

# LUPUS RESEARCH ALLIANCE

FORMERLY



## **LUPUS RESEARCH ALLIANCE TARGET IDENTIFICATION IN LUPUS APPLICATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

**Effective – November 4, 2016**

**Letter of Intent Due – December 23, 2016  
APPLICATION DUE DATE – February 17, 2017**

Applications will be administered by:

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# LUPUS RESEARCH ALLIANCE: PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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| <b>TARGET IDENTIFICATION IN LUPUS</b><br><b>2017 Lupus Research Alliance Initiative</b> |
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**DESCRIPTION OF TARGET IDENTIFICATION IN LUPUS PROGRAM**

The Lupus Research Alliance is an independent, voluntary health agency formed to provide a concentrated effort for the prevention, treatment and cure of systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus or SLE). The purpose of the Lupus Research Alliance Target Identification in Lupus (TIL) grants program is to fund highly meritorious and innovative research focused on the identification and scientific and/or clinical advancement of therapeutic targets that will lead to new therapies for the treatment of lupus. Lupus is a complex systemic autoimmune disease that can cause significant morbidity and mortality. At present, therapy for lupus is empiric and involves a variety of non-specific anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive agents. While these agents are frequently beneficial, many patients do not respond adequately or experience significant side effects. This grant program has been established to develop new approaches to treat lupus more effectively and safely.

**Program Goals:** The goals of the TIL grant program are to: (1) characterize key steps in the pathogenesis of the disease that will allow for the development of new therapeutic agents; (2) promote basic and clinical research studies to identify and/or better characterize promising lead compounds for lupus treatment; and (3) support research that facilitates the clinical evaluation of innovative approaches to the prevention or treatment of lupus and its complications. This research is intended to be highly focused on lupus and, as such, should lead directly to knowledge that will facilitate drug discovery and/or testing of new treatments. These therapies may be used to treat systemic or organ-specific manifestations of lupus, although they may find applicability in the setting of other autoimmune or inflammatory illnesses. As the goal of this program is to advance the treatment of lupus, any research funded must be based on realizable goals for translation into therapeutic discovery programs. Targets can include small molecules, biologic agents, vaccines, gene therapy, as well as novel approaches in public health and risk reduction. The Lupus Research Alliance particularly welcomes applications proposing research that will apply knowledge gained in other disease areas (e.g. cancer, metabolic diseases) to mechanisms relevant to lupus.

**Eligibility Criteria:** Individuals with doctoral degrees (MD, PhD, DO or equivalent) are eligible to apply. Scientific independence, as evidenced by direction of a research program, a publication record, or other experience that establishes scientific leadership is necessary to apply. The Lupus Research Alliance does not impose geographic restrictions on its applicants. Investigators working anywhere in the world are eligible to apply. The Lupus Research Alliance is willing to appropriately support research in industry or collaborations between academia and industry.

**Relevance to the Mission of the Lupus Research Alliance:** The TIL grant program will fund research that will accelerate the development of new treatments of lupus. As such, these grants should be innovative in direction and utilize state-of-the-art techniques. Fundamental studies in genetics, immunology, cell biology and molecular biology to identify and characterize molecular systems must be oriented towards the development of drugs that would prevent and/or ameliorate

clinical signs and symptoms of lupus. These studies can be initiated or conducted in either humans or animals, although any work on animals must include a plan for extension and verification in patient populations. Studies working towards the identification or development of lead therapeutic compounds for lupus must provide a clear scientific rationale for the compound(s) under investigation, and a research plan that would allow for a definitive decision regarding the viability of the compound(s) as a therapeutic approach to lupus. Clinical studies to improve the ability to evaluate innovative therapies in lupus may focus on the development of systems or processes that enhance the ability to obtain reliable and timely answers to therapeutic questions in lupus.

TIL grants should lead to new insights into disease pathogenesis, advances in the development of innovative therapies under consideration for lupus, or improvements in the abilities to evaluate the outcome of lupus therapies. These proposals must demonstrate a strong orientation to the development and/or evaluation of new therapeutics. Thus, these grants differ from a conventional R01 mechanism where a translational goal is not essential to the success of the grant. Applications submitted for the TIL grant program must be relevant to the purpose and goals of the program.

## **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Letter of Intent (LOI):** A non-binding letter of intent must be submitted by the investigator in advance of an invitation to apply for a grant. This letter should provide the proposed title of the research project and the name of the Principal Investigator. The letter must include a summary of the general theme and the potential future clinical ramification of the project future should it be successful. Submission of the LOI does not commit the investigator to submitting an application; however it is required to be submitted in order to have access to the full application. The main purpose of this letter is to assist the Lupus Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Board in determining whether the proposed subject matter of the proposal falls within the Lupus Research Alliance's particular research goals during the upcoming funding year.

- LOIs should be submitted electronically through proposalCENTRAL no later than December 23, 2016 by 5 p.m. (EST).
- The submitted LOI must be approved by the Lupus Research Alliance.
- The full application will become available once the LOI is approved. Detailed instructions for LOI submission are available in the Altum proposalCENTRAL website.

### **Application Details: Applications are due on February 17, 2016 5 PM EST.**

Each application should contain the following information (please log into Altum proposalCENTRAL for a detailed description of all forms to be completed and uploaded):

1. Lay Abstract: An abstract for a lay audience of the research plan that includes the application's long term objectives and specific aims. Investigators should highlight the relevance of the work to lupus. The abstract should not exceed 3000 characters.
2. Scientific Abstract: A technical abstract of the research plan that includes the application's long term objectives and specific aims. Investigators should highlight the relevance of the work to lupus. The abstract should not exceed 3000 characters.

3. Resubmission Statement (if applicable): Revised applications are required to include a resubmission statement that addresses the comments of the previous review, and explains how the application has been strengthened or modified. See *Resubmission Information* section for additional information.
4. Proposal Narrative: A research plan highlighting the significance and novelty of the work; describe the relevance of the project to the cause, cure, treatment or prevention of lupus and/or its secondary complications; highlight the relevance of the project to the goals of this Request for Applications; provide background information and rationale, approach and anticipated results for experiments that can be accomplished within three years.
5. Milestones: A list of milestones (the expected status of the project at various points in time). These milestones will be used to evaluate progress and to facilitate communication between the principal investigators and the Lupus Research Alliance Scientific Advisory Board. The list of milestones should reflect the specific aims of the proposal and be presented within the context of a pathway for determining or evaluating a potential target for lupus treatment. A suggested format for listing these milestones is a table, listing by priority the goals, along with their respective expected dates of completion and measures. The milestones are part of the proposal narrative but are not included in the 10 page limit. See Instructions for Proposal Narrative in the electronic templates section.
6. Budget Detail and Summary: A budget for the project prepared in U.S. dollars. This information should be entered directly into the electronic application. The budget should be for three years. *Note*: This application is for three years of funding support. Third year of funding will be based on the successful completion of a non-competitive progress report and review by members of the Lupus Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Board. Applicants may apply for two years of funding, if preferred.
7. Budget Justification: A detailed justification for the budgetary requests. This information should be entered directly into the electronic application. The information in this section should be divided into two sections. The first section should include the following line items: personnel, consultant costs; equipment and supplies (both office and medical or laboratory). The second section should include all other line items including but not limited to: travel to annual investigator's meeting, patient care, other expenses, consortium and contractual costs. Funds can not be used to pay for tuition or education expenses. Each section should not exceed 2000 characters. Any additional information should be included as an appendix to the application.
8. Facilities & Equipment Description: A short description of the facilities and equipment available to support the project.
9. Biosketch: A standard NIH Biosketch (current or previous format) for all key personnel working on the project. This should include a description of other financial support available to the applicant for his/her research endeavors. Applicants who are not based in the United States may submit a copy of their curriculum vitae.
10. Assurances: Appropriate institutional assurances regarding human subjects and animals as applicable.
11. Other Support: Applicants must include accurate and complete information regarding all other sources of grant support from the main PI (current and pending), including title, abstract, annual and total amount of the grant, inclusive funding period, and

percent effort of the applicant. It is not necessary to include this information for all Key Personnel. This should also include a description of currently active support and all projects and proposals pending review and/or award whether or not financially and/or scientifically related to this application.

12. Consultant/Co-Investigator/Collaborator Letters: Optional, only submit if relevant to the application.
13. Consent Forms: If relevant, copies or drafts of all informed consent forms to be distributed to participants for signature in this study (or their legal guardians).
14. Appendix Materials: See instructions for appendix material allowed.
15. Signed Cover Page: The signed cover page should be uploaded electronically. Instructions will be available in the Altum proposalCENTRAL website.

**Supplemental Material:** Applicants will have the opportunity to provide supplemental material (limited to 2 pages) related to their research project. Applicants will be notified by email as to the method of delivery and deadline date for receiving this information. There is no need to submit a cover letter or to mail any documents to the Lupus Research Alliance.

**Restriction on Number of Applications:** Only one application will be accepted per principal investigator in a grant cycle.

**Resubmission Information:**

- A resubmission is considered an application un-funded in one of the previous two TIL application cycles. An applicant who is unsuccessful in a competition may resubmit a similar revised application three times (the original, plus two resubmissions).
- If major changes are made to the application or if this is an entirely different/new project, the application should not be submitted as a resubmission. Reviewers for applications checked as resubmissions will be provided with the critiques from the previous application cycle.
- If you include changes to your original proposal, highlight the changes. Explain how the application has been strengthened or modified (additions, deletions, revisions).
- If the changes are so extensive as to include changes to most of the proposed Proposal Narrative, explain this exception here.

**REVIEW PROCESS**

**Rating of Applications:** Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Relevance to the program goals of the Lupus Research Alliance: prevention, treatment, or cure of lupus
- ✓ Feasibility will be evaluated based on the ability to accomplish the work proposed within a three year time frame and the likelihood that the work will:
  - characterize key steps in the pathogenesis of the disease that will allow for the development of new therapeutic agents
  - promote basic and clinical research studies to identify and/or better characterize promising lead compounds for lupus treatment
  - support research that facilitates the clinical evaluation of innovative approaches to the prevention or treatment of lupus and its complications.
- ✓ Appropriate research design; originality and scientific rigor

**Review/Notification:** All grant applications will be peer-reviewed by the Study Section of the Lupus Research Alliance. Results from that peer review will be forwarded to the Lupus Research Alliance Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB will consider the recommendations from the Study Section, as well as review the existing Lupus Research Alliance portfolio to determine which applications would complement existing grants or address an unfilled area of research. The SAB will submit their recommendations to the Lupus Research Alliance Board of Directors. This Board will consider all the previous recommendations and will also provide a lay perspective. This perspective will include patients' concerns and expectations, as well as deliberations on the business aspect of funding the recommended grants. The Lupus Research Alliance Board of Directors will make all final funding decisions. Notification of approval/disapproval will be made to applicants in June of 2017. All applications submitted will undergo a pre-review process. For applications receiving a full review, critiques containing the reviewers' comments and/or critiques will be provided within 3 months of the review date. (Applications not recommended for full review will not receive any written critiques). By applying, you are acknowledging your understanding that critiques may not be provided. The Lupus Research Alliance does not provide scores or application's rank to applicants.

### **TERMS OF AWARD**

**Award Period:** Grants will be awarded for a maximum of three years; funding decisions for the grants will be made by the Lupus Research Alliance Board of Directors in the spring of 2017. If approved, the start date for the project will be July 1, 2017.

**Third Year Funding:** Support for a third year of funding will be based on the successful submission of a non-competitive progress report and review by members of the Lupus Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Board during the second year of the award. Funding decisions for the third year will be made by the Lupus Research Alliance Board of Directors subsequently.

**Amount of Award:** Funding for the TIL award will be made for up to \$200,000 per year (for a maximum of three years - total amount up to \$600,000) including indirect costs. Funding for the third year is based on the successful submission of a non-competitive progress report. The award amount will be determined by the Lupus Research Alliance's Board of Directors based on the results of the peer review process including recommendations from the Lupus Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Board. Applications with budgets totaling less than the maximum amount are strongly encouraged.

**Award Guidelines:** The Lupus Research Alliance follows the U.S. National Institute of Health salary guidelines for Principal Investigators, Post-Doctoral Fellows and other applicable persons who will work on the project. The Lupus Research Alliance does not allow award funds to be appropriated to the cost of tuition. All indirect costs or institutional overhead costs are not to exceed 8% of the total amount approved (excluding equipment).

**Equipment:** Title to all equipment purchased with Lupus Research Alliance funds shall vest in the Sponsoring Institution provided that, for the duration of the research grant and for a period not to exceed sixty days from the termination date of the grant, the Lupus Research Alliance

may, at its option, direct the Sponsoring Institution to transfer title to a new Sponsoring Institution.

**Laboratory Visits:** As a condition of support, the Principal Investigator agrees that a representative of the Lupus Research Alliance may visit the laboratory or other venue where the grant is being funded upon reasonable prior notification.

**Dissemination of Information:** To disseminate information about the Lupus Research Alliance research program to our volunteers and the public, grantees are expected to occasionally give brief presentations of their research to professional audiences or the general public. All applicants are required to provide a summary of their research project in non-technical language. The summary should be brief and should explain the relevance of the project to lupus in such a way that lay advocates involved in the review process can evaluate the potential contribution of the project to the mission of the Lupus Research Alliance.

**Publications:** It is expected that the results of research supported by the Lupus Research Alliance shall be published as rapidly as possible in the open literature, consistent with high standards of scientific excellence and rigor. The responsibility for publication lies exclusively with the Principal Investigator (and his/her collaborators) and the result of any work supported by the Lupus Research Alliance may be published without prior review of Lupus Research Alliance. Any publication arising in whole or in part from a research grant funded by the Lupus Research Alliance shall acknowledge funding support by the Lupus Research Alliance. As soon as a manuscript is accepted for publication (whether during the term of the grant or after it has expired) a copy of the publication along with the name of the journal and expected date of publication should be forwarded to the Lupus Research Alliance. As soon as reprints are available, a copy of the reprint should be forwarded to the attention of the Research Administration Department in the Lupus Research Alliance office.

**Internal Revenue Service Information:** Personnel compensated in whole or in part with funds from the Lupus Research Alliance are not considered employees of the Lupus Research Alliance. Institutions shall be responsible for issuing the appropriate IRS tax filings for all individuals receiving compensation from Grantor's funds hereunder, and shall be responsible for withholding and paying all required federal and state payroll taxes with regard to such compensation.

**Scientific Conduct and IRB Approval:** The Lupus Research Alliance provides grant-in-aid support for research projects including those that may involve human subjects. Lupus Research Alliance will not act as the Sponsor of any research as that term is defined by Food and Drug Administration nor take on any of the responsibilities of a Sponsor. *See* 21 C.F.R. §§ 312.3, 812.3. Lupus Research Alliance does not provide management support for the projects that it funds and does not assume responsibility for the conduct of the investigation or the acts of the investigator or others since all persons undertaking the funded research are acting under the direction and control of the grantee institution and subject to the institution's medical and scientific policies. As a condition of receiving Lupus Research Alliance grant funding for research, a Grantee institution and the investigator each agrees (i) to safeguard the rights and welfare of any individual who may participate as a human subject in any research funded in



whole or in part by Lupus Research Alliance and (ii) to seek and obtain approval from Grantee's institutional review board, where human subjects are involved, and to comply with the provisions of 45 C.F.R. pt. 46 to the same extent as each would were the research funded by the National Institutes of Health ("NIH"), (iii) to comply with United States Department of Health and Human Services regulations or guidelines regarding financial conflicts of interest (*see* 42 C.F.R. pt. 50, subpt. F), recombinant DNA, biohazards, research misconduct (*see* 42 C.F.R. pt. 93), and vertebrate animals, all to the same extent as each would were the research funded by NIH; and (iv) such other federal regulations as may pertain to the particular research funded in whole or in part by the Lupus Research Alliance grant.

**Principal Investigator Assurance:** All research grants funded by the Lupus Research Alliance are subject to the terms and conditions outlined in this document and the funding letter. Deviations from the policies outlined in this document are valid only if made in writing and signed by an official of the Lupus Research Alliance. Research performed under Lupus Research Alliance grants is the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator of that grant and the Sponsoring Institution. The Principal Investigator and Sponsoring Institution are both responsible for insuring that all research activities are conducted in a safe, responsible, and ethical manner.

**Intellectual Property and Patent Policy:** The Lupus Research Alliance's policy on intellectual property and patent ownership will be shared upon request.

**Other Terms and Conditions:** The submission of this application to the Lupus Research Alliance certifies that the organization named in this application is in compliance with all statutes, Executive orders, and regulations restricting or prohibiting U.S. persons from engaging in transactions and dealings with countries, entities, or individuals subject to economic sanctions administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The organization is aware that a list of countries subject to such sanctions, a list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons subject to such sanctions, and overviews and guidelines for each such sanctions program can be found at <http://www.treas.gov/ofac>. Should any change in circumstances pertaining to this certification occur at any time; the organization is required to notify the Lupus Research Alliance immediately.

**Cancellation:** Any grant may be terminated or cancelled by the Lupus Research Alliance upon written notice to the Principal Investigator and responsible Administrative Official at the Sponsoring Institution if in the sole discretion of the Lupus Research Alliance; (1) the Principal Investigator is unable to carry out the research for any reason; (2) the Principal Investigator or any member of his/her research team is found by an institutional investigation to have committed scientific misconduct or fraud; (3) the Principal Investigator has failed to comply with any of the terms and conditions of this award; (4) the Lupus Research Alliance concludes that the Principal Investigator has received overlap funding for the award or that the funds are not being used for the purposes originally outlined in the research protocol, or; (5) the IRB approval for the grant has been rescinded.

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES**

**Letters of Intent (LOI):** Must be submitted electronically through the Altum proposalCENTRAL website by December 23, 2016. Altum proposalCENTRAL can be accessed directly at <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>. Do not e-mail or mail any copies of the LOI to the Lupus Research Alliance, only electronic submissions will be accepted. Once the LOI is approved the applicant will have full access to the application in proposalCENTRAL.

**Applications:** The electronic application must have the signatures of both the applicant and the representative of the applicant's institution included as an upload. These documents will complete the official application. All applications must be submitted electronically through the Altum proposalCENTRAL website by February 17, 2017. Altum proposalCENTRAL can be accessed directly at <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>. Instructions and application forms are available on the proposalCENTRAL website. Do not e-mail or mail any copies of the application to the Lupus Research Alliance, only electronic submissions will be accepted. You must upload the signed title page as part of the application.

**Deadlines:** The receipt deadline for the non-binding LOI is December 23, 2016. The deadline for the Target Identification in Lupus grant application is February 17, 2017. The LOI and electronic application must be received by the close of business (5:00 PM EST) on the respective deadline dates.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| November 4, 2016  | TIL RFA Distributed                                 |
| December 23, 2016 | TIL Letter of Intent Due                            |
| February 17, 2017 | TIL Grant Application Due                           |
| Spring 2017       | Application Review Meeting                          |
| June 2017         | Funding decision and notification to all applicants |
| July 15, 2017     | Grant activation date                               |

**Late or Incomplete Applications:** An application will not be reviewed if; (1) it is not submitted by the deadline; (2) is incomplete; (3) the principal investigator is ineligible; (4) it exceeds the page limit, or; (5) uses a printer font smaller than standard type size (Arial 11 pt). An application will be considered incomplete if it fails to follow the instructions or if the material presented is insufficient to permit an adequate review without the solicitation of a substantial amount of additional information. The principal investigator bears the responsibility for submission of a complete application by the designated deadline date.

**Change of Application Status:** Should your application status change after submission including a withdrawal of application, a change of address, etc. you should notify the research department via e-mail immediately at [research.admin@lupusresearch.org](mailto:research.admin@lupusresearch.org).

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Lupus Research Alliance Contact Information:** Questions concerning the application submission process, or the administration of TIL grant applications, should be directed to the Lupus Research Alliance Research Administration Department at (212) 218-2840 or [research.admin@lupusresearch.org](mailto:research.admin@lupusresearch.org).

**Altum proposalCENTRAL Contact Information:** For help with the electronic grant application process, please contact the help desk of ProposalCENTRAL by email at [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com). You may also contract them by phone at 1-800-875-2562, extension 227.