

Tips Sheet for Arthritis Society Grants and Awards Applicants

The following list of “tips” have been compiled from feedback provided by our volunteer peer review panel members. Applicants are encouraged to create applications in [Apply](#) early to familiarize themselves with the online system, allow time for a complete review of the application form, and upload attachments prior to the deadline.

Please refer to to the [program description](#) and application template document for information required. Remember, [Apply](#) will not accept any formatting or scientific symbols.

All applicants are strongly urged to seek a “friendly review” by knowledgeable colleagues who are willing and able to provide a critique of both content and style. New investigators are strongly encouraged to seek out appropriate mentors for advice in preparing the grant application.

Writing Style

- Read instructions carefully to ensure that your responses directly answer the questions posed throughout the application.
- Your application should tell a story. Lead the reviewer carefully and do not make them work to follow your path.
- Provide the information in the grant proposal in an orderly fashion and be clear, concise, and comprehensive.
- Avoid repetition and redundancy.
- Avoid vague statements and broad sweeping all-inclusive hopes.
- Give clear definitions for terms, study parameters, inclusion criteria, etc.
- Provide justification for all information. Explain the “why” in addition to the “what”.

Grant Application Structure

- Every section is important and must include sufficient details. For example, in studies involving patient cohorts, please provide a description of the patient cohort.
- Ensure that the research background, objectives, hypotheses, methodological approach, and statistical analyses correspond and flow appropriately with one another.
- Make sure your hypothesis is clear and is structured at the beginning of your application.
- The background section of your proposal should outline the most current research in your field of study. This section should also outline a careful summary of preliminary data and include an appropriate rationale for the proposed study.
- Clearly describe the role of each individual involved in your research.
- Goals should be focused and should be stated concisely and precisely.

- Be certain that the research design is appropriate for the questions being asked in the study and that the data generated will answer these questions.
- Emphasize the collection and analysis of facts or the perceptions and experiences of the study cohort, not the perceptions and experiences of the applicants.
- Identify sources of bias and address how you will effectively mitigate them.
- Effectively conclude your research proposal. You want your application to be memorable and impactful.

Consumer Involvement

- Highlight the role of the consumer in the project development, evaluation process, knowledge translation etc.
- Use lay-terms when writing the public summary section. Consumers, who are not researchers, are reviewing your applications as well.
- Consider sharing your proposal with non-researchers to provide feedback about whether the potential impact of your project is clear and understandable.

Important Considerations

- Address issues identified from a Letter of Intent (LOI) review within the full application (if applicable).
- Convey the novelty and potential impacts of your research but do not overstate the impacts. Not all research will lead to a cure for arthritis, not all clinical trials or methodologies will revolutionize practice etc.
- Be sure that the impact of an outcome is linked to the priority areas you have indicated.
- Your proposed project should be well justified and appropriate for the funding term.
- Your application should demonstrate that you are a capable candidate. Each reviewer has other applications to evaluate over a limited amount of time - emphasize what sets you apart from other candidates.

References and Additional Documentation

- Include references. Do not state as fact if you cannot provide appropriate sources of information or preliminary data.
- Avoid referencing meeting abstracts or data that is not provided. Provide the details within the proposal. You may include this information in appendices, but reviewers are not obligated to read the appendices.
- Obtain references from individuals who can speak to your accomplishments in different career stages.
- Communicate with references for letters of support, when applicable. Ensure that they highlight key elements of your application.
- Ensure all required documentation is attached to your application upon submission.

Stars Career Development Award Applicants Only

- Clearly describe your program of research, not just project(s). This is not an operating grant competition but instead supports an individual as they develop their research program.
- Ensure your short-term objectives and methodology are feasible given your expertise, research environment, and proposed budget. Reviewers will assess both your research program and specific research project(s) that will be supported by this award.
- Consider the term of this award and justify your proposed program within its scope.
- Describe how this award will help you. What is the incremental benefit in receiving this award? How will it advance your research and overall career?
- Include details as to how your institution will help you reach your career goals.
- Describe how the award is unique and/or complementary to the funding sources you have already received and/or established.