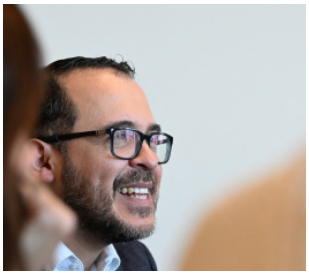
ARTHRITIS NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION®

2025 Impact Report

www.curearthritis.org

From Seed Funding to Scientific Legacy



Seeding the Future

With 392 grants totaling $33M in funding, The Arthritis National Research Foundation invests in the promise of emerging researchers—ensuring that bold ideas receive the support they need to flourish. These grants empower scientists at critical early stages, allowing them to conduct pioneering research that might otherwise go unexplored.

From Growth to Leadership

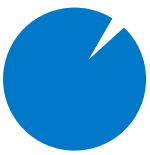
Our investment yields exponential returns. Our researchers secure $25 in federal funding for every $1 received from ANRF, amplifying the impact of our funding and driving scientific advancement. The journey doesn't stop there—3 in 5 researchers go on to establish their own labs, fostering the next generation of innovation and leadership.

A Legacy of Impact

Beyond individual success, our funding cultivates enduring contributions to science and medicine. 92% of our funded researchers remain in research, while 98% continue careers in science and medicine, ensuring that knowledge gained leads to breakthroughs that improve lives worldwide.

392
Grants

$33M
Funding



92%
Stay in Research

98%
Continue Careers in Science and Medicine

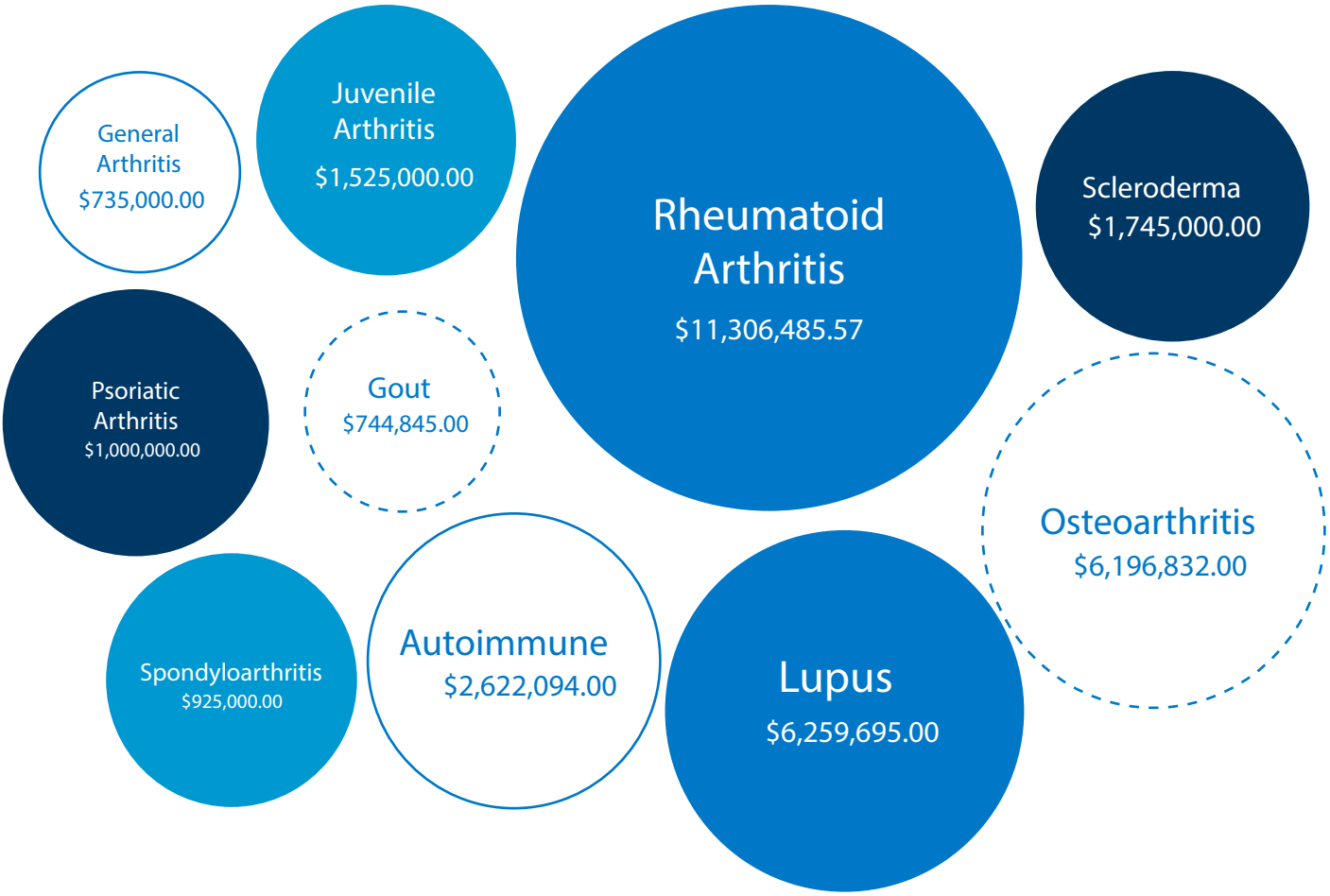
By the Numbers

Across 258 researchers and 110 institutions, we've built a network where ideas can flourish, supported by funding that opens doors to discovery. This collective effort has led to 705 peer-reviewed publications highlighting ANRF-funded research, cited by other researchers over 44,000 times. These contributions shape the future of medicine in ways that extend far beyond the walls of a lab.

The research we've funded has laid the foundation for 42 patents, each representing a leap toward new treatments and medical breakthroughs. Even more remarkably, 24 patented discoveries stemming from ANRF-funded projects are now being used as a foundation by pharmaceutical companies in drug development. The path from an initial idea to a life-changing treatment is long, but ANRF's commitment ensures that promising research isn't just imagined, it becomes reality.

Substantial investments have been made across a range of autoimmune and arthritic conditions, ensuring vital advancements continue.

The funding landscape showcases a push towards better treatments, deeper research, and ultimately, stronger support for patients.



2017 - 2019 Scholar Rachel E. Miller, PhD
and Scientific Advisory Board Member, Anne-Marie Malfait, MD, PhD

Research Funded, Breakthroughs Achieved

For decades, ANRF has proudly supported pioneering research that is changing the landscape of autoimmune disease treatment, diagnosis, and personalized care. The scientists we fund are advancing medical knowledge and creating real-world impact for millions of people living with autoimmune conditions. From early ideas to life-changing breakthroughs, each milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to building a healthier future for all.

1982 – Gale Granger: Unlocking the Power of the TNF Molecule

Gale Granger's research on Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) revolutionized our understanding of immune system regulation. His discoveries laid the foundation for biologic treatments such as Adalimumab and Etanercept, which now form the backbone of autoimmune disease management. Today, 50 – 90% of arthritis patients benefit from DMARDs or biologics, an innovation that traces back to this landmark research.

1994 – Betty Tsao: Identifying the Lupus Susceptibility Gene

Tsao's pioneering work in genetics led to the identification of key risk loci for lupus (SLE), shedding light on the underlying mechanisms that drive the disease. This breakthrough has improved diagnostic accuracy and informed treatments for over 5 million lupus patients worldwide, enabling earlier intervention and better disease management.

2006 – Christine Beeton: Targeting Kv1.3 in Autoimmune Diseases

Beeton's discovery that Kv1.3 ion channels play a critical role in autoimmune T-cell activation opened new doors in therapeutic development. Researchers have since developed Kv1.3 inhibitors as potential treatments for diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis, offering hope for targeted therapies that reduce inflammation while preserving immune function.

2014 – Scott Canna: Uncovering the NLRC4 Inflammasome Mutation

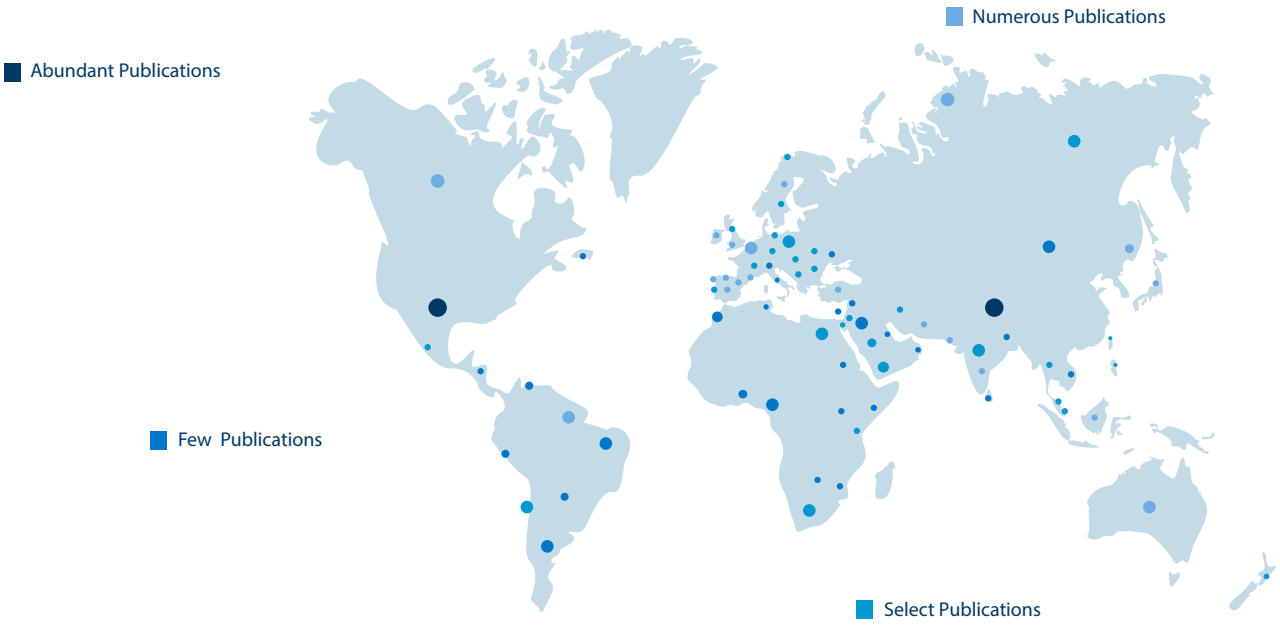
Canna's work on the NLRC4 inflammasome mutation illuminated a rare genetic disorder characterized by excessive inflammation and immune dysregulation. His findings have dramatically improved diagnosis and treatment for rare autoinflammatory conditions, providing patients and physicians with a much-needed framework for managing these complex diseases.

2023 – Anna Helena Jonsson: Defining RA Synovium Heterogeneity

Jonsson's research redefined rheumatoid arthritis treatment by identifying distinct inflammatory subtypes within RA synovium. Her work has paved the way for personalized treatment strategies, ensuring that patients receive therapies tailored to their specific disease characteristics, marking a significant leap toward precision medicine in autoimmune care.

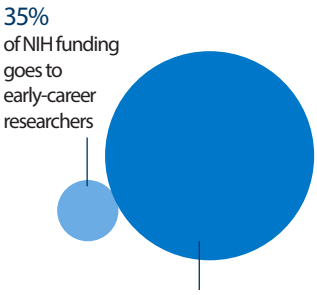
The Ripple Effect of Innovation

Each of these discoveries has contributed to shaping the future of medicine, but the impact extends beyond individual breakthroughs. ANRF-funded research has been widely recognized, with 36 high-impact publications appearing in Nature, Science, and PNAS. Additionally, the talent we support doesn't just make an impact in their early careers—101 scientists funded by ANRF have gone on to become leaders in their fields, continuing to drive innovation in research, education, and clinical practice.



This photo captures a moment from our 2025 Research Scholar Symposium in Chicago, a gathering where brilliant researchers connected with clinicians and industry leaders, exchanged bold ideas, and tackled real-world challenges in rheumatology research through hands-on workshops and collaboration.

Filling the Gaps



100%
of our funding is dedicated to early-career researchers

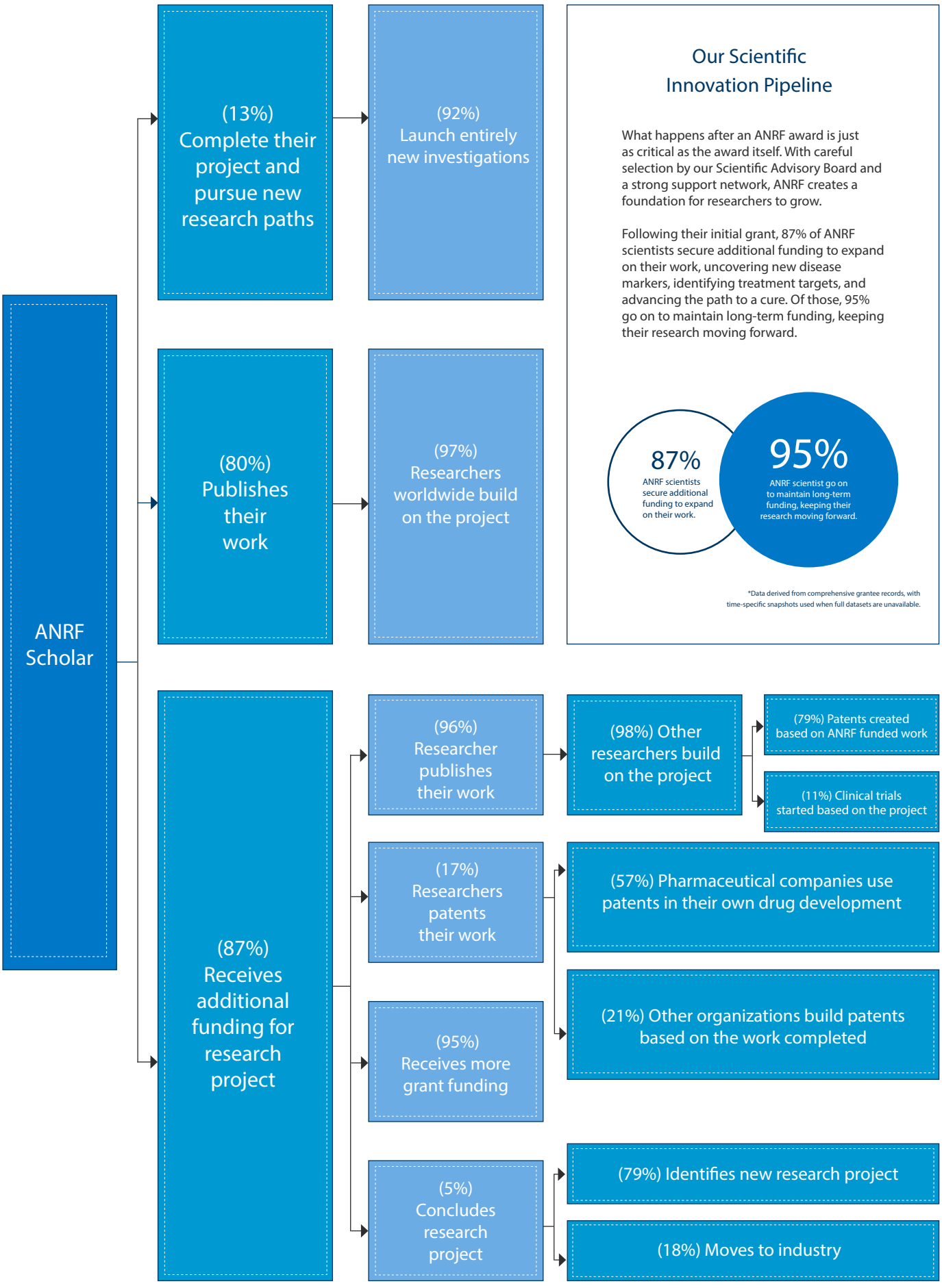
The Arthritis National Research Foundation (ANRF) is excited to announce several grant opportunities for 2025, opening in October.

Our offerings include the All Arthritis and Autoimmune Research Grant, Psoriatic Arthritis Research Grant, Rheum for Kids: Pediatric Skin and Joint Grant in collaboration with PeDRA, and Postdoctoral Research Fellowship.

While the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has long been a pillar of research support, its allocation for early-career scientists has steadily declined. In 2020, only 35% of NIH grants were awarded to early-stage researchers, and since 1985, the percentage of NIH funding dedicated to this critical group has dropped by 30%. For many promising scientists at the start of their careers, these numbers represent barriers that threaten to slow progress before it even begins.

ANRF bridges this gap. 100% of our funding is dedicated to early-career researchers, ensuring that the next generation of scientists has the resources to pursue groundbreaking discoveries. We believe that investing in new talent today leads to transformative breakthroughs tomorrow. By directing our support toward those who need it most, we provide opportunities for pioneering ideas to take root, grow, and ultimately shape the future of medicine.

ANRF addresses underfunded research areas, overlooked communities, and emerging scientists. We eliminate financial barriers to scientific progress and ensure potential isn't limited by access. Where funding gaps exist, we fill them.

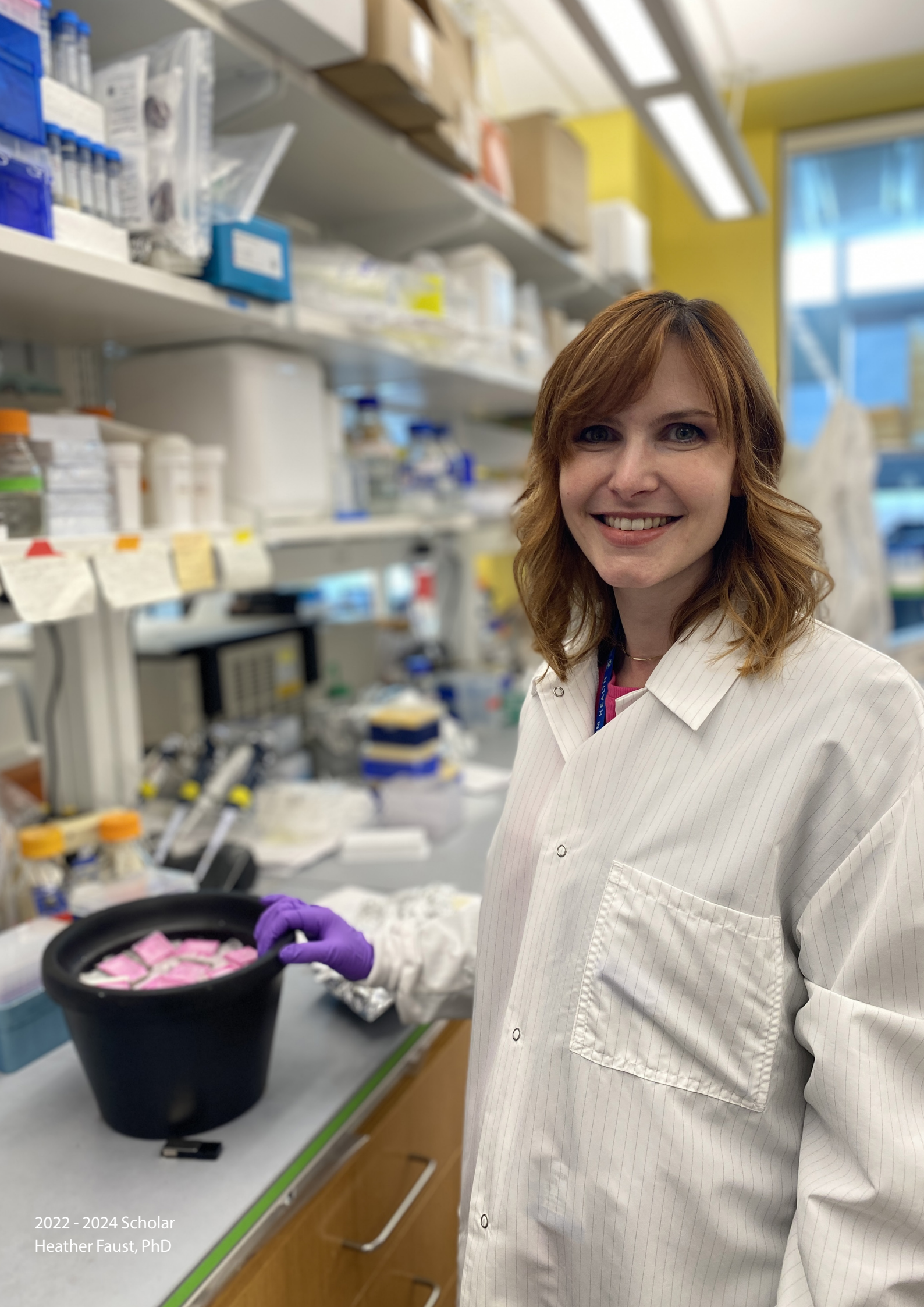


Our Scientific Innovation Pipeline

What happens after an ANRF award is just as critical as the award itself. With careful selection by our Scientific Advisory Board and a strong support network, ANRF creates a foundation for researchers to grow.

Following their initial grant, 87% of ANRF scientists secure additional funding to expand on their work, uncovering new disease markers, identifying treatment targets, and advancing the path to a cure. Of those, 95% go on to maintain long-term funding, keeping their research moving forward.

*Data derived from comprehensive grantee records, with time-specific snapshots used when full datasets are unavailable.



2022 - 2024 Scholar
Heather Faust, PhD

A Future Built on Opportunity

ANRF funding builds careers, strengthens ideas, and ensures that promising scientists have a real chance to make an impact. Over the years, ANRF has been there at the beginning of countless research journeys, enabling scientists to push boundaries and redefine the future of medicine.

"I am very grateful for the support from ANRF! The ANRF research grant was an important stepping stone in my career and allowed me to work on a research topic I am passionate about!"

– Julia Jellusova, PhD (2013 Scholar)

"The ANRF was my first grant and launched my career. As it happened to many other ANRF alumni, I then got an NIH grant on the same topic I had written my ANRF grant on. I still work on that program and cannot forget the impact that the ANRF grant had on my career and the project."

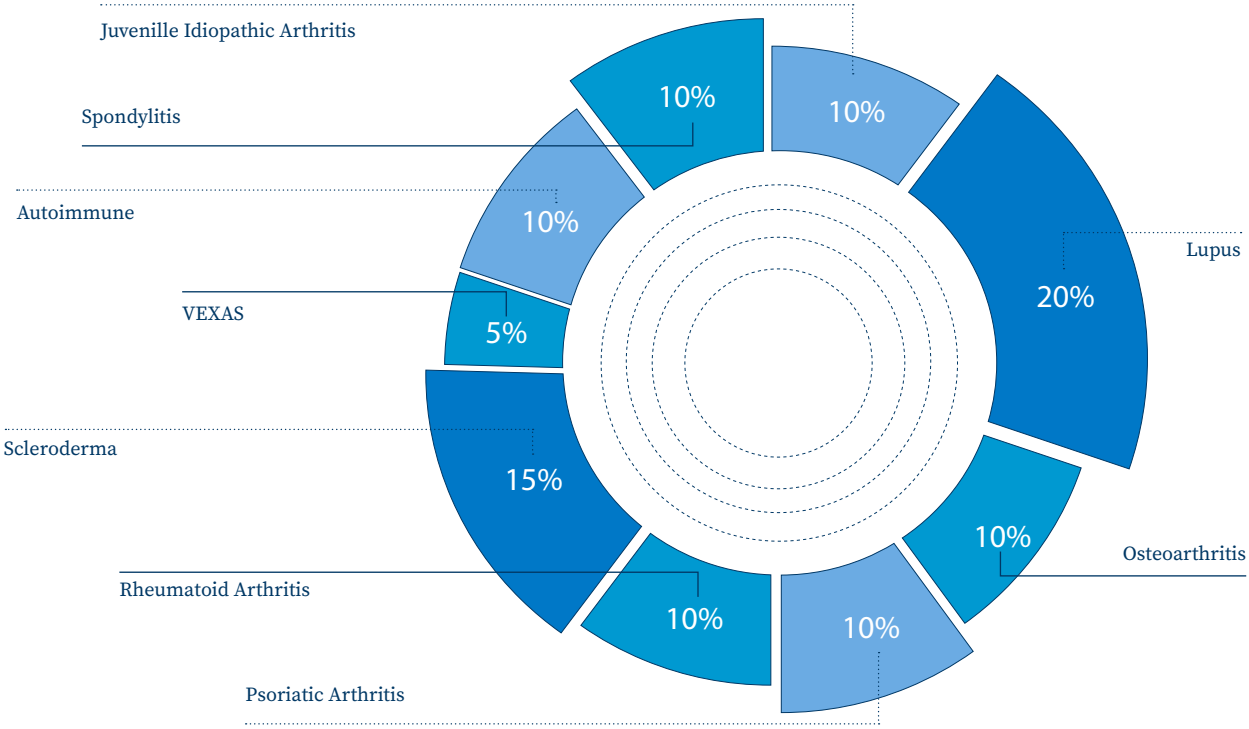
– Nunzio Bottini, MD (2006 ANRF Scholar)

"This award has been instrumental in helping me launch my career as an independent investigator. Over the course of the funding cycle (which encompassed the COVID-19 pandemic), I have published multiple papers, established a national reputation, given multiple Grand Rounds and Distinguished Lectures to broader community, and secured 2 R01-equivalent grants as well as multiple smaller grant mechanisms. I have also started my own lab and grown my group, which was made possible by the support of ANRF. I am incredibly grateful for the support of the ANRF and look forward to further developing the science that has been uncovered by this grant award."

– Renuka Nayak, MD, PhD (2019-2021 ANRF Scholar)

Discoveries in Motion

For more than 50 years, we have been driving progress across arthritis and autoimmune disease research, funding discoveries that have made a real impact for those living with both well-known and rare conditions. The breadth of our investment is reflected in the wide range of diseases our researchers continue to explore.



Frontlines of the Future

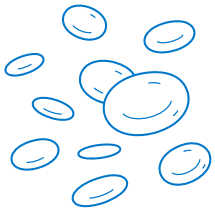
With 20 active grants in the pipeline, our newest cohort of researchers is diving into complex diseases—seeking answers, improving treatments, and bringing hope to patients who need it most.

Our community of researchers represents a wide range of disciplines and perspectives, united by a shared goal: advancing understanding and treatment of autoimmune diseases.

This diversity of research interests fuels innovation and leads to more comprehensive, impactful solutions for patients everywhere.

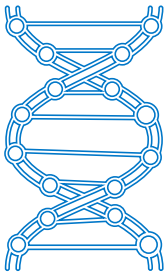
Yuriy Baglaenko
Research: Juvenille Idiopathic Arthritis

Scientists haven't been able to pinpoint the exact T cells responsible, but Baglaenko is using cutting-edge technology to identify them. His work could lead to better treatments and help doctors predict which drugs will work best for each child.



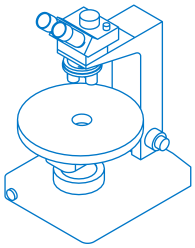
Priyanka Verma
Research: Scleroderma

She's studying a molecule called FMO3, which may be linked to both fibrosis (the thickening of tissue) and blood vessel damage. By understanding its role, Verma's research could lead to new ways to treat the disease before it progresses.



Sivakanthan Kasinathan
Research: Lupus

While scientists know lupus is linked to genetic changes, no one fully understands how these mutations shape immune cells. Kasinathan's research maps lupus-related mutations across the genome, studies how they affect immune cell behavior, and may pave the way for personalized lupus treatments in the future.



Satomi Arimoto
Research: Psoriatic Arthritis

Research has shown that bacteria from the mouth can travel to joint fluid and worsen symptoms. Arimoto is studying how an overly active immune response—called trained immunity—might trigger PsA. Understanding this could lead to prevention strategies or even new treatments for those at risk.

Unlocking What's Next

In just the past three years, ANRF has invested 14% of its total funding from the last 50+ years, an extraordinary increase that reflects our commitment to meeting the rising need for arthritis and autoimmune disease research. As diagnoses continue to grow across the U.S., we're accelerating our support for early-career scientists whose fresh perspectives are shaping the future of treatment and discovery.

Their work is bringing us closer to a world where autoimmune diseases are better understood and ultimately overcome.

Charity Navigator 2025

For the seventeenth consecutive year, ANRF received the 4-star rating, making it one of the top 1% of charities in the country.

Candid Platinum Transparency

ANRF has achieved the highest distinction with Candid's Platinum 2025 Transparency rating, placing it among the nation's most trusted organizations.

www.curearthritis.org