Request for Proposals

Resident Fellow Awards

Background
The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) launched the Resident/Fellow Research Grant Program in 2024 to support early-career physician-scientists pursuing melanoma research. As of 2026, the MRF has awarded a total of 22 Resident/Fellow Grants totaling $220,000 in funding.

Purpose
This program supports ***resident- or fellow-led*** research projects that advance understanding of melanoma prevention, early detection, biology, and treatment. The proposed research must not just be an extension of the mentor's funded research. For the 2027 cycle, the MRF will accept applications for the following types of Awards:

1) **General Resident/Fellow Awards:** Projects focusing on the prevention, early detection, biology or treatment of melanoma in either cutaneous or any rare subtype (mucosal, acral, ocular, and pediatric melanoma). Projects may span basic, translational, clinical, or behavioral research. Approximately 8-11 grants will be awarded in this category, subject to the results of application review and funding availability.
2) **Resident/Fellow Award Addressing Women's Health**: Projects that focus on melanoma while addressing a health area that affects women uniquely, disproportionately, or differently from men; this includes research addressing questions unique to maternal health. Such research should relate anticipated findings to improvements in women's health outcomes and/or advancing knowledge for women's health. All other eligibility requirements and guidelines are the same as the regular Resident/Fellow Awards. A maximum of one grant will be awarded in this category, subject to the results of application review and funding availability.

For questions, contact: **research@melanoma.org**

Award Information

- **Award Amount:** $10,000
- **Anticipated Award Period:** April 30, 2027 – April 29, 2028
- **Extensions:** One-year no-cost extension may be requested and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Allowable Costs:** Direct research costs, salary support for the PI or other personnel (except for mentor)
- **Unallowable Costs:** Indirect costs, travel, consultants, mentor salary, or contractors

Key Dates

- **Application Deadline:** January 14, 2027 at 11:59 PM ET
- **Notification of Awards:** On or before March 1, 2027
- **Deadline for Recipients and Institutions to Sign Award Agreements:** March 31, 2027
- **Funds Disbursed:** On or before April 30, 2027

Eligibility
Applicants must:

- Hold an MD or MD/PhD (or equivalent) at submission
- Be a US-based resident (dermatology, pathology, radiation oncology) **or** a fellow in a 2-year (or longer) clinical fellowship (medical or surgical oncology)
    - US citizenship is **not** required
- Conduct the project at their home institution
- Have at least one MD or PhD research mentor engaged in melanoma research
- Prior MRF Medical Student Research Grant recipients are eligible to apply

Review Criteria
Applications are evaluated based on:

- **Applicant:** Academic achievement, leadership potential, research background, commitment to a career in melanoma research
- **Project:** Scientific merit, clarity, methodology, achievability
- **Mentor:** Research expertise related to the proposed technique(s), external funding support, research environment, mentorship commitment

Each application is reviewed by at least two independent melanoma experts. Final funding decisions are made by the MRF Board of Directors.

Award Administration and Reporting
Upon acceptance of an award, the selected recipient PI and Institution will be required to sign an award agreement accepting the MRF's terms and conditions. Recipients must return the signed agreement by March 31, 2027. Assuming the agreement and supporting documents are submitted on time, funds will be disbursed by April 30, 2027.

If the PI needs more time beyond the base award period to complete the proposed research, the MRF may consider a no-cost extension request. The award agreement will include the requirements for no-cost extension requests. Such requests generally must be well justified, made before the base award period ends, and are subject to MRF approval.

Final financial and scientific reports, detailing all activities during the award period, are to be submitted to the MRF within 60 days of the end of the award period.

Acknowledgment of support from the MRF must accompany any published report using data or findings from research conducted under this award and use the MRF's approved logo. Any intellectual property identified pursuant to this work remains solely within the institution.

STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:
All submissions, notifications, and critiques will be completed through ProposalCENTRAL (https://proposalcentral.altum.com/).

Please read the instructions carefully prior to beginning the online grant submission process.

Step 1: Title Page
The project title should not exceed 75 characters (including spaces).

Enable Other Users to Access This Proposal: You have the option to allow other individuals access to your application. You can choose from three different levels of permission.

Step 2: Applicant/PI
Profile information is pre-loaded in this section. You may update your profile information here as well.

Step 3: Additional Applicant/PI Information
Additional applicant/PI information is requested in this section. All answers for this step are optional. This information will not be included in application review and will only be used for internal MRF purposes.

Step 4: Institution and Contacts
Institution information and contact information can be updated and/or changed here. Institution Signing Official and Financial Officer contacts are required.

Step 5: Key Personnel
Please list any Key Personnel, other than the applicant, who will provide support to the project. Please list the mentor(s) as a Key Personnel in this section.

Step 6: Personal Statement
Provide a personal statement describing your professional goals/career plans. The total length of the statement should not exceed 3,000 characters (including spaces).

Step 7: Abstracts

- **Scientific Abstract**: In the space provided, include a summary of the proposal that gives a brief description of the objectives, rationale, methods, and expected results. Limit: 2,000 characters (including spaces). Written in scientific terms.
- **Lay Abstract**: In the space provided, include a brief (<2,000 characters, including spaces) summary of the proposal. Please write this abstract so the everyday person can understand the significance, impact, and innovation of the proposed research. Portions will be used in MRF's publications, press releases, fundraisers, and educational events.
- **Summary Quote**: In 100 characters or less, describe the anticipated impact of your research on the melanoma community. As this will be used for promotional purposes, use language readily understood by the lay community.
- **For Applicants Incorporating Women's Health Only:** In the space provided, describe how

your proposed research addresses women's health.

- **Keywords/Research Categories:** Select up to six keywords that best reflect the proposed research. Keywords will be used to ensure the application is reviewed by reviewers with the appropriate expertise. Then select appropriate categories for the project.

Step 8: Budget Summary

Provide a high-level summary of what the funds will be used for. Grant awards are to be used for direct laboratory costs and/or salary support. They are not to be used for indirect/administrative costs, to hire a consultant or contractor, or for travel expenses.

Step 9: Organization Assurances

Enter information regarding human subjects, vertebrate animals, and/or recombinant DNA (if relevant). If an application has just been submitted, please note that as well.

Step 10: Upload Attachments

All attachments must be in PDF form. Uploaded documents should fall under one of the following categories:

- **Letter of Support** – From at least one research mentor approving the proposed research and outlining their role/expectations. The mentor should also comment on the applicant's potential for a career as a physician-scientist.
- **Research Plan** – Limited to 5 pages, Arial font, at least 11 pt, 1-inch margins, single-spaced acceptable. Must contain:
    - Background and Significance
    - Hypothesis and Specific Aims
    - Experimental Design and Methods
    - Preliminary Data (if available)
- **Biographical sketch (biosketch)** – A biosketch is a standardized document used by grant applicants to summarize their qualifications, experience, and relevant contributions. Please use the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form. A biosketch is required for the applicant, all mentors, and key personnel.
- **Other Support** – An Other Support page is a document that lists all grants and other funding a researcher is receiving/applying for. The MRF follows the NIH's format, the Current and Pending (Other) Support Common Form. An Other Support page is required for the applicant, all mentors, and key personnel. Applicants with no other current or pending research grants or funding may submit a one page pdf stating that they have no other support.

Step 11: Required Document Checklist

Complete the checklist to confirm that all required attachments have been uploaded.

Step 12: Validate

Click the 'Validate' button here to check for any missing required information or files. All missing required information will be listed on the screen. Please correct any missing information before proceeding to the next step.

Step 13: Signature Page(s)
You may print the signature page(s) after you have completed all the proposal sections. Signatures from the applicant and Signing Official are required.

Step 13: Submit
Submit your application. You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. We encourage you to submit your application as early as possible so that we can assist you with any issues that may arise. As a reminder, the deadline is **January 14, 2027 at 11:59 PM ET. There are no grace periods.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How do I apply for a grant?
The grant application will be available ONLY during the time applications are being accepted. During that time, you can apply for a research grant online at http://proposalcentral.altum.com/.

Do I need to be a U.S. citizen?
No. However, the proposed research must be conducted in a non-profit research organization, a medical institution or an educational institution located in the United States.

Am I eligible?
Please read all eligibility requirements. Should you have questions not answered here, please contact the MRF at research@melanoma.org.

How long is the research plan section of the application?
The research plan is limited to 5 pages, not including references.

What information is included in the project plan?
The text of the research plan should contain sufficient information for evaluation by the review panel. The plan should cover:

- Background and Significance
- Hypothesis and Specific Aims
- Experimental Design and Methods
- Preliminary Data (if available)
- References (not included in page limit)

Can an award be transferred to a new institution?
A grant can be transferred upon approval by the MRF. For detailed criteria and instructions, please contact the MRF at research@melanoma.org.

Term	Definition

Key Personnel	The PI and other individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the grant. Typically, these individuals have doctoral or other professional degrees, although individuals at the masters or baccalaureate level may be considered key personnel if their involvement meets this definition. Consultants also may be considered key personnel if they meet this definition.
Principal Investigator (PI)	This is the main applicant and the person responsible for all activity being supported by the grant. He or she is responsible and accountable to the MRF for the proper conduct of the project or activity.
Other Support	Includes all financial resources, whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial or organizational, available in support of an individual's research endeavors, including, but not limited to, research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts or organizational awards. Other support does not include training awards, start-up funds, prizes or gifts.
Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC)	Established at institutions in accordance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals with broad responsibilities to oversee and evaluate the institutions' animal programs, procedures and facilities. IACUC review and approval is required for all PHS supported activities involving live vertebrate animals prior to funding.
Institutional Review Board (IRB)	IRBs are set up by research institutions to ensure the protection of rights and welfare of human research subjects participating in research conducted under modifications in or disapprove research protocols based on whether human subjects are adequately protected, as required by federal regulations and local institutional policy.