ARTHRITIS NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION®

Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease Research Grant

2027 Program Guidelines, Applications Instructions, and Policies

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Program Summary

About the Arthritis National Research Foundation:

Since 1970, the Arthritis National Research Foundation (ANRF) has funded arthritis research to understand the causes, prevention and development of new treatments for osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, juvenile arthritis and related autoimmune diseases.

Our mission is to provide initial research funding to brilliant, investigative scientists with new ideas to cure arthritis and related autoimmune diseases.

About the Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease Research Grant:

The ANRF is pleased to announce the release of the 2027 Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease Research Grant Application. This grant aims to provide financial support to **early career researchers studying arthritis and/or related autoimmune disease**, **who are within a few years of their transition to independence.**

Grants will be **funded for 2 years and awarded up to a total of $250,000.** We invite researchers and innovators from diverse fields to submit their grant applications for this funding opportunity.

Key Dates:

October 1st, 2026	Application opens through ProposalCentral
January 8th, 2027	Deadline to submit application (11:59 PM, PT)
January-April	Grant review period
May 14th, 2027	Outcome notifications sent to all applicants
July 1st, 2027	Research term begins
June 30th, 2029	Research term concludes

Important Notes:

Labs are limited to submitting only one application per annual cycle.

An applicant can be awarded this grant only once.

This is a career development award. Applicants should expect to participate in an active cohort with the Arthritis National Research Foundation designed to help researchers meet their career goals.

ANRF will consider applications researching basic or clinical studies. Clinical studies should have a translational component that helps reveal the underlying mechanisms or response to therapy.

Applicants may not have, or ever had, an NIH R01 grant or equivalent.

Applicants must be affiliated with, and complete all grant-funded research, at a qualified U.S. nonprofit research institution. Applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens.

Purpose and Scope

Background:

Arthritis and related autoimmune diseases affect over 21% of adults in the United States. This group of diseases are incredibly complex and require innovative research to better understand their underlying mechanisms. There is a pressing need for more talented investigators to join the fields of rheumatology and immunology to tackle these challenges. Therefore, ANRF has spent the last 50+ years dedicating grant funding to early career researchers looking to make impacts towards cures of these disease states.

Goal:

ANRF is committed to nurturing the next generation of leaders in arthritis and autoimmune disease research. We are pleased to provide the opportunity to support early career researchers in their pursuit of innovative and impactful research projects. Our goal is to support exceptional researchers at the key point in their career as they transition to independence to allow them the resources to make significant advances in research of arthritis and related autoimmune disease.

Scope:

This call is for all types of applications relating to arthritis and related autoimmune disease research, including but not limited to osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis, lupus, gout, spondylarthritis, pediatric rheumatology, scleroderma, fibromyalgia, Sjogren's disease, and uveitis (shown in relationship to autoimmune forms of arthritis). If you are studying psoriatic arthritis or an underlying mechanism that may affect psoriatic arthritis, please review the Psoriatic Arthritis Grant Application at https://curearthritis.org/research-grants/.

Candidates:

Candidates for Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease awards are qualified, promising investigators with a clear upward trajectory, ideally just before or within a few years after transition to independence to their own research groups; seeking to make significant contributions in the field of arthritis and related autoimmune disease research. Reviewers for this application may look for one or more of the following attributes to determine if the applicant is in the right stage of their career for this award:

- Has at least 1 first or corresponding author manuscript in a related field.
- Shows an interest in a long-term career in arthritis and/or related autoimmune disease research.
- The preliminary data is generated by the applicant and supports an independent line of investigation.
- Shows evidence of establishing an independent research direction separate from their mentor/PI.
- Has prior or planned submission of larger grants and career development awards but is not yet a PI on an R01 or otherwise received $300,000 in external grant funding.

How to Apply

All ANRF grant applications must be submitted online by **January 8, 2027, at 11:59PM, Pacific Time** through the ProposalCentral website at www.proposalcentral.com. Detailed information, instructions, and the opportunity to register as a user can also be accessed through this link. If you have any difficulties, please see the ProposalCentral FAQ page or contact Altum customer support by calling 800-875-2562 or emailing pcsupport@altum.com.

In order to submit a complete application, applicants must enter information directly into the online platform and upload a number of documents. Details about required information and the materials to be uploaded are listed below. Follow all instructions and prompts. All required forms are preloaded and will be available to you upon beginning your ANRF application in ProposalCentral.

Research Plan:

The scientific content (body) of the proposal may not exceed 6 pages and must contain:

- **Specific Aims** – specific goals of the research project including relevance to arthritis/autoimmune disease (one page recommended).
- **Research Strategy** – briefly discuss how your project is significant, feasible, and innovative.
- **Experimental Design** – how the hypothesis will be tested. Include relevant methods, statistical analyses, all figures and tables.
- **Project Timeline**.

Important note: All margins in this document may not be less than 1 inch. Font size not less than 11-point Arial. No less than standard single-spaced lines. *Applications violating this guideline may not be selected for review.*

Supporting Information:

Additional items which MUST be included in the proposal. This information is separate from the 6-page scientific content limit and is not required to follow the formatting requirements of the research plan.

Page 8:

- **Career Development Plan** – discuss your future plans in 350 words or less. Include brief history of your (applicant's) association with the research institution, background leading to development of this project, etc.
- **Project Ownership Plan** – in 350 words or less, discuss how the mentor and the applicant agree upon the ownership for the project and resources generated therein. Describe what part of the proposed project belongs to the applicant, and whether the applicant has overall responsibility for, and ownership of, this portion of the project. Describe what portions (materials, resources, tools, etc.) of the project the applicant will take to an independent research position and use to pursue additional grant funding.
- **Related Funding** – please share if your mentor, or another senior investigator in your laboratory, has submitted, received, or plans to submit funding for research that is related to

the work proposed in this application. If they have, discuss the funding source, relation to the PI, application status, in a brief description of how the projects are related.

If there are changes to the information provided during the review process, please email grants@curearthritis.org to keep ANRF informed.

Because ANRF funds are intended to support those seeking to move on to independent research careers, it is essential that any overlap with the mentor's funding is clearly delineated in the Project Ownership Plan particularly with regard to how ANRF funds will enhance opportunities for independence.

Page 9:

- **Lay Abstract** – provide a summary for the general audience in 250 words or less. Best practice is to keep this information at or below the 7th grade reading level.
- **Scientific Abstract** –provide a technical summary in 250 words or less.

Pages 10 & 11:

- **Budget and Justification** – list all expenses (salaries, supplies, equipment, and travel) to be paid through grant funding. Justify expenses as needed. Please refer to the funding policies section of this document for a complete list of allowable expenses.

Page 12:

- **Current and Pending Support** – list of all grant support you receive, have applied to receive, or intend to apply to during the application review period. Please do not include support for which you are not the PI or Co-PI, institutional support, or support from your mentor in this section; doing so may disqualify your application.

Page 14:

- **Biographical Sketch** – use the five-page NIH Bio Sketch format. Uploads may not exceed 5 pages.
- **Letter(s) of Support** – from your institution and/or mentor indicating their knowledge of and support of your proposed project.
- **References** – complete reference with title of article.

Additional Resources:

- Documents available on curearthritis.org:
  - ANRF Grant Application Scoring Criteria
  - ANRF Grant Writing Guide
  - ANRF Grant Toolkit
- Questions:
  - In-Person: Meet the Funders at ACR Convergence; November 6-11, in Orlando, FL
  - Virtual Office Hours: December 4th
  - Email: grants@curearthritis.org
- Watch: 2023 Interview with SAB Member, Dr. Michelle Kahlenberg
- Listen: ANRF's In the Rheum Podcast on Spotify
- Website: http://www.curearthritis.org/research-grants/
- Submit: ProposalCentral

Grant Policies

How to Apply:

Applicants must apply through ProposalCentral to be considered. Applicants must set up an account in Proposal Central to be able to access the application. Any required templates are provided within the ProposalCentral Application.

Applications:

1. The Scientific Advisory Board and Board of Directors review grant proposals annually.
2. Clinical and basic/foundational studies will be considered. Clinical studies should have a translational component that helps reveal the underlying mechanisms or response to therapy.
3. One (1) application may be submitted per lab annually. It is highly encouraged that interested applicants discuss the desire to apply with their lab and PI. If multiple applicants from the same lab submit an application, only the first application submitted will be reviewed.
4. Investigators must possess either an MD and/or PhD degree or equivalent. Please reach out to grants@curearthritis.org to determine if your degree would be considered an equivalent.
5. Applicants must be affiliated with, and complete all grant-funded research, at a qualified U.S. nonprofit research institution.
6. Applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens.
7. Preference will be given to senior postdoctoral investigators transitioning to independent investigator status and new assistant professors.
8. Applications that list a Co-PI will not be accepted.
9. Applicants may not have, or ever had, an NIH R01 grant or equivalent.
10. Applicants may not receive more than $300,000 of funding per year at the time of award from other sources. Any other support must be for a research project that differs significantly in aims, methodology and scope.
11. Applicants may not apply for funding if they have already received an Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease (formerly the All Arthritis Grant) or Psoriatic Arthritis Grant from ANRF.
12. The ANRF funds 6-12 grants each year based on funding availability and number of acceptable applications.
13. An additional administrative review may be rendered to determine priority for funding when multiple proposals are received from a single division or department.

Funding:

1. The Arthritis and Related Autoimmune Disease grant is awarded for up to two years, for up to $250,000 ($125,000 max per year).
2. Partial funding may be awarded if the grantee has documentation that the remainder of the funding for proposed research has been acquired.
3. Salaries, supplies and equipment directly related to the proposed study may be included in funding.
4. Salaries funded may not exceed the NIH salary cap.
5. No more than 50% of the applicant's salary may be funded through the grant.

6. Awardees must commit a minimum of 50% protected research time to total research activities.
7. Post-doctoral researchers and graduate students "to be named" will not be funded.
8. Senior personnel (considered Associate Professor level or above) and mentors will not be funded.
9. Overhead or indirect costs will not be funded.
10. ANRF pays awards in four (4) installments per year.
11. Justified travel to scientific meetings directly related to the proposed studies is an allowed expense.
12. Expenditures for each individual line item on the approved budget shall not vary by more than 10% and any variance within that percentage shall not materially change the scope and focus of the project. Any anticipated change of greater than 10% requires written consent of ANRF.
13. Any funding remaining at the end of the grant term must be immediately returned to ANRF. Contact ANRF at grants@curearthritis.org prior to returning any funds.

Working with Human and Animal Models:

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the use of human subjects or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval for the use of animal subjects can be pending at time of submission but must be approved prior to funding.

Researchers are expected to follow their institution's policies when working with live subjects.

Cohort Commitments:

ANRF is committed to ensuring the success of our cohorts. Therefore, we offer several opportunities to learn more about topics relevant to navigating a successful career. When accepting the grant funding, the grantee agrees to make every attempt to attend the following events:

- Quarterly cohort meetings – 1-hour meetings held virtually in July, October, January, and April
- Annual Symposium – held in-person on a Saturday in March (travel and accommodations through ANRF)

Please note: ANRF provides a stipend to attend the annual symposium during funded years, any allowable costs that exceed the stipend may be reimbursed through the research grant.

Additionally, ANRF welcomes all current and former grantees into our alumni program, the Scholars Society. This community is designed to provide opportunities to continue networking and collaboration with other ANRF alums. All grantees are automatically enrolled into the Scholars Society upon completion of the grant agreement and remain in the program in perpetuity, at no cost.

Reporting:

Grantees must complete 2 Midterm Progress Reports through their 2-year funding period; at 6 months and 15 months. In this report, grantees must document progress made towards their aims and any changes made to the initial proposal.

Within 8 weeks of the final award term ending, the grantee's submission of the following items is required:

- 1–2-page final project report
- Financial accounting report
- A copy of any publications currently in progress – accepted or in publication
- A list of any public presentations of ANRF-funded work, not limited to lectures, symposium presentations, posters, etc. Include name, location, date, and number of attendees for each event where applicable.

In order to document the foundation's effectiveness in funding research, ANRF will continue to follow up with grantees 2 and 5 years after the conclusion of funding. At those times, grantees will be asked to submit progress reports on any additional research conducted from the original ANRF grant and share their career journey.

Acknowledgement:

Any publication or presentation resulting in-whole or in-part from this research funding shall give credit to the ANRF and the grantee will provide an electronic copy of the publication to ANRF.

ANRF requests all publications and presentations produced as a result of funding are shared in perpetuity. Presentations and publications can be shared through the research announcement form linked here or by emailing grants@curearthrtis.org.

No-Cost Time Extensions:

No-cost extensions (NCE) may be approved for grant awards at the discretion of ANRF but should not exceed 9 months. NCE requests from current grant recipients must be submitted on official letterhead via email to grants@curearthritis.org.

Transfer of Grant Awards:

If an investigator changes institutions during the grant award period, ANRF requires the following:

- A letter from the new institution—preferably the head of the department—stating the investigator will be working on the same project, have the laboratory facilities needed and time available to work on the project. The letter should indicate the start date of the investigator in the new environment, investigator's contact information, address, e-mail and phone for disbursement of the remaining Arthritis National Research Foundation grant funds. The letter must be co-signed by the responsible business/grants management official of the new institution.
- An updated budget from the new institution showing how the remaining funds will be spent.
- The original institution is responsible for sending unused funds (prorated depending on the date) to the Arthritis National Research Foundation. A new check will then be forwarded (in the amount of the unused funds) to the new institution.

Support of a Safe Workplace:

ANRF is committed to safe work environments free from discrimination and harassment and expects the grantee institution to maintain a safe, nondiscriminatory, and harassment-free work environment at all times. If you feel you are working in an unsafe environment, please contact grants@curearthritis.org for resources.

Applications not in strict compliance with stated policies and guidelines will be subject to administrative inactivation.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Application:

Q I am moving to a new institution during the time my application will be in review. Which institution should I apply through?

A We would recommend using your current institution to apply and using space in the Project Ownership Plan to discuss the transition to the new institution.

Q The application mentions mentorship in several places. If I do not work under a mentor, am I still eligible to apply?

A Yes, you are still eligible. We have applicants apply from across the spectrum of their transition to independence, and if they are completing work in their mentor's lab, we want to know how they will own the project.

Q My research plan has some tables that are not in 11-point Arial font, may I submit them in their current format?

A Yes, tables can be submitted in a slightly smaller font. All data in the table must be legible to the reviewers.

Q I am applying for this year's grant cycle with a similar but modified proposal from my application last year. Would that be considered a resubmission or a general submission?

A No matter the content of the previous proposal, we suggest submitting the application as a resubmission. This allows our reviewers to see the changes made from previous applications based on the feedback provided.

Q Is there a limit to how many times I may resubmit my proposal?

A No, ANRF does not have a limit, however, please be mindful of ANRF's focus on early career researchers. If you no longer qualify for the grant by ANRF's definition of an early career researcher, you may no longer apply.

Eligibility:

Q Is the grant limited to researchers based in the United States?

A Yes, all researchers must be affiliated with a US institution but are not required to be U.S. citizens.

Q I am here on a visa and do not have a green card. Does that disqualify me?

A No, ANRF does not take citizenship into account when reviewing and awarding grant mechanisms.

Q Would I still be eligible to apply for the grant without a faculty position?

A Yes.

Q I am considered a mid-career investigator based on my age, but I've never had an R01. Am I eligible for this award?

A Yes, we at ANRF are very understanding that not everyone has a direct career path. Therefore, we do not consider age when reviewing grant applications.

Q Will associate level professors looking for funding qualify?

A ANRF focuses on supporting researchers who are within the first few years of their transition to independence. While we primarily prioritize Assistant Professors and below, we recognize that career paths vary. Associate Professors who have recently established their own independent labs are eligible to apply but are encouraged to provide additional context to their career journey in their biosketch.

Q I'm a full professor but otherwise meet the funding qualifications of the grant. Am I eligible to apply?

A We invite everyone to apply, but, because we aim to provide funding to researchers beginning the transition to independence, rarely fund applications from applicants above the assistant professor level.

Q Should I be concerned that I have previously received NIH grant funding?

A Not necessarily, ANRF policies state that applicants may not ever have had an NIH R01 grant or equivalent. However, if previous NIH funding is not an R01 grant or equivalent, and total funding is not currently above $300,000 per year, you may be eligible.

Q **I have received an NIH Career Development (K) award, does that prevent me from applying for this grant?**

A **No, ANRF does not consider an NIH Career Development (K) award to be an R01 grant equivalent.**

Q I have received an R00 award, does that prevent me from applying for this grant?

A No, the R00 is a continuation of the K99, which ANRF does not consider to be an R01 equivalent.

Q If the ANRF grant will push my funding above $300,000 per year, would I be ineligible for funding?

A No, ANRF funding would not count towards the $300,000 per year cap on grant funding.

Q Can I apply to this ANRF grant if someone in my lab is applying to a different ANRF grant mechanism?

A Yes, ANRF lab restriction policies are limited to each grant mechanism.

Key Personnel:

Q **Who would be considered key personnel?**

A **For the purposes of this grant, key personnel are generally limited to collaborators receiving salary support through the grant.**

Q Are applicants required to list their mentors as key personnel?

A Only if they are receiving salary support. Please be aware, ANRF does not fund senior personnel. Please see the ANRF Grant Policies for more information on allowable budget items.

Q Are applicants required to list postdocs or technicians as key personnel?

A No. Postdocs and technicians are not considered key personnel.

Budget:

Q **Would this grant cover the PI salary?**

A **ANRF grants do not cover the cost of senior level researchers. If the PI meets the criteria dictated in the grant policies, they would be considered for salary funding.**

Q Is there a minimum required salary disbursement through this grant?

A No, there is no minimum salary requirement.

Q Are the salaries, supplies, equipment, and travel directly related to the proposed work the only allowable costs available to request?

A Generally, yes. However, please reach out to grants@curearthritis.org with specific questions.

Q Are publication costs used to disseminate results an allowable expense?

A Yes.

Q Are microcopy analysis costs related to the project an allowable expense?

A Yes.

Q Are computing, data and data storage costs allowable costs?

A Yes.

Q Are stipends for a specific graduate student (NOT a to be named student) an allowable expense?

A Yes, stipends for a specific graduate student are an allowable expense.

Q Is tuition for a PhD student allowed to be funded through the grant?

A No, tuition may not be funded through the grant at this time.

Q **The documents say that a postdoc or graduate student "to be determined" is not allowable. Is a technician or biostatistician TBD allowable?**

A **Yes, a technician or biostatistician to be named is an allowable cost.**

Q Can funding be used to travel to conferences?

A Justified travel to scientific meetings directly related to the proposed studies is allowable.

Q Should the support from ANRF cover all research related expenses or do I just need to mention the ones I am seeking support for?

A The budget only needs to show costs directly relating to the support you are requesting. You may add details noting what is supported through other funding mechanisms to the textbox on the budget justification page if you would like to explain further.

Q What is a person-month and how do I calculate it?

A A person month is a metric for expressing the amount of time personnel devote to a project. Information for calculating person months can be found here: https://grants.nih.gov/news-events/nih-extramural-nexus-news/2026/06/what-is-a-person-month-how-do-i-calculate-it

Support:

Q Would pending support be limited to anything I have been awarded and expect to receive, or would it include applications that are currently in review?

A Pending support would include applications you intend to submit, are currently in review, and anything awarded and expecting to receive.

Q Do I need to submit the documentation of support for other people who support me in this grant?

A ANRF does not need to know about monetary support from mentors; only how much money in grant funding the applicant has currently and is pending.

IRB/IACUC Approvals:

Q Would it be acceptable if the IRB or IACUC application was submitted as “to be submitted” instead of “pending”?

A Yes, as long as approval for IRB is submitted by the time the grant agreement is signed it would be acceptable for the IRB to be listed as ‘to be submitted’.

Bio Sketch:

Q I faced a personal hardship that prevented me from getting all of the relevant information needed to build a thorough proposal but feel as though I have a well thought out research project. Where can I provide this information to justify my application?

A We are very understanding that not everyone has a direct path to their research career and some people may need additional time or resources to build their proposal. Please include any relevant information about your journey in the “Personal Statement” section of your bio sketch.

Q **Does my bio sketch need to meet the formatting requirements of the research plan?**

A **No, the bio sketch can remain in the NIH template and does not need to be formatted to 1” margins.**

Q Is a bio sketch required for an applicant's mentor?

A No, not unless they are a collaborator.

Q I am a permanent US resident with a green card, where should I clarify this?

A Please add this information to your bio sketch.

Q Should I submit bio sketches for post docs or technicians?

A Generally no, bio sketches are only required for key personnel.

Q If I am including a biostatistician "to be named", do I need to include the bio sketch for this person?

A A bio sketch would not be required for this person.

Other Policy Clarifications:

Q **Do ANRF awards have terms and conditions related to Intellectual Property?**

A **No, ANRF does not seek a percentage of IP earnings.**

Q Can you provide more information on protected research time, how should I calculate my time if I have a 9-month appointment?

A The purpose behind the 50% 'protected research time' policy is to ensure applicants with other responsibilities (such as practicing MDs) are able to devote a reasonable amount of time to research with the funding provided by the grant. We are looking to see that the applicant spends at least half of their work time on research in general – not just ANRF research.

Questions

We are happy to help! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments. Contact grants@curearthritis.org or call 1-800-588-2873 x103.

The Arthritis National Research Foundation is committed to discovery and innovation in the search for effective therapies and lasting cures for arthritis and related autoimmune diseases.