VASCULITIS FOUNDATION®

Early Diagnosis · Better Treatment · Improving Lives

Vasculitis Foundation Young Investigator Award

Request for Applications (RFA)

Purpose

The **Vasculitis Foundation (VF) Young Investigator Award** supports innovative pilot projects from early-career investigators that will improve the understanding, diagnosis, and management of vasculitis. The program is intended to provide seed funding to generate preliminary data and support career development in vasculitis research.

Projects may focus on, but are not limited to:

- **Etiology/Pathogenesis** – studies of immunity, inflammation, or vascular biology (with clear relevance to human vasculitis).
- **Epidemiology** – including genetics and population-level analyses.
- **Diagnosis** – including identification of disease subtypes, imaging, or biomarkers.
- **Treatment/Management** – including therapeutics, prevention of complications, biomarker development, and psychosocial outcomes.

The ultimate goals are to **improve the quality of life for patients with vasculitis and to advance toward discovering the causes and cures of vasculitis.**

Award Amount and Duration

- **Maximum $25,000 per year**, up to **$50,000 over 2 years**.
- Up to **50% of the yearly budget** may be used for PI salary support.

Funds may be used for salary, research supplies, travel, and other direct costs. No indirect costs are allowed.

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Eligibility

- Applicants must meet the NIH definition of an **Early Stage Investigator (ESI):** within 10 years of terminal research degree or completion of clinical training, whichever is later, and **no prior R01 or R01-equivalent independent funding.**
- Applicants may submit only **one application per cycle**.
- Only **one grant per year** will be awarded to any institution or its major branches.
- Applicants currently holding active VF funding (including fellowships) are **not eligible**; final reports must be submitted and approved before reapplying.
- A **mentor** is required; both PI and mentor must submit NIH-style biosketches.

Application Components

1. Project Abstract Information

Applicants must submit the following:

- **Project Title**: Specific, detailed, ≤200 characters (including spaces).
- **Abstract** (≤2,000 characters): Succinctly describe the hypothesis, aims, and expected results.
- **Relevance to VF Mission** (≤1,000 characters): Explain how the project improves the health and quality of life for people with vasculitis.

2. Research Proposal (maximum 5 pages, excluding references)

- **Specific Aims and Objectives**
- **Significance and Innovation**
- **Preliminary Data** (if available)
- **Research Design and Methods** – statistical approach, feasibility, pitfalls, alternatives

- **Investigator Roles and Training Environment**

- **References** (not included in page limit)

3. Applicant Statement (maximum 1 page)

Must include:
a. Applicant's long-term career goals and background.

b. Rationale for mentor selection and how the mentor adds value to the project and applicant.

c. Specific details on applicant's role and percent effort/time dedicated to the project.

d. Explanation of how the project will enhance applicant's research skills in vasculitis/rheumatology.

e. Description of how project results could support future funding applications and lead to a publication-quality manuscript.

4. PI NIH Biosketch (≤5 pages) – include current/pending support.

5. Mentor NIH Biosketch (≤5 pages).

6. Mentor Letter of Support – outlining mentorship plan, resources, frequency of meetings, and commitment.

7. Budget and Justification – itemized by year; up to 50% for PI salary.

8. Institutional Letter of Support – confirming commitment of resources and protected time.

Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on:

- **Significance:** Importance of the research question; potential to advance knowledge or care in vasculitis.

- **Preliminary Evidence:** Strength of data supporting feasibility (from PI or literature).

- **Design and Methods:** Rigor, appropriateness, and feasibility; contingency planning.

- **Investigator(s):** Training, experience, and commitment to vasculitis research.
- **Mentorship and Environment:** Strength of mentor(s), institutional resources, and environment.
- **Budget:** Appropriateness and adherence to guidelines.
- **Human Subjects/Animal Use:** IRB/IACUC approval required prior to release of funds.

Restrictions

- No more than one VF grant may be held by an investigator at a time.
- Research must comply with institutional, IRB, and animal welfare regulations.
- Awards are limited to **direct costs only**.

Timeline

- **Application Deadline:** January 31, 2027
- **Peer Review:** February – March 2027
- **Notification of Award:** May 2027
- **Award Term:** 2 years, beginning July 1, 2027

Contact

Questions about eligibility or applications should be directed to:

Vasculitis Foundation Research Program
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