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The Cruel Mystery
LUPUS™
FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

2027 Gina M. Finzi Memorial
Student Summer Fellowship Program

Purpose: To foster an interest among students in the areas of basic, clinical, translational, epidemiological, or behavioral research relevant to lupus. Students must work under the sponsorship and supervision of an established, promotion ladder faculty principal investigator who directs a laboratory that is dedicated at least in part to the investigation of lupus at an academic, medical, or a research institution. The institution must be in the U.S., Canada, or Mexico.

Fellowship award amount: 6 awards of $4,000.00 each

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

Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program

The Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program is a memorial tribute to Gina M. Finzi, the late daughter of former Lupus Foundation of America President Emeritus Sergio Finzi, PhD. Since 1984, Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program has supported the work of nearly 200 young investigators.

This year, Lupus Foundation of America is awarding five recipients at $4,000 each. The award funding is paid to the recipient's institution, and the research must be conducted in the institution's research lab or another appropriate research environment. The research project should span across 10 weeks during the months of May through September 2027.

Eligibility

- The project must be in one of the following areas focused on lupus research: basic, clinical, translational, epidemiological, or behavioral research.
- The applicant is responsible for identifying a supervising sponsor who is an established, promotion ladder faculty principal investigator who directs a laboratory dedicated at least in part to the investigation of lupus at an academic, medical, or research institution.
- The institution where you're conducting your research must be in the US, Canada, or Mexico.
- Undergraduate students may apply. Preference will be given to graduate or medical students who have already earned a baccalaureate degree or will have done so prior to their official acceptance of the award.
- Awards may not be postponed for use in a later year or be carried out for two or more summers.

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 in ProposalCentral by **February 1, 2027, at 5 pm ET**. Hard copies will not be accepted under any circumstances.

The application will be reviewed and scored by a panel of lupus experts and people living with lupus. Whenever possible, please consider using layperson's language when submitting the required documents.

The application **must** include the following components:

1. Cover letter addressed to the Lupus Foundation of America's review committee on institutional letterhead that includes:
    a. Name, date, address, and original signature of the applicant
    b. Name of the institution where the research will be conducted
    c. Name, title, and address of the mentor that will oversee the project
    d. Name and dates of proposed project
    e. Status of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and/or Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval
    f. Statement that all proposed research will be conducted according to the rules and regulations of the US Department of Health and Human Services relevant to the ethical conduct of research on humans and animals
    g. Note: Cover letter must be submitted in PDF format

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

3. Research proposal abstract and layperson's summary:
    a. Scientific abstract (no longer than 2,000 characters)

   b. A layperson's summary of the proposal for the Lupus Foundation of America to use in press releases (no longer than 2,000 characters)

4. NIH-formatted biosketches from the applicant, sponsor, and any other research personnel who will have a major role in the design, execution, analysis, interpretations, or writing related to the proposed studies. Biosketches should include positions and honors, peer-reviewed publications, as well as current and pending research support.

5. A statement from the sponsor about the applicant's academic achievements, future professional aspirations, and potential to implement the proposed studies. The statement should also contain details about the mentorship that the applicant will receive during the research experience in the laboratory of the principal investigator.
   a. The sponsor will need their own ProposalCentral account to upload the letter or recommendation. Please contact Jaren Crump at crump@lupus.org if your sponsor does not already have an account.

6. A proposal narrative of no more than 2 pages (single-spaced with one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, excluding the Literature cited pages), including the following sections:
   a. Specific aims
   b. Research strategy
      i. Background and significance to lupus research or treatment
      ii. Innovation
      iii. Approach (including preliminary data, if any)
      iv. Commentary on the mentorship that the applicant will receive during the research experience in the laboratory of the principal investigator
   c. Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (1-page maximum)
   d. Literature cited with a maximum of 30 references to peer-reviewed journal publications

Submission Deadline

Application packages must be submitted in their entirety via our ProposalCentral online grants system no later than **February 1, 2027, at 5 pm**. No application materials will be accepted after this deadline. Only one proposal per applicant will be accepted.

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

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed according to a modified version of the 9-point NIH review system (see this web page: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm) and will be reviewed by two experts in lupus research and one person with lupus.

Each proposal will receive an overall impact score (1-9) based on the below criteria, as determined by the 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

Use of Funds and Conditions of Award

1. Funds from this award must be used to support research-related activities of the fellow. Research-related activities must take place in the laboratory of the sponsor identified in the grant application. Funds from this award cannot be used for any other reason, including indirect costs. Any unused funds must be returned to the Lupus Foundation of America.

2. The proposed research must be in the areas of basic, clinical, translational, epidemiological, or behavioral research relevant to lupus. The research must be conducted under the sponsorship and supervision of an established, promotion ladder faculty principal investigator who directs a laboratory dedicated at least in part to the investigation of lupus at an academic, medical, or research institution in the U.S., Canada, or Mexico. For laboratories in Canada or Mexico.

3. Awardees must electronically submit a final progress report, originally signed and dated by both the fellow and sponsor, that documents the nature and outcomes of the research conducted must. This report must be submitted in ProposalCentral. The Foundation will provide a formatted progress report form to fellows. Awardees must also agree to at least one post- award update call with the Foundation.

4. All publications resulting from research funded either wholly or partially by this fellowship award must acknowledge financial contributions from the Lupus Foundation of America's Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program. 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 fellow's or sponsor's home institution about such research must acknowledge financial contributions from the Foundation's Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program.

5. Each applicant must indicate on their 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 fellow'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.

6. Fellows 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. Letters must be on institutional letterhead, originally signed and dated by an appropriate university official. Fellows 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. Letters must be on 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 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.

7. Each fellowship is for one-time use only and cannot be postponed, extended, modified, renewed, or transferred to another individual or institution. No additional funds will be provided beyond the amount stipulated in the award letter. Eligible applicants who would like to pursue Foundation funds beyond the dollar amount or period of time stipulated in the award letter are encouraged to submit a new application with new, specific aims in response to a future Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program funding opportunity announcement.

8. 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, or other individual associated with the proposed research.

9. Any patentable discoveries, abstract, or publications resulting from research funded either wholly or partially by the Lupus Foundation of America's Gina M. Finzi Memorial Student Summer Fellowship Program must be reported to Jaren Crump, Research Grants and Contracts Manager, at the Foundation, as soon as any relevant decisions to pursue a patent are made.