



Request for Applications 2026 EMPOWERING LUPUS RESEARCH ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLEMENT up to \$30,000 over 2 years

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BACKGROUND

The Lupus Research Alliance (LRA) is the largest private funder of lupus research worldwide. The organization aims to transform lupus treatment while advancing towards a cure by funding cutting-edge, innovative, and translationally relevant research and fostering scientific talent. Addressing the challenges of lupus requires a talented and tenacious workforce capable of decoding the inherent complexity of the disease and devising innovative medicines. The LRA has therefore developed the Empowering Lupus Research (ELR) Program to expand the pool of lupus research professionals.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The LRA Empowering Lupus Research Administrative Supplement (“ELR Supplement”) provides up to \$30,000 for up to two years to promising trainees from varied backgrounds who reflect the communities and populations of people living with lupus and who are working with LRA-funded researchers or investigators focused on autoimmunity supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Defense (DOD), or equivalent grants in good standing.

The intent of this award is to broaden representation of professionals, choosing lupus research as a career path to better reflect the unique populations and communities in which they serve.

ELIGIBILITY

The **applicant** must be a **principal investigator (PI)** who has an active LRA grant or currently holds an NIH, DOD, or equivalent grant in good standing that addresses major challenges in lupus research, including genetic causes of lupus and disease mechanisms, novel targets and pathways, or novel treatment approaches and technologies. There must be at least one year of grant funding remaining at the time of application to be eligible to apply. The LRA does not impose geographic restrictions or citizenship requirements for this award. Researchers working outside of the United States are encouraged to apply.

An eligible **trainee** is defined as a person who is either 1) currently enrolled in a science-focused bachelor's, master's, or other advanced degree program at an accredited institution or 2) within three years of having completed a bachelor's, master's, or other advanced degree (PhD, MD). Prior research experience is not required, but the trainee should have an interest in lupus.

No more than two ELR Administrative Supplements can be awarded for each Parent Grant.

AWARD AMOUNT AND PERIOD OF SUPPORT

Eligible PIs can request a maximum of \$30,000 (up to \$15,000 for pre-doctoral trainees or up to \$30,000 for post-doctoral trainees) over one or two years, as long as the parent grant is active.

KEY DATES

RFA Release:	April 20, 2026
Applications Due:	June 15, 2026
Application Decision:	September 2026
Earliest Start Date:	December 2026

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications must be submitted via the [LRA Grants Management System](#) by **11:59pm US ET on the stated deadline**. Applications will not be accepted via any other means.

All templates and instructions, including this Request for Applications and the Research Plan Template, can be downloaded from within the submission form. **Please note that when a template is provided, it must be used.**

The following information is required to submit a complete application:

Applicant


Note: The applicant is the PI, not the trainee.

- The Institution Information and Contact Information will be preloaded with information from the organization profile and applicant profile, respectively.
- For Role, select "Applicant/PI" from the dropdown menu.
- Indicate whether the applicant is currently funded by the LRA and, if so, provide the project title and grant program.

- If the applicant does not have an active LRA grant, please provide the grant title, the funding agency, the grant number, and the funding period for the parent grant.
- For Gender and Race and/or Ethnicity, select all that apply. This information is not required and will not be used in any way during the selection process. LRA collects this data for administrative purposes only.
- Select from the dropdown menu how the applicant heard about this opportunity.
- Upload, as a PDF, a standard NIH Biosketch for the applicant. Applicants who are not based in the United States may submit a copy of their curriculum vitae, which must be limited to five pages in length.
- Upload, as a PDF, an Other Support Page for the applicant. This should detail all other financial support (current as of the date of the submission) available to the applicant for their research endeavors.

Give Other Users Access to Proposal

To provide other users institutional administrators with access to the application form:

1. Click the Collaborators icon .
2. Enter the required information.
3. Clicking on the plus sign (+) button will add additional rows.
4. Click the Save button at any time to save your work.
5. Click the Invite button, then the Yes button to confirm. An email with the subject line “Invitation to Collaborate on LRA Grant Proposal” will be sent inviting them to work on the grant proposal. They will be asked to click a link to accept or decline the invitation. Users who accept but are not yet registered in the system will need to do so.

***Note:** A user added as a financial administrator, research/grants administrator or signing official will be able to edit the application form but will not be able to submit it. Only the applicant and any users added as institutional administrators will be able to both edit and submit the application form. Only one user can edit the application form at a time.*

Information for the referee who will provide a **Letter of Reference** for the trainee must also be entered in this section. Follow the steps described above. The referee will receive an email with the subject line “LRA Letter of Reference Requested.”

One letter of reference is required. The letter should describe the scientific abilities and potential of the trainee. This letter is confidential and will not be released to the PI or the trainee. The letter of reference is uploaded directly by the referee to the LRA Grants Management System. **Please be aware that an application cannot be submitted without the letter of reference.**

Trainee

Enter the requested information for the trainee and upload a standard NIH Biosketch for the trainee.

1. To add the trainee, click the plus sign (+) button.
2. Select Trainee from the Role dropdown menu. Enter the requested information.
3. Click the Save Draft button.

4. Upload, as a PDF, a standard NIH Biosketch for the trainee.
5. Click the Submit button, then the Yes button, to submit the record.

Please provide the trainee's gender and race and/or ethnicity. Select all that apply. This information is not required and will not be used in any way during the selection process. LRA collects this data for administrative purposes only.

Project Information

- Enter the title of the proposed project.
- Indicate whether the application is a resubmission and, if so, provide the title of the prior application.
- Parent Grant Abstract: LRA-funded PIs should provide a 250-word summary that includes the specific aims of the funded parent grant. PIs holding an NIH, DOD, or equivalent grant should provide a 1,000-word synopsis detailing grant aims, significance, innovation, approach, and how the results of the parent grant research are expected to impact the lupus patient community.
- Keywords: Select all that apply.

Attachments

Upload the **Research Plan**, **Career Development Plan**, and **Statement of Career Goals** as PDFs.

Research Plan: The Research Plan template provided on the LRA Grants Management System must be used. Margins must not be less than .5 inches on each side and 12-point Times New Roman or the equivalent should be used for the text. **The Research Plan, excluding the Resubmission Statement and References, should not exceed one page.**

In the Research Plan, the applicant/PI should describe the trainee's proposed research plan, including ***significance***, ***innovation***, and ***approach***. The proposed research must be within the scope of the parent grant, appropriate for the trainee's career stage and level of experience, and feasible to complete within the timeframe of the grant, should it be awarded. The research plan should detail how the proposed research activities will contribute to the parent grant research project. The research plan must also include an ***impact statement*** about the potential of the proposed research to improve the standard of care or quality of life of people with lupus.

Revised applications are required to include a resubmission statement, not to exceed a half page. The statement should highlight any major changes and explain how the application has been modified to address the concerns of the original review notification.

- A resubmission is an application that was not funded in one of the previous application cycles.
- An applicant who is unsuccessful may revise their original application only once.
- If substantial changes are made to the original application, the application should not be submitted as a resubmission.

Career Development Plan: The applicant/PI should provide a detailed description of the specific goals, activities, resources (i.e., applying for grants, internships, fellowships, etc.) and associated timelines that will be used to assist the trainee in advancing toward career goals expressed in the trainee's Statement of Career Goals. Metrics to evaluate progress towards stated objectives should also be outlined. Provide information about the frequency and nature (i.e., topics to be discussed, preparation for scientific meetings, etc.) of the trainee's interaction with the applicant/PI and other supervisory personnel (if the trainee will be mentored by individuals other than the applicant/PI). Proposed methods for handling unique challenges and difficulties that the trainee may face should be included. The plan should also detail the applicant/PI's previous mentoring experience and trainee outcomes (i.e., current status of trainees) that would inform how the trainee will be mentored. The Career Development Plan should not exceed one page.

Statement of Career Goals: The trainee should describe their current and long-term research and career objectives. In addition, the trainee should include a short personal statement outlining how their application meets the aims of the Empowering Lupus Research as defined in the background and program description sections above. The Statement of Career Goals should not exceed one page.

Budget

Click the Edit Budget button and enter the budget details. Please keep the following in mind:

- The ELR Supplement will be supported for up to US\$15,000 for pre-doctoral trainees or up to US\$30,000 for post-doctoral trainees over one or two years.
- Funds may be used for the salary and fringe benefits of the trainee and appropriate research costs.
- Funds may not be used for tuition, personal computers, or major laboratory equipment.
- The LRA follows the NIH salary limitation guidelines for post-doctoral fellows and graduate students.
- Trainees are expected to attend LRA's annual scientific meeting, Forum for Discovery. Up to US\$2,000 per year should be budgeted to pay for travel expenses related to attending Forum for Discovery, LRA's annual scientific conference.
- Up to US\$2,000 per year can be used to pay for dependent care costs associated with the completion of the project, travel to relevant research meetings, or project-related training and workshops.
- Indirect costs are not allowed.

Budget Justification: Provide a detailed budget justification (500 words maximum). The justification should outline the proposed expenses and their relevance to the trainee's mentored research experience

Electronic Signatures

When the applicant is ready to submit the application:

1. Click on the checkbox next to, “By signing, the applicant certifies that the information contained in the application is true, complete, and accurate to the best of their knowledge.”
2. Enter the applicant’s name in the Applicant Signature Box.
3. Click on the Applicant Signature Date box and click the Now button. This will automatically insert the current date and time.
4. The institution’s signing official must also sign, following the procedure outlined in steps 2 and 3 above.
5. Click the Submit button to submit the application, then the Yes button to confirm.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

1. PI’s commitment to mentoring and research training.
2. Feasibility and quality of research plan for trainee and alignment with goals of parent grant.
3. Evidence that the proposed experience will expand and foster the research capabilities, knowledge, and skills of the trainee and that a robust mentoring plan is in place.
4. Level of trainee’s interest and commitment to a career in biomedical/lupus research.
5. Trainee’s qualifications, including record of academic achievement, prior research experience, and assessment by the referee.

LRA MENTORSHIP RESOURCES

Mentors and peer support play a critical role in the development of scientists. The LRA offers a mentoring program for all ELR recipients to provide them with crucial mentoring resources and the support of other members of the program. ELR recipients will meet at least once per year during the LRA annual scientific meeting, Forum for Discovery, to discuss questions or issues related to publications, grant applications, collaborations, etc.

INQUIRIES

Scientific:

Mara Lennard Richard, PhD
Scientific Program Officer
Lupus Research Alliance
mrichard@lupusresearch.org

Administrative:

Erin McLaughlin
Manager, Grant Programs
Lupus Research Alliance
emclaughlin@lupusresearch.org

LRA Grants Management System:

For assistance with the electronic grant application process, please contact the LRA at grants@lupusresearch.org.