

**2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DERMATOLOGY FELLOWS AWARD
FEBRUARY 1, 2021**

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) is pleased to announce a call for applications to our Dermatology Fellowship Award program. The aim of this training program is to drive greater interest in the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and staging of melanoma among dermatologists by investing in post-docs and medical residents focused on dermatology.

Interested applicants should refer to this RFP for complete instructions on eligibility, key criteria, and instructions on how to apply for the MRA Dermatology Fellows Award. MRA plans to award at least seven new MRA Dermatology Fellow Awards during the 2021 cycle, inclusive of three special opportunities to ensure **at least** one award in each of the following categories:

- (1) Skin of color
- (2) School-aged children (generously sponsored by Supergoop!)
- (3) The Grace Wenzel Dermatology Award – Supporting women in melanoma research

Email questions about this RFP, eligibility, or other issues about MRA or its awards to Rachel Fischer at rfischer@curemelanoma.org.

Full proposals due 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, April 2, 2021

Award Term: 1 Year with the possibility of a 2nd year renewal

Award Amount: Up to \$35,000 total costs for one year. A second, renewal year may be possible based on progress and a Year Two Renewal Proposal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Objective	3
Review and Selection Criteria	4
Applicant Eligibility.....	4
Special Opportunities.....	5
Application Format and Instructions	7
Timeline.....	10
Award Administration.....	11
Frequently Asked Questions	11

INTRODUCTION

About Melanoma: According to the National Cancer Institute, melanoma is the sixth most common cancer in the United States and rates continue to increase. More effective options for patients and those at risk are urgently needed. While research and treatment have advanced significantly in recent years, leading to the availability of immunotherapies and molecularly targeted therapies for patients, there is a significant need for developing new treatment approaches, and optimizing the effectiveness of existing and emerging therapies. MRA is committed to advancing such efforts, which are supported under the MRA General RFP typically released in August (<https://www.curemelanoma.org/research/request-for-proposals/>).

Similarly, particularly with advancements made in treatment, there is a critical need to improve early detection efforts, while also strengthening prevention. While deaths due to melanoma have decreased due to new treatments, new melanomas have increased. In addition, as treatment options advance for earlier intervention through neo-adjuvant and adjuvant approaches, detection at the earliest opportunity continues to offer the greatest hope for those confronting melanoma. Finally, with the advancement of technology, such as artificial intelligence, new tools for detection are being developed. However, there is a question as to how well such advancements will serve people of color.

About the MRA: Founded in 2007 by Debra and Leon Black under the auspices of the Milken Institute, MRA has become the largest non-profit funder of melanoma research world-wide. The mission of MRA is to **end suffering and death due to melanoma** by collaborating with all stakeholders to accelerate powerful research, advance cures for all patients, and prevent more melanomas. To date, the MRA has awarded \$123 million to support research projects worldwide. Please visit www.curemelanoma.org for further information on MRA. To search for past MRA research awards by institution, investigator, keyword, or grant award mechanism – including past Dermatology Fellows Awards – please visit www.curemelanoma.org/grants.

About the MRA Dermatology Fellows Program: Recognizing the need to strengthen research into the prevention and detection of melanoma, as well as increase dermatology scientists’ and physicians’ overall

engagement within the field of melanoma research, MRA launched the MRA Dermatology Fellows Award as a Pilot Program in 2019. In 2007, when MRA formed, only two FDA-approved treatments existed for metastatic melanoma. Since then, 13 new treatment options have gained approval, improved health outcomes and added years of life for patients. At the same time, less focus has been placed on—and less progress made in—prevention and detection. Improved prevention, detection, diagnosis, and staging can deliver a profound impact on melanoma. Early detection greatly improves overall survival and comprehensive and coordinated prevention programs – comprehensive programs such as those carried out in Australia – have been proven to reduce melanoma incidence.

OBJECTIVE

MRA aims to strengthen the engagement of dermatology residents as well as Ph.D. and/or M.D. postdoctoral fellows in departments or divisions of dermatology with research aimed at improving melanoma prevention, detection, diagnosis, and/or staging. In pursuit of this goal, **MRA welcomes proposals with immediate real-world implications for public health, prevention, and/or clinical practice in the following areas:**

- **Prevention:**
 - Elucidation of environmental, epidemiological, biological, and/or behavioral factors that lead to increased risk of melanoma, and that can inform prevention and/or detection strategies in melanoma patients or in those at risk of developing melanoma;
 - Research, design, or implementation of interventions that educate and/or evolve clinical practice related to melanoma among dermatologists, primary care physicians, health systems, residents, medical students, and/or the public to maximize risk-reduction, behavioral change, awareness, and/or early detection.
- **Detection, Diagnosis, and Staging:**
 - Development, study, or evaluation of targeted screening methods in melanoma patients, individuals at risk for melanoma, and/or the general public;
 - Systems design/interventions that will improve screening rates for melanoma among dermatologists, or that build a knowledge base that will help to further the goal of earlier detection;
 - Use of clinical samples to identify and/or validate diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers;
 - Use and/or advancement of technologies, including non-invasive approaches, to improve melanoma diagnosis and/or risk stratification.

Proposed efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Demonstration projects both within applicant's own health system or in community settings;
- ✓ Immersive study in areas that can advance melanoma practice;
- ✓ Augmentation of larger research efforts and/or clinical trials by applicant that could show value-add in improving prevention and detection efforts; or

- ✓ Research appropriate to the scale of scale of resources.

MRA also encourages the application of artificial intelligence (AI) across any of these areas.

Note that all applications for the Dermatology Fellows Award should be focused on melanoma prevention, detection, diagnosis, and/or staging.

REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals will undergo rigorous peer review by the MRA Dermatology Council (DC), comprised of experts in diverse areas of dermatology, translational, and clinical research. Applications will be scored according to MRA Review and Selection Criteria. To minimize any real or perceived conflicts of interest (COI), MRA asks Dermatology Council members to adhere to a rigorous set of COI guidelines. Further information about these guidelines are available upon request. Please contact Rachel Fischer at rfischer@curemelanoma.org. All awards are contingent upon ratification by the MRA Board of Directors.

The following criteria will be used to assess the merit of proposals for award:

- **Overall Scientific and Clinical Importance:** Original, innovative, and transformative research approaches with strong scientific rationale and clear capacity to enhance prevention, detection, diagnosis, and/or staging for patients with melanoma or for individuals at risk will be prioritized. Proposals that articulate a clear path to near-term clinical application, or that can impact practice in prevention and detection strategies will be favored.
- **Rigor and Feasibility:** MRA seeks outstanding and technically rigorous proposals as determined by peer review. Overall study design, methodology, and analyses must be feasible and appropriate to accomplish specific aims.
- **Investigator/Environment:** Applicant has appropriate training, expertise, and evidence of productivity (inclusive of publications, datasets, code, patents, etc), to carry out proposed research. Applicant's institution and department are sufficiently committed to area of research proposed and to the applicant. Equipment and other institutional resources are sufficient to support the applicant. Selected Mentor is appropriate to advance applicant's career and project with evidence of a strong mentorship relationship.

Applications will be approximately weighted as follows: One-third Scientific and Clinical Importance, Rigor and Feasibility; one-third Investigator; and one-third Environment/Mentor.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility requirements for new applicants:

- **MRA encourages applications from a diverse pool of investigators with respect to race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, and disability.** MRA recognizes that a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical for ensuring that the most creative minds have the opportunity to contribute to realizing our research goals and to ensuring more equitable health outcomes for all.

Moreover, increased diversity leads to improved health care access for underserved populations and better health outcomes ([Cohen et al. Health Aff. 2002](#)). A study examining the racial composition of dermatology residents and faculty from 2012-2014 found that while 4.3% of residents are Black, the proportion of faculty who are Black decreases with academic rank. Only 1.3% of Full Professors are Black ([Qiu et al. J. Am. Acad. Dermatol. 2016](#)). Thus, there is clearly a clear need to increase the number of dermatologists from underrepresented communities in training and faculty positions.

- Applicants must have a doctoral degree (M.D. or Ph.D.) by the date of award activation and must conduct their proposed research/project under a Mentor who holds a formal appointment at the host institution's Department/Division of Dermatology.
- New applicants must hold a trainee position, such as postdoc or medical resident, at a not-for-profit, non-governmental U.S. research institution at the time of award activation.
- Applications are limited to applicants that will be based within a Department/Division of Dermatology with an established pigmented lesion clinic/program at time of award activation.
- Mentors must be a faculty member with an appointment in a U.S. department/division of dermatology with an ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education) approved training program (secondary appointments are allowed).
- Applicants may be residents, as well as M.D.'s conducting a postdoctoral fellowship. Proposals from applicants who will hold an independent faculty position at the time of award activation will not be considered.
- At institutions with policies that prohibit residents from being able to receive research grant funding, the Mentor may serve as the primary investigator on the proposal.
 - In this case, please provide a letter from the Department Chair stating such a policy exists and email Rachel Fischer at rfischer@curemelanoma.org to ensure MRA is aware.
- Applicants need not be specifically trained in melanoma research, but must have a demonstrated interest in melanoma.
- Up to two new applications from a single institution may be submitted, in addition to any renewal applications.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY: DERMATOLOGY FELLOW AWARD FOR MELANOMA RESEARCH ON SKIN OF COLOR

While people with darker skin are less likely to develop melanoma than individuals with lighter skin tones, melanoma does occur across all races and ethnicities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 2012 and 2016, the average annual number of deaths (and death rates) due to melanoma were 237 (0.7 per 100,000) among the Hispanic population, 131 (0.4 per 100,000) among the Black population, 58 (0.3 per 100,000) among the Asian/Pacific Islander, and 15 (0.5 per 100,000) among the American Indian/Alaska Native population. Among the White, non-Hispanic population average deaths during this same period were 8,556 per year at a rate of 3.2 per 100,000.

The types of melanoma faced by populations vary, with African Americans most likely to be diagnosed with acral lentiginous melanoma (believed not to be linked to UV damage), while the Hispanic population is nearly three times as likely to be diagnosed with cutaneous nodular melanoma (which is associated with UV damage,) compared to acral lentiginous melanoma. Over the past two decades, melanoma incidence among Hispanics has risen by 20%.

Proposed efforts may focus on, but are not limited to:

- Comparative analysis of acral lentiginous melanoma from skin of color and whites to explore common and/or diverging biology, and/or disparities;
- Research to improve specificity of detection efforts among skin of color, so as to reduce unnecessary worry and procedures that may cause more harm than benefit. Such efforts may include a range of non-invasive diagnostic approaches from Artificial Intelligence to gene expression profiling;
- Research into the potential risks, harms, and benefits of screening and public education about melanoma in populations of color; and
- Studies of the epidemiology, biology, and genetic risk of melanocytic lesions, including acral lentiginous melanoma and rare melanoma subtypes, across racial/ethnic groups are needed.

Applicants should submit to the general Dermatology Fellows Award program and designate their desire to be considered for this award when completing their online application in ProposalCENTRAL. To do this, please select “Skin of Color” under subprogram in the Title Page step of the online application. **Selecting “Skin of Color” will not limit an applicant’s opportunity to also be selected under the general Dermatology Fellows Award, but instead is meant to expand opportunities in an effort to increase overall funding of projects focused on melanoma in Skin of Color.**

Please see instructions below on how to apply. Please contact Rachel Fischer Ph.D., MRA Senior Associate, Scientific Program and Grants Administration at rfischer@curemelanoma.org with any questions.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY: SUPERGOOP!-MRA DERMATOLOGY FELLOW AWARD ON PEDIATRIC SUNSCREEN USE

About 90% of all skin cancers, including melanoma, are directly related to exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. UV rays can penetrate and change the structure of skin cells, as well as lead to cancer-causing mutations in the DNA of these cells. Such changes can cause skin cancer, including melanoma. Preventing sunburns among children is especially important – for instance, just one or two blistering sunburns during childhood doubles a person’s lifetime risk for developing melanoma.

Supergoop!, founded by Holly Thaggard in 2005, was initially built on the idea of educating children early in life on the importance of daily sunscreen use as a means to preventing skin cancer over a lifetime. This focus on establishing early healthy habits and education remains critical to the mission of Supergoop!

In partnership with Supergoop!, MRA seeks research or demonstration projects focused on sun-safety, with the Fellow committing to the following:

- The research or demonstration project will be representative of a breadth of skin tones;
- In partnership with MRA and Supergoop!, and in addition to their proposed project, the Fellow will support early childhood education on the importance of sunscreen by speaking about their research to K-12 audiences. This awareness work will focus on underserved communities; and
- The Fellow will partner with MRA and Supergoop! on sun protection awareness efforts via social media or press, with a special emphasis on underserved communities that may not have access to the educational intervention or sunscreen.

Applicants should submit to the general Dermatology Fellows Award program and designate their desire to be considered for this award when completing their online application in ProposalCENTRAL. To do this, please select “Supergoop!” under subprogram in the Title Page step of the online application. **Selecting “Supergoop!” will not limit an applicant’s opportunity to also be selected under the general Dermatology Fellows Award, but instead is meant to expand opportunities in an effort to increase overall funding of projects focused on pediatric dermatology and sunscreen use.**

Please see instructions below on how to apply. Please contact Rachel Fischer Ph.D., MRA Senior Associate, Scientific Program and Grants Administration at rfischer@curemelanoma.org with any questions.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY: GRACE WENZEL-MRA DERMATOLOGY FELLOW AWARD FOR WOMEN IN MELANOMA RESEARCH

In 2018, Grace Wenzel was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma at the age of 22. Before ultimately succumbing to her disease in 2020, Grace became a tireless advocate for melanoma research, including research focused on melanoma prevention.

MRA is proud to offer a Dermatology Fellow Award in memory of Grace Wenzel with the goal of attracting and retaining female dermatology residents and postdoctoral researchers in Departments/Divisions of Dermatology who aim to advance melanoma prevention and detection. The award will support projects with the potential to lead to transformative advances in prevention, detection, diagnosis and staging of melanoma. **For this Award, the fellow must be a woman.**

Applicants should submit to the general Dermatology Fellows Award program and designate their desire to be considered for this award when completing their online application in ProposalCENTRAL. To do this, please make the “Woman Dermatology Fellow” selection under subprogram in the Title Page step of the online application. One award will be funded via this Special Opportunity, but as is our practice, MRA will grant additional Dermatology Fellow Awards regardless of the gender of the applicants. **Selecting “Woman Dermatology Fellow” will not limit an applicant’s opportunity to also be selected under general Dermatology Fellow Awards, but instead is meant to expand opportunities in an effort to increase overall the number of women competing for funded research.**

APPLICATION FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 2nd, 2021. Proposals will not be considered after the deadline. Applicants must utilize the ProposalCENTRAL online application tool at <https://proposalcentral.com> and the document templates and requirements therein. Please carefully follow the instructions in ProposalCENTRAL and below. Applications include the following steps and components:

1. **Title Page:** Enter the project title.
 - Select Special Opportunity if applicable (otherwise select N/A)
2. **Templates and Instructions:** Download RFP and templates.
3. **Enable Other Users to Access This Proposal:** Allow others (e.g., institutional administrators or collaborators) to view, edit, or submit your proposal. Electronic signatures are required to submit the application for submission. ***The Signing Official from the applicant's institution must be provided at least 'Edit' access on this screen to be able to sign.*** Please review the Signature Page to confirm the signature roles required and add as appropriate on this page.
4. **Applicant/PI:** Key information about the applicant. If the applicant is the Mentor due to institutional policies, please provide a letter from the Department Chair in the Upload Attachments section stating such a policy exists and email Rachel Fischer at rfischer@curemelanoma.org to ensure MRA is aware.
5. **Organization/Institution:** Key information about the applicant's institution, including name and email address of the signing official who, in addition to the applicant, will be contacted if the award is selected for funding.
6. **Key Personnel:** List and provide contact information for key persons. A Mentor from the same institution is required.
7. **Data and Renewable Reagent Sharing Plan:** In order to promote rapid research advancement, transparency, reproducibility, and collaboration, MRA encourages the open sharing of data and resources generated from its funded awards. Provide information for the types of data and renewable reagents (if applicable) that will be generated as part of the award and how they will be shared.

MRA has adopted the following **Data Sharing Policy**:

- MRA **requests** the posting of manuscripts based on or developed under an MRA Award to a pre-print server ahead of or at the time of journal submission.
- MRA **requests** the posting of research outputs (data, code, software) to public data repositories at the time such research outputs are generated.
- MRA **requests** that manuscripts based on or developed under an MRA Award be published in open-access journals.

- MRA **requests** that all research outputs based on or developed under an MRA Award (including publications, data, code, and software) be made available with no commercial modification rights (e.g. [CC BY-NC license](#)).
- MRA **requires** that the final, accepted version of any publication based on or developed under an MRA Award be deposited in PubMed Central so that it is available 12 months after publication.
- MRA **requires** that any data, code, and/or software needed for the independent verification of published research results based on or developed under an MRA Award be curated and made freely and publicly available at the time of publication.

MRA will incur costs associated with policy compliance, provided these fees (e.g. article processing charges, data storage), are included in the original grant application budget.

8. **Abstracts and Keywords:** Provide a general audience abstract (non-technical) and a technical abstract (2,000 characters' maximum each) and keywords. Please note: the general audience abstract will become public if the award is selected for funding, therefore, it should not contain any proprietary information.
9. **Budget Period Detail:** Enter budget detail for the award period requested. Awards will not support indirect costs, overhead costs, or other similar institutional charges. Fringe benefits for personnel salaries are allowable.
10. **Budget Summary and Justification:** A summary of the budget detail will be shown in this step. In addition, provide sufficient detail for the evaluation of the major portions of the budget that are being requested. If more space is required than is provided in the ProposalCENTRAL forms (2,000 characters), applicants may upload the budget justification in document form in step #12.
11. **Organizational Assurances:** IRB and IACUC approvals, if applicable.
12. **Upload Attachments:** Upload the following:
 - a. **Biosketch for applicant and key personnel:** Please upload an NIH format Biosketch for applicant, Mentor and any additional Key Personnel. Biosketches for research support staff, students, postdocs and other training positions are not required (with the exception of the applicant Fellow). Key Personnel who do not have an NIH biosketch may use the template provided in ProposalCENTRAL.
 - b. **Project description:** Must be formatted in Arial 11-point or Times New Roman 12-point font with no less than ½ inch margins. The project description should be 3 pages maximum, inclusive of the following: Background and specific aims, preliminary data, experimental design and methods, figures (which may be embedded within the above sections), and rationale/fit with key criteria, including the potential for clinical impact.
 - c. **Literature references:** A list of up to 20 references supporting the project description is allowed, in addition to the 3-page project description.

- d. **Mentor Letter of Support:** Include a letter of support from an established scientific Mentor at the same institution who holds a formal appointment in the Department of Dermatology, who is familiar with the applicant and his/her work and will provide guidance and support for the project. The Mentor's letter should confirm that the applicant has an interest in dermatology research and include a brief statement about the applicant, the Mentor's role, mentoring plan, the research environment, and sources of institutional support that the applicant will utilize in conducting the project. MRA recognizes that unconscious bias can manifest in such support letters and therefore strongly recommends considering these or similar guidelines when preparing such letters: <https://tinyurl.com/yapwnw3a>.
 - e. **Application requirements checklist:** Please fill out to ensure all application materials are complete and applicant is eligible to apply.
13. **PI Data Sheet:** Please provide your ORCID ID. If you do not have an ORCID ID, you can register for one here: <https://orcid.org/register>. MRA requests that applicants provide additional demographic information, but it is not required. Demographic information is not used in any way during the selection process and reviewers do not have access to this information. Having such information will help MRA staff understand its applicant and awardee pools and detect and address any inequities that may exist in the selection process.
14. **Validate:** Check for any missing required information.
15. **Signature Page(s):** *Before submitting the application*, an electronic signature is **required** from both the Applicant/PI and a Signing Official from the applicant's institution. Type your name in the text box and click the green 'Sign' button. A date and time stamp will appear next to the button indicating that the electronic signature was successful. To give the Signing Official access to sign this application, enter their information in Step 3: Enable other users to access this proposal and grant them at least "Edit" access.
16. **Submit:** Please note that no proposals will be able to be submitted past their deadline. Technical support for the on-line application system is not available after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

TIMELINE

Application deadline concludes at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 2nd. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

February 1, 2021: Dermatology Fellows Award - Program Request-for-Proposals (RFP) issued

April 2, 2021: Applications due

Early June 2021: Awardees notified

July 1, 2021: Projects start

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

AWARD LETTER

Upon acceptance of the award, the Fellow and his/her employing Institution will be required to sign an Award Letter indicating acceptance of the MRA's Award Terms and Conditions within 30 days, which can be found here <https://www.curemelanoma.org/assets/Uploads/PDFs/TermsAndConditions2019.pdf>. MRA must be notified in advance and approve any significant changes in research objectives, key personnel (including transfer to another employee), or budget.

APPROVALS

MRA requires certification through proposalCENTRAL of compliance with Human Subjects and Animal Care Assurance as applicable. In cases where ethical/regulatory approval is required to perform the work, such approvals will be required before initial payments are made. This includes local IRB approvals of clinical trials supported by MRA funding.

FUNDING

For all proposals, the level of funding may be adjusted by MRA as appropriate for the scope of the proposal and the funds available. **Awards will not support indirect costs, overhead costs, or other similar institutional charges;** however, fringe benefits for personnel salaries are allowable.

MRA SCIENTIFIC RETREAT

Fellows will be invited to attend the annual MRA Scientific Retreat. Fellows are expected to attend and may be asked to present research findings or project outcomes made under their awards at these meetings. MRA will cover reasonable travel costs related to participation in the Scientific Retreat directly and such costs should not be included in proposed budget. More information about MRA Scientific Retreats and dates for MRA's 2022 and 2023 Scientific Retreats can be found at: <https://www.curemelanoma.org/research/scientific-retreat/>.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I do not hold the title of Fellow but I do hold the title of my institution's entry level, postdoctoral appointment. Am I eligible to apply?

A: Post-terminal degree, training appointments that are not tenure-track/permanent positions may be eligible to apply. Applicants cannot hold independent, faculty-level appointments.

Q: I am an Assistant Professor at an academic institution. Am I eligible to apply?

A: Generally, no, unless the Assistant Professor title is equivalent to a Fellow position. Those currently in training positions are eligible. Only those who are postdocs or medical residents will be considered. Dermatology Fellow Award applicants who do not hold a 'Fellow' title must contact MRA to verify their eligibility prior to submitting a proposal (see contact information in this RFP).

Q: What is the role of the Mentor?

A: It is expected that Fellows have appropriate expertise and evidence of productivity to carry out the proposed research training project. However, a Mentor is required and it is expected the applicant will work closely with the Mentor in execution of this training project. The Mentor must hold a formal appointment at the applicant's institution's Department/Division of Dermatology.

Q: I would like to have a Mentor that is not at my institution. Is this allowed?

A: No. All Fellow applicants must have a designated Mentor at their institution to help to ensure that the Fellow has the resources they need to successfully carry out the work at their institution. An applicant may have additional mentors outside of their institution for other purposes, including providing scientific guidance for the project, but they will not be considered a Mentor for the award.

Q: Are Mentors of Fellow applicants allowed to be a PI of an existing MRA award or award application during the 2021-2022 cycle?

A: Yes, however, each research proposal must have a distinct hypothesis.

Q: Is there a minimum level of effort for the Mentor?

A: No. Mentors should not be listed as having any percent effort on the award.

Q: What should be covered in the Mentor Letter of Support?

A: Applicants should include a letter of support from an established scientific Mentor at the same institution, from within the Department of Dermatology, who is familiar with the applicant and his/her work and will provide guidance and support for the project. The Mentor's letter should confirm that the applicant has an interest in dermatology research and include a brief statement about the applicant, the Mentor's role, mentoring plan, the research environment, and sources of institutional support that the applicant will utilize in conducting the project. MRA recognizes that unconscious bias can manifest in such support letters and therefore strongly recommends considering these or similar guidelines when preparing such letters: <https://tinyurl.com/yapwnw3a>.

Q: Are Assistant Professors allowed to be Mentors?

A: Yes. Applicants are encouraged to select a Mentor with a strong track record in melanoma research and care.

Q: Can a faculty member serve as a Mentor for more than one applicant?

A: Yes, faculty may serve as a Mentor for more than one applicant.

Q: Can faculty with a secondary ACGME appointment serve as a Mentor?

A: Yes, faculty with primary or secondary ACGME appointments may serve as a Mentor.

Q: What is the expected level of percent effort for a Fellow?

A: There is no specific requirement around percent effort, but MRA encourages a minimum of 25% effort on the project. If 25% effort is prohibitive, please provide an accompanying letter to describe why a reduced effort is necessary.

Q: I will not receive my Ph.D. or M.D. until after the application deadline. May I apply?

A: Applicant Fellows must have received their advanced degree at the time of award activation.

Q: Will you consider postdocs or medical residents who are not trained in melanoma research?

A: Yes. Investigators need not be specifically trained in melanoma research, but must have a demonstrated interest in melanoma.

Q: What is the renewal process for this award?

A: A second, renewal year may be possible based on progress and a Year Two Renewal Proposal. At the end of year one, awardees will submit a Year Two Renewal Proposal to MRA. Renewal Proposals will be reviewed internally by MRA's scientific team. Based on this review, MRA will then make recommends for second year renewals to the Chair of the MRA Dermatology Council, who will review and approve any renewals. All awards are contingent upon ratification by the MRA Board of Directors.