Help Us Solve
The Cruel Mystery
LUPUS
FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

2027 Gary S. Gilkeson, MD Career Development Award

Purpose: To facilitate the professional career development of rheumatology, nephrology, and dermatology fellows as well as postdoctoral fellows who are conducting lupus research in the U.S. and Canada. Applicants should be dedicated to developing a career as an independent scientist at an academic, medical, or research institution with a primary focus on lupus investigation.

Award amount: 2 awards of up to $70,000 per year for up to 2 years

Application deadline: February 1, 2027

Earliest award notification date: March 31, 2027

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Lupus Foundation of America's Mission

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for all people affected by lupus through programs of research, education, support and advocacy. We are focused on achieving the following disease-specific outcomes:

a. Reduce time to diagnosis
b. Ensure people with lupus have an arsenal of safe and effective treatments
c. Expand direct services and increase access to treatment and care

About the Gary S. Gilkeson Career Development Award

The Lupus Foundation of America's Gary S. Gilkeson Career Development Award facilitates the professional development of current fellows (any year), clinicians up to two years post- fellowship and/or within four years of postdoctoral research in nephrology, rheumatology, or dermatology, in the U.S. or Canada. Their work should focus on the investigation of basic, clinical, translational, behavioral, or epidemiological lupus research.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Hold an MD or PhD (or equivalent) from an accredited institution
- Be a citizen or legal resident of the U.S. or Canada at the time of application
- Be a clinical fellow (any year) or up to two years post-clinical fellowship in an adult or childhood fellowship program in rheumatology, nephrology, or dermatology that is accredited by either the American Council on Graduate Medical Education (in the U.S.) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (in Canada) with documented history of conducting lupus research or;
- Be a postdoctoral fellow doing lupus-related research with $\geq$ 2 years and $\leq$ 4 years of mentored, non-independent research training experience after the terminal non-medical doctorate at the time of application

Exclusion Criteria:

Applicants who currently receive or have previously been awarded any of the following awards (or similar) are ineligible to apply:

- A mentored award (such as a K award) or NIH research grant (such as an RO1, RO3, R21, PO1, P50, or any similar award)
- Veteran's Administration Career Development Award

- American College of Rheumatology (ACR) Rheumatology Research Foundation (RRF) Rheumatology Scientist Development Award
- ACR RRF Rheumatology Investigator Award
- ACR RRF Career Development Bridge Funding Award

Funding Opportunity

The Gary S. Gilkeson Career Development Award will provide two grant awards of up to $140,000.00 each over the two-year grant period. Grants will be awarded based on the availability of funds and will be paid to the applicant's institution. Awardees' institutions will receive $70,000.00 for the first year of the grant. After the first year, funding may be renewed for a second year for up to $70,000.00. Renewal of grant funding is dependent upon the grantees' progress toward their project goals, and submission of a lupus-specific abstract based on the LFA-funded research.

Online Submission

The Lupus Foundation of America uses an electronic grant submission process. All applicants must submit their full application packages through the ProposalCentral online grants management system. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Applicants must first create a ProposalCentral account and complete the application at https://proposalcentral.com/GrantOpportunities.asp?GMID=56.

For more information, visit our Request for Applications page at http://www.lupus.org/rfa. Please contact Jaren Crump at crump@lupus.org if you have any questions.

Required Application Components

Complete application packages (with all required attachments and supportive documentation) must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. ET on February 1, 2027. We will not accept hard copies under any circumstances.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of lupus research experts, and people living with lupus. Please consider using layperson's language whenever possible when submitting the required documents.

The application must include the following components:

1. Cover letter on institutional letterhead that includes:

a. Applicant's name, date, address, and original signature.
b. Project title and dates of proposed project.
c. Status of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and/or Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
d. Statement that at least nine person months of the applicant's full-time professional effort will be dedicated to conducting research during the first 12-month year, and at least six person months' effort to the CDA research project during the second 12-month year.
e. Statement that all proposed research will be conducted according to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services relevant to the ethical conduct of research on humans and animals.

2. Grant application cover page that includes:
    a. Project title and dates of proposed project.
    b. For the applicant, the institutional official, and the signing official: name, highest degree, title, email address, direct phone number, and institutional street address.
    c. If different from the institutional official and the signing official, the institutional grant administrator's name, highest degree, title, email address, direct phone number, and institutional street address.
    d. Dated original signatures from the applicant and the institutional signing official All dated signatures must be on the same grant application cover page.
    e. IRB and/or IACUC approval date, as well as the Human Subjects Assurance Number and/or Animal Welfare Assurance Number.
    f. If these are not available at the time of application, they will be required upon acceptance of the award and prior to disbursement of any funds to the sponsoring institution.

3. Research proposal abstract and layperson summary:
    a. Scientific abstract that is no longer than 2,000 characters.
    b. Layperson's summary of the proposal for the Lupus Foundation of America's use in press releases, no longer than 2,000 characters.

4. NIH-formatted biosketches from the applicant, sponsor/mentor, and any other research personnel who will have a major role in the design, execution, analysis, interpretation, or writing related to the proposed studies. This information should include positions and honors, peer-reviewed publications, as well as current and pending research support.
    a. Applicants performing their fellowship in Canada are required to collaborate with a U.S.- based investigator. A biosketch must be provided by this investigator as well.

5. In layperson's language, a biography of the applicant's education and research background (no more than 5 paragraphs).

6. For applicants who are current fellows: A letter from fellowship program director or chair of division/department (in rheumatology, nephrology, or dermatology) certifying the applicant's participation in the fellowship program, including a brief description (5-7 sentences) of the program of study.

7. A statement from the sponsor/mentor (an MD, PhD, or equivalent who is a scientist specialized in lupus) about the applicant's academic achievements, future professional aspirations, and potential to implement the proposed studies, as well as the mentorship that the applicant will receive during the research experience in the group or laboratory of the principal investigator. This statement will be viewable by the applicant. It cannot be a scanned image file (for example, a JPEG) or a non-Word file scanned into a PDF.

8. A letter of recommendation from an investigator other than the applicant's sponsor/mentor who knows the applicant well and can appropriately comment on the applicant's academic achievements, future professional aspirations, and potential to implement the proposed studies. Please have your sponsor/mentor email the letter separately to Jaren Crump at crump@lupus.org prior to the grant deadline. This letter must be submitted by the individual who wrote it and will not be viewable by the applicant.

9. The applicant and the mentor must jointly write a career development plan of no more than four pages. The career development plan should clearly describe how this award would facilitate the applicant's progress toward a career as an independent clinician-scientist, with a considerable focus on lupus.

10. A proposal narrative of no more than five pages (single spaced with one-inch margins, in 12-point Times New Roman font, excluding the Literature cited pages), that includes the following sections:
    a. Specific aims (1 page maximum)
    b. Research strategy (4 pages maximum)
        - Background and significance to lupus research or treatment
        - Innovation
        - Approach (including preliminary data, if any)
    c. Mentorship the Candidate will receive (1-page maximum)
    d. Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (1-page maximum)
    e. Literature cited (not included in the 5-page limit)

11. A brief but specific budget and proposed breakdown of how the funds are to be used (keeping in mind the specifications and restrictions indicated in the Use of Funds and Conditions of Award section). There is no specific template for formatting your budget.

12. All applications must include an institutional letter of support on official letterhead, signed by an authorized institutional official. The letter should confirm the institution's commitment to the applicant and project, and describe the resources, facilities, and support that will be made available. This requirement aligns with the Lupus Foundation of America's expectations to demonstrate feasibility and institutional backing.

Submission Deadline

Application packages must be submitted in their entirety via ProposalCentral by no later than **Monday, February 1, 2027 at 5 p.m. EST**. No application materials will be accepted after this deadline. Only one proposal per applicant will be accepted.

The earliest notification of grant awards will be made by March 31, 2027. Awardees will begin working on their projects no earlier than September 1, 2027.

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed according to a modified version of the 9-point NIH review system (see this page: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm) by a panel of lupus research experts who are familiar with rheumatology, nephrology, and/or dermatology fellowship training, and people living with lupus.

Each proposal will receive an overall impact score (1-9) as determined by the scientific reviewers' assessments of the following aspects of the proposal:

1. Applicant
2. Mentor(s)
3. Environment/Institution
4. Approach/Method
5. Significance/Relevance to lupus

Each proposal will also receive an overall impact score (1-9) as determined by the lupus patient reviewers' assessments of the following aspects of the proposal:

1. Patient impact

2. Use of human subjects
3. Significance to LFA's mission

Use of Funds and Conditions of Award

1. Applications will be accepted from rheumatology, nephrology, and dermatology fellowships and postdoctoral researchers in the U.S. and Canada. Applicants performing their fellowship in Canada are required to be in collaboration with a U.S.-based investigator. This investigator's NIH-formatted Biosketch must be added in ProposalCentral. (See #4 under Required Application Components.)

2. Funds from this award must be used to support only the proposed research activities of the awardee. Funds cannot be used for any other reason, including indirect costs. Any unused funds must be returned to the Lupus Foundation of America.

3. This award will fund up to two recipients for a maximum of two years. The funds may be spent on salary, fringe benefits, supplies/equipment, technical personnel, travel to a scientific meeting to deliver an abstract or presentation, and/or to submit a manuscript of the research to a journal.
    a. If the funds are to be used for a salary, and if the fellow has other sources of salary support, then the fellow's salary cannot exceed the standard national or institutional level for their credentials (whichever is greater).
    b. Applicants who are currently being funded by an institutional T32 are eligible to apply, but can use these funds only for non-salary purposes if the T32 is fully supporting their salary during the award period.

4. Each applicant must inform the Lupus Foundation of America of their home institution and intended work location, as well as the institution at which the proposed project will be completed if different. Applicants must indicate on their application if they plan to change their institution or work location. Once granted, awardees are required to notify the LFA immediately if they decide to change institutions. Awards are not automatically transferrable, and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Awardees must electronically submit signed, dated progress and final reports documenting the nature and outcomes of the research conducted. Reports must be submitted to ProposalCentral by the mid- and end-points of the grant award, respectively. The Foundation will provide the formatted reports to the awardees. The Foundation will disburse each award payment only after we receive the specific deliverables indicated in the award letters, such as progress reports.

6. All publications resulting from research funded either wholly or partially by this grant award must acknowledge financial contributions from the Lupus Foundation of America's Gary S. Gilkeson Career Development Award. This includes primary and review-type peer-reviewed journal articles, abstracts, commentaries, magazine articles, national and/or local media coverage, as well as any such coverage at the home institution or the institution of a collaborator on the project. In addition, copies of such publications must be provided to the Foundation within 30 days of final production. All publicity and information disseminated by the home institution of the awardee or sponsor/mentor about such research must acknowledge financial contributions from the Lupus Foundation of America, Inc.

7. Each applicant must indicate on cover letter that all proposed research will be conducted according to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services relevant to the ethical conduct of research on humans and animals. Also, each applicant's institution must agree to hold the Foundation harmless from any and all claims that may arise from research-related activities funded either wholly or partially by the Lupus Foundation of America, Inc.

8. Applicants proposing to conduct research on animals must provide the Lupus Foundation of America with a letter from the sponsoring institution's IACUC documenting approval of the proposed research and its compliance with NIH guidelines for the care and use of animals in research. The letter must be on institutional letterhead, originally signed and dated by an appropriate university official. Applicants proposing to conduct research involving human subjects must provide the Foundation with a letter from the sponsoring institution's IRB documenting approval of the proposed research and its compliance with NIH guidelines for the use of human subjects in research. The letter must be on an institutional letterhead, originally signed and dated by an appropriate university official.

   IRB and/or IACUC approval are not required on the date of application, but they are required when the Foundation's offers the award. No award funds will be disbursed until the Foundation receives written IRB and/or IACUC approval. All IACUC and IRB approval documents must contain the full name, title, address, phone number, and email for the IACUC or IRB chair in order for the Foundation to disburse funds.

9. Each award is for one-time use only and may only be postponed, extended, modified, or transferred to another individual or institution upon review by LFA, on a case-by-case basis. No additional funds will be provided beyond the amount stipulated in the award letter. Second-year funding is conditional, and dependent upon satisfactory progress made by the end of year one.

10. Each award payment will be made in the form of a check payable in U.S. dollars, or electronic transfer to a designated institutional grant official who is authorized to receive, deposit, and appropriately manage funds from such a payment at the sponsoring institution. Under no circumstances will a disbursement be made payable or available to an applicant, sponsor/mentor, or other individual associated with the proposed research.

11. Any patentable discoveries, abstracts, or publications resulting from research funded either wholly or partially by the Lupus Foundation of America must be reported to Jaren Crump (crump@lupus.org) as soon as any relevant decisions to pursue a patent are made.