

LRA/RRF

EMPOWERING LUPUS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

In partnership with the [Lupus Research Alliance](#) (LRA), the [Rheumatology Research Foundation](#) (RRF) is pleased to issue a notice of special interest (NOSI) to highlight the availability of funds aimed towards driving the discovery and development of next generation lupus diagnostics and curative treatments.

Applications submitted through the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research Partnership should aim to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- Stimulate the investigation of underexplored pathways and novel concepts in lupus biology,
- Initiate transformative discoveries in autoimmune disease, driving the development of safer and more effective treatments for people living with lupus, and/or
- Aim to bridge the gap between the bench and the bedside in lupus and autoimmunity research.

Projects should be relevant to the mission of both the RRF and LRA and be applicable to the LRA's strategic priorities:

- Defining human lupus heterogeneity by molecular pathology to stratify patients by active disease mechanisms, and
- Integrating the research continuum to bring advances to patients,
- Enabling global research/technology collaborations.

This collaborative research program aims to support early career scientists and junior investigators from varied backgrounds who are committed to a career in rheumatology and who are focused on lupus research. The intent of this award is to increase a broad representation of professionals, choosing rheumatology as a career path with an emphasis on lupus to better reflect the unique populations and communities in which rheumatology professionals serve.

The Lupus Nexus (LNx) is a comprehensive registry, biorepository, and data platform designed to facilitate information exchange and empower researchers to address critical questions in lupus research. For detailed information about the LNx, visit LupusNexus.org.

The Rheumatology Research Foundation is accepting application submissions through the following award mechanisms:

Scientist Development Award

Investigator Award

KEY DATES

Letter of Intent Due: July 1, 2026

Application Due: August 3, 2026

Award Notifications: January 2027*

Award Start Date: July 1, 2027

* Note that consideration for the NOSI requires additional internal approvals from both organizations. Therefore, NOSI applicants may receive funding notifications later than applicants for the traditional SDA and IA.

Please note that this NOSI complements but does not replace the Foundation's annual programs. Funded projects via this partnership will be in addition to those funded via the standard Scientist Development Award and Investigator Award. Applicants that do not meet the criteria outlined in this NOSI should consider applying for their project through the established [Scientist Development Award and Investigator Award programs](#).

AVAILABLE FUNDING

ACR/ARP members are encouraged to submit applications through the following mechanisms:

SCIENTIST DEVELOPMENT AWARD (SDA)

This mentored career development award is designed for individuals in the early stages of their career or those without significant prior research experience. Projects should help awardees generate scientific data and develop innovative research ideas necessary to transition to an independent research role in areas aligned with the stated goals of the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research Partnership.

Max Award Amount: \$225,000

Max Award Term: 3 Years (2 years guaranteed funding with possible renewal in year 3)

Additional Notes:

- A short personal statement will be required outlining how your application meets the stated goals of the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research Partnership. The personal statement should NOT repeat the abstract or project aims, but rather provide details about the candidate themselves, their career trajectory and their connection to the Lupus Community.
- Recipients of the Empowering Lupus Research SDA will be required to attend the LRA's annual scientific conference. **Travel to this meeting should be included in the budget.** Attendance at the RRF's annual Investigators Meeting is optional but encouraged.
- Recipients of the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research SDA will be required to participate in the LRA's mentoring program. The mentoring program is guided by established lupus investigators appointed by the LRA. The group will meet at least twice a year—once in person during the LRA annual scientific conference—to discuss questions or issues related to publications, grant applications, laboratory and grant management, collaborations, career advancement, etc.
- This award is not intended to support **applicants** at the faculty level. Additional eligibility, award policies and application requirement details can be found in the [Scientist Development Award request for applications](#).
- Please follow all instructions relevant to the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research SDA within Proposal Central to ensure you have completed all components required under this NOSI within the letter of intent and application.
- Year 3 of this award is based on competitive renewal. Decisions on year 3 funding will be based on, but not limited to progress made to date, need and available funds. **NOSI applicants will be required to include a proposed Year 3 budget in the application.**

INVESTIGATOR AWARD (IA)

This award is intended to support early career investigators for the period between the completion of post-doctorate fellowship training and establishment as an independent investigator.

Max Award Amount: \$500,000

Max Award Term: 4 Years (3 years guaranteed funding with possible renewal in year 3)

Additional Notes:

- A short personal statement will be required outlining how your application meets the stated goals of the LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research Partnership. The personal statement should NOT repeat the abstract or project aims, but rather provide details about the candidate themselves, their career trajectory and their connection to the Lupus Community.
- Recipients of the *LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research IA* will be required to attend the LRA's annual scientific conference. **Travel to this meeting should be included in the budget.** Attendance at the RRF's annual Investigators Meeting is optional but encouraged.
- Recipients of the *LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research IA* will be required to participate in the LRA's mentoring program. The mentoring program is guided by established lupus investigators appointed by the LRA. The group will meet at least twice a year—once in person during the LRA annual scientific conference—to discuss questions or issues related to publications, grant applications, laboratory and grant management, collaborations, career advancement, etc.
- Additional eligibility, award policies and application requirement details can be found in the [Investigator Award request for application](#).
- Please follow all instructions relevant to the *LRA/RRF Empowering Lupus Research IA* within Proposal Central to ensure you have completed all components required under this NOSI within the letter of intent and application.
- Year 4 of this award is based on competitive renewal. Decisions on year 4 funding will be based on, but not limited to progress made to date, need and available funds. **Applicants will be required to include a proposed Year 4 budget in the application.**

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Please see [2026 Awards & Grants Policies](#) for citizenship requirements for both awards. If you have questions about your eligibility, or the application process, please inquire by email to foundation@rheumatology.org before preparing your application. A member of our team will be happy to walk you through the process!

Visit rheumresearch.org to learn more about funding opportunities from the Rheumatology Research Foundation.

Visit lupusresearch.org to learn more about funding opportunities from the Lupus Research Alliance.