

VICTOR A. MCKUSICK FELLOWSHIP GUIDELINES

The Marfan Foundation is requesting proposals to the Victor A. McKusick Fellowship Grant program. The fellowship program is designed to provide financial support for the career development of a fellow with research interest in the care and study of patients with Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions. Proposals are being accepted for two-year grants in basic, translational or clinical research. A two-year grant not to exceed \$50,000/year for PhDs or \$75,000/year for MDs will be made in July 2019 from the Foundation's Victor A. McKusick Fellowship Fund.

SCHEDULE

Application Deadline: February 1, 2019
Announcement of Awards: May 10, 2019
Funding Available: July 1, 2019

SPECIAL AREAS OF INTEREST

Basic research, translational studies and clinical studies in cardiovascular, orthopedic, pulmonary, ophthalmologic, pain and other pertinent areas utilizing synergistic collaborations; integration of novel theories from non-traditional researchers into established paradigms; novel animal model systems; innovation; and the distillation of knowledge into practical new therapies, for Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions.

CONTACT

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Application Forms which need to be separately downloaded:

1. Title Page Form
2. Table of Contents Form
3. Biographical Sketch Form

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION, REVIEW AND AWARD OF FELLOWSHIP GRANTS

A. INTRODUCTION

The Marfan Foundation's Victor A. McKusick Research Fellowship Grant is intended to provide the opportunity for career development with formal education and experience in research methodologies. The fellow should work in an active and progressive research environment that intimately involves the fellow in the conception, planning, execution and reporting of research related to Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions. It is expected that the fellow receive formal education in such topics as biomedical statistics, research design, grant writing, and safety, regulatory and ethical concerns. At the end of the granting period, the fellow should have a firm foundation in the fundamentals that will prepare him/her to conduct independent research and compete effectively for extramural funding. The goal of The Marfan Foundation's Victor A. McKusick Research Fellowship Program is to advance research in the care of patients with Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions and to facilitate the academic growth and development of future researchers and clinicians.

B. TYPES OF PROPOSALS SOLICITED

The Marfan Foundation is currently accepting proposals for a fellowship to support the development of research of Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions. Each proposal should have the quality of an NIH proposal. The proposal must be based on an identified research project. Special areas of interest are basic research, translational studies and clinical studies in cardiovascular, orthopedic, pulmonary, ophthalmologic, pain and other pertinent areas utilizing synergistic collaborations; integration of novel theories from non-traditional researchers into established paradigms; novel animal model systems; innovation; and the distillation of knowledge into practical new therapies.

C. BUDGET/AWARD

Two-year fellowship awards will be available for PhDs for up to \$50,000 per year and for MDs up to \$75,000 per year.

D. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FELLOW

The applicant must hold an MD, DO, PhD, ScD, DDS, DVM or equivalent degree. Fellowships can be offered up to the post graduate year 6 level. Both US citizens and non-US citizens are encouraged to apply, however work must be done at a U.S. based institution. Fellows should be eligible at their institution for specialty training in the field of Marfan syndrome including but not limited to genetics, cardiology, orthopedics, pulmonary and ophthalmology. The fellowship can only be held one time by any candidate.

E. QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR

The mentor must have proven ability to pursue independent research as evidenced by original research publications in peer-reviewed journals and/or funding from extramural sources. The mentor may be in any department within the applicant's institution. The mentor must submit an evaluation of the fellow every 6 months as part of the progress reports required during the granting period.

The application must include a statement from the mentor providing: 1) information on the mentor's research qualifications and previous experience as a research supervisor; 2) a mentor's plan describing the nature of the supervision and mentorship that will occur during the proposed award period; and 3) a plan for the transition of the candidate from the mentored phase of their careers to the independent investigator phase during the project period of the award.

F. ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE CANDIDATE

The sponsoring institution must define and document a strong, well-established research and training program related to the candidate's area of interest including a high-quality research environment with staff capable of productive collaboration with the candidate. The sponsoring institution must provide a statement of commitment to the candidate's development into a productive, independent investigator and to meeting the requirements of this award. It should be clear that the institutional commitment to the candidate is not contingent upon receipt of this award.

G. REVIEW PROCESS

The Marfan Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board, a committee of experts in basic, translational and clinical research, will review each application. Each proposal will receive a priority score based on the evaluation of the committee. Priority scores will be forwarded to The Marfan Foundation where award decisions will be made based upon relative scientific merit ranking of the submitted proposals, and on priorities of The Marfan Foundation. All applications will be held in the strictest confidence and all decisions by The Marfan Foundation are final.

H. TERMS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

1. Duration

Applications will be accepted for two-years of training. Extension of grant period for unexpended funds may be given beyond the two-year period upon review of request. Two-year funding period begins July 1, 2019 and ends June 30, 2021. Requests for change in funding dates will be considered.

2. Changes of Status of Designated Fellow

If the named fellow changes affiliations a request for transfer must be approved by The Marfan Foundation. If the fellow ceases research in the field for which the fellowship was made, the award will terminate and the remaining balance will be returned to The Marfan Foundation.

3. Site of Project

Awards are for studies in the United States at an accredited medical school or institution affiliated with a university teaching program.

4. Budget

Budgets for up to, but not exceeding, \$50,000 per year for PhDs and \$75,000 per year for MDs for a two year period are acceptable. Any unexpended funds shall be returned to The Marfan Foundation upon completion of the granting period unless prior approval is given by Foundation. Payments will be made to the fellow's institution which will be responsible for administering the funds. The Marfan Foundation does not pay for institutional overhead, construction or renovation; purchase of major capital equipment; office equipment or furniture; travel (except as required to perform the project); tuition fees; journal subscriptions, dues or memberships; equipment service contracts; salaries for secretaries. Funds will be distributed semi-annually.

5. Indemnification of The Marfan Foundation

The fellow, mentor, and any co-investigators and his/her Affiliated Institution (AI) will be obligated to indemnify The Marfan Foundation from any and all liability that may arise from the fellow/mentor/AI's conduct and the Foundation's affiliation therewith due to the award relationship.

6. Institutional Support

The mentor and fellow assume responsibility for conducting research projects and supervising the work of co-investigators. The fellow must demonstrate that access to a suitable caseload or patient population will be available for study during the funding period for clinical studies.

7. Use of Animals and Humans in Biomedical Research

Fellows must certify that the research facilities, its researchers and employees adhere to the Animal Welfare Act National Research Council Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and any appropriate US Department of Agriculture or National Institutes of Health Regulations and Standards. Institutional review board (IRB) or its equivalent must approve research involving animal and human subjects and a copy of the approval or pending approval must be sent with this application. Copies of annual renewal of IRB must be forwarded to The Marfan Foundation. IRB approval must be documented prior to dispensation of The Marfan Foundation funds. The application must include letters of support if the proposed project uses facilities not routinely available to or directly under the supervision of the sponsoring program.

8. Publications

All discoveries resulting from work supported in part by The Marfan Foundation should be made available to the public and scientific community through approved scientific channels such as national meetings and peer reviewed publications. Publications will acknowledge the support of The Marfan Foundation. Two reprints of each publication must be forwarded to the Foundation.

9. Publicity

The Marfan Foundation shall be permitted to use the fellow and mentors name, image and likeness, as well as the name of the Affiliated Institution, in connection with all statements, printed materials or electronic media related to the fellowship award or related to The Marfan Foundation's Research Program. At the Foundation's request, the fellow will provide the Foundation with appropriate photographs and biographical information to be used in connection with this award.

10. Progress and Financial Reports

Fellows will be required to submit a brief progress report at 6-month intervals with the last report to be 3 months after the end of the granting period. Financial reports will also be required at these times. An additional and final questionnaire will be forwarded to the grant recipient 12 months after the completion of the grant to describe any publications and subsequent funding received based on research performed using the Foundation's funds. Consideration for future funding will be dependent upon completion of these progress reports.

11. Liability of The Marfan Foundation.

The Marfan Foundation assumes no financial liability of patient care responsibilities of any kind undertaken by the fellow or mentor. The mentor and the mentor's institution acknowledge that The Marfan Foundation is not legally liable for the conduct of the fellow or the mentor and associate investigators.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CORRESPONDENCE

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Chief Science Officer

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22 Manhasset Avenue
Port Washington, NY 11050

Tel: 800-8-MARFAN or 516-883-8712 ext. 117
Fax: 516-883-8040
Email: research@marfan.org

J. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application must be submitted electronically, including the application forms, additional pages, and appendices, as a single PDF file, via The Marfan Foundation website, marfan.org.

Please name your application using the following format:

McKusickFellowship_Lastname_FirstName.pdf

Example: McKusickFellowship_Smith_Jane.pdf

The application forms may be completed use the free Adobe Reader program. If you do not already have it, you can download it at <http://www.adobe.com/products/reader.html>. The Title Page form requires dated signatures; you may either insert a digital signature and date or print the form and then scan it to include in your application PDF.

Additional pages should be typed single-spaced using a font size of at least a 10 points and with one inch margins. Pages should be numbered at the bottom. Appendices should not be used to subvert the page limitation on the grant, however, figures, tables, diagrams and photographs can be placed in the appendices. Please present the proposal in the order that follows.

1. Title Page: 1 page

Application form provided

2. Table of Contents: 1 page

Application form provided

3. Project Abstract and Lay Person Summary: 1 page each

- a. On a single separate page, describe precisely and clearly the nature, objective, methods of procedure and significance of the proposed research project for the Marfan community, and how it relates to the goal of providing a better understanding of Marfan syndrome, VEDS, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions and/or improving the treatment or diagnosis of Marfan syndrome, EDS, LDS, and other related conditions (limit 300 words).
- b. Rewrite the abstract in abbreviated form in terms suitable for presentation to lay persons. Please include why it is important research for people with the Marfan syndrome (limit 500 words)

4. Research Plan: 3 pages

- a. Goals and Objectives; Rationale; Methodology; Evaluation. (Figures should be placed in appendix.)

- b. Please comment upon the importance of the Foundation's funding:
 - i. Will this funding allow you to pursue studies that would otherwise not be performed? Is funding meant to supplement other sources of support?
 - ii. Do you anticipate that this funding will increase your competitiveness for other funding sources?
- c. Please comment upon the significance of the work that you propose:
 - i. Is it similar to or a direct extension of work that has been or is being performed elsewhere?
 - ii. Does the work complement or extend other studies that are being performed at your institution?
 - iii. How novel are the studies that you describe?
 - iv. Would such a proposal be competitive for NIH funding in its current form, or would you require additional preliminary data?

5. Career Development Plan: 3 pages

Plan can be written by the candidate and/or mentor.

- a. Describe the resources and facilities that will be available to the candidate.
- b. Describe how the institutional research environment is particularly suited for the development of the candidate's research career and the pursuit of the proposed research plan.
- c. In a clear statement, provide assurances that the candidate will be able to devote a minimum of 75 % of his/her effort in developing his/her research program, that the remaining percent effort being devoted to activities related to the development of their research career, and that the candidate will be released from normal clinical, teaching or administrative duties. Candidates who will use the resources within a General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) during the course of the award should include a letter of agreement from either the GCRC program director or the principal investigator with the application.

6. Budget

- a. List full budget with amount requested from The Marfan Foundation. Include:
 - i. Names, titles, time/percentage effort of all participants, requested salaries and fringe benefits and total amount required.
 - ii. Statement that the institution or other funding sources will absorb indirect costs.
 - iii. A written budget justification.
- b. The budget justification should be suited to the proposals. It is important that the investigator match the dollar amount with the actual project. If funding from other sources is being used to cover certain parts of the study, please elaborate on what part the of the budget will not be completed with the Foundation funding and what the approximate cost of the full project would be. Please list additional sources of funding if budget exceeds the Foundation's grant amount such as:
 - i. Current grants or funding sources and description
 - ii. Pending grants or funding sources and description

No overhead or indirect costs will be considered.

7. Biographical Sketches: 5 page each

Using the supplied form, please provide biographical sketches for key personnel. Indicate the total number of publications in each of the (2) categories: referenced articles and invited works. If you prefer, you may use the NIH biosketch form instead.

8. Facilities Description: 1 page

Describe what resources and facilities are available at the project site. Describe how the mentor and/or the institution will provide an experience that combines both clinical and research opportunities if applicable.

9. Appendix

- a. Figures, tables etc.
- b. Literature cited
- c. Human subjects experimental approval
- d. Vertebrate animal experimental approval
- e. Letters of support — required from mentor (see Section E)