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# UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

## 2025 Leadership in Education, Achievement and Diversity (LEAD) Program

### IMPORTANT DATES

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, October 31, 2024

**Peer Review:** November 2024 – February 2025

**Funding Notification:** April 2025

**Award Period:** July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027 (two years)

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION MENTORED RESEARCH AWARDS

The mission of the Urology Care Foundation, the official foundation of the American Urological Association (AUA), is to support and improve urological care by funding research, developing patient education, and pursuing philanthropic support. Having recognized a major need to support the future of the urologic research workforce, the Urology Care Foundation offers a portfolio of mentored research training awards designed to recruit promising young physicians and investigators into urologic research and foster their career success.

These awards are administered by the AUA Office of Research, with funding provided by the Urology Care Foundation and partner organizations and sponsors. The AUA Office of Research was created in 2001 with a mission to increase and maintain the workforce of urology physician-scientists and researchers to catalyze the advancement of clinical practice and reduce the burden of urologic disease through impactful research. All proposals are evaluated by an independent peer review panel of expert physician-scientists and researchers who evaluate the scientific merit of each project as well as the applicant’s potential to become a future research leader.

The AUA and its Urology Care Foundation are committed to promoting diversity in its many forms to promote excellence in research and leadership within the urologic research workforce. The AUA and its Urology Care Foundation are supportive of efforts to analyze and address the ways in which social and economic inequalities impact the urology community, and the ability to achieve health equity for patients with urologic conditions. Information related to the applicant’s race/ethnicity and gender is collected during the proposal process to assess these efforts but is de-identified for all reporting purposes.

### B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Research training during urology residency provides residents with exposure to a research career path and experience to enable them to continue their development towards becoming independent investigators. Importantly, residency research training has the potential to address the critical and increasing shortfall of urology surgeon-scientists and to play a key role in improving patients’ lives through research. The Urology Care Foundation is also focused on developing resources that make urologic research training more compelling to urologists from communities underrepresented in science, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that urologic research is strengthened through diversity and inclusion, and appropriately addresses disparities in urologic care through research.

Established in 2021, the Leadership in Education, Achievement and Diversity (LEAD) Program is a high-impact initiative designed to support the development of successful research careers by urology residents from racial and ethnic backgrounds underrepresented in urologic research. The LEAD Program provides comprehensive research support to young urologists by creating a development pathway through existing AUA research programs. Program participants will conduct mentored research training, engage in AUA research education opportunities, and be championed through networking events as they develop successful research careers and improve urology patient care. In the event an applicant is selected during their final year of residency, the LEAD Program award may be retained as they transfer into a fellowship program.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

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To be considered for the LEAD Program, by July 1, 2025, applicants must:

- Be and remain enrolled in an accredited urology resident program within the geographic boundaries of an AUA Section during the entire program award period (e.g., July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027);
- Be able to allocate the minimum 80% level of protected time toward the research project during year one (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) of the award term; and

Deviation from the percent effort requirement will result in reimbursement to the Urology Care Foundation of any remaining funds provided through the award and/or jeopardize future Urology Care Foundation awards to the institution.

Funding is available for research training in urologic benign diseases (such as LUTS, bladder dysfunction or prostate-related diseases) or malignant diseases of the prostate, and across all research types: basic, translational, clinical, and health services/outcomes. Additionally, research projects addressing factors relevant to the understanding and promotion of minority health in urology and/or to the understanding and reduction of health disparities in urology/urologic oncology are encouraged.

One proposal per applicant is allowed during a competition year. Former recipients of a Urology Care Foundation Residency Research Award or a LEAD Program award are ineligible. If the research is being conducted in the United States, applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens but must have valid Social Security numbers for Internal Revenue Service purposes.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

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Membership in the AUA is required to accept this award. All applicants who are not AUA members at the time of proposal submission must commit to applying for AUA membership if selected to receive LEAD Award. Membership applications must be submitted within one week of accepting the LEAD Award and proof of AUA membership must be provided to the AUA Office of Research prior to funds being dispersed. Additional information about AUA membership can be found at <http://www.auanet.org/membership/member-benefits-and-programs/resident/fellow>.

### 3. MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

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Each applicant must have a primary mentor for the proposed research project. Mentors should be independent investigators with track records of success in research publication, grant funding, and documented development of trainees who have achieved academic success. The proposal must be prepared by the applicant under the supervision and guidance of, but with minimal assistance provided by, the mentor(s). More than one mentor per project is both permitted and recommended if the project is highly translational or multidisciplinary. Listing of collaborators and/or consultants on the project is acceptable and it is recommended that applicants upload a letter of support from them if applicable (see Section II, Subsection F: Letters from Collaborators).

### 4. HOST INSTITUTION REQUIREMENTS

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To be eligible as a host institution, the institution must be accredited, reside within the boundaries of the AUA Sections and support the applicant by provide adequacy of the environment, laboratory equipment, and supplies needed to conduct the proposed research.

Additionally, institutions (e.g., Residency Program Directors, Department Chairs, etc.) must agree to provide time protection for LEAD awardees to attend and participate in research conferences, workshops, courses, etc. during the

two-year award performance period. Failure to do so will result in withholding of funds for this and/or other Urology Care Foundation research awards associated with the institution, and potentially render the institution ineligible for receipt of future Urology Care Foundation award funds.

## D. FUNDING INFORMATION

### 1. AWARDS AVAILABLE

One award is anticipated to be available for the 2025 LEAD Program, which consists of \$10,000 specifically allocated to executing the proposed research project, as well as complimentary access to additional AUA Office of Research programs. Availability of all Urology Care Foundation awards is contingent on market trends and subject to change. Final determinations regarding award funding will be made at the time of awardee selection. Funding is available for research training in benign or urologic oncology disease areas such as bladder dysfunction and prostate-related and across all research types: basic, translational, clinical, and health services/outcomes.

The Urology Care Foundation continuously seeks additional sponsors; thus, the portfolio of awards available is ever evolving both within and between funding years. The entities listed above may not represent the complete list of sponsors that will support awards for this competition cycle, nor do these sponsors or the Urology Care Foundation make any guarantees that any/all awards will be filled. LEAD Program Awards are granted based on the objective evaluation of all aspects of eligibility criteria, scientific review, and the financial portfolio available at the time the awards are finalized by the Urology Care Foundation. The Urology Care Foundation reserves the right for final approval for any/all awards provided through the program.

While applicants may propose any type of research (basic, translational, clinical, or health services/outcomes) in urologic benign diseases (such as LUTS, bladder dysfunction or prostate-related) or malignant diseases of the prostate, the Urology Care Foundation encourages consideration of key gaps in research that have been identified in the AUA clinical guidelines and, if addressed, could ultimately have a significant impact on improving urology patient care. Additionally, research related questions addressing factors relevant to the understanding and promotion of minority health in urology and/or to the understanding and reduction of health disparities in urology/urologic oncology conditions are encouraged.

### 2. REGISTRATION SUPPORT

Awardees will receive complimentary registration to AUA online research education coursework and complimentary registration to attend the AUA Early Career Investigator Workshop during the award period.

Participation in these programs is required of all LEAD awardees during the award period. Failure to register and/or attend without prior approval from the AUA Office of Research may result in the forfeiture of the award and potential ineligibility for future Urology Care Foundation award funds.

### 3. TRAVEL SUPPORT

During the award performance period, awardees will receive travel support to offset transportation, lodging, and other costs associated with attending the AUA Annual Meeting and attending other relevant research conferences. Travel support is available at up to \$1,500 per calendar year, with a per-meeting cap of \$1,000.

All LEAD Program awardees are required to attend every AUA Annual Meeting occurring during the award term. Further, LEAD Program awardees are expected to participate in affiliated Office of Research / Urology Care Foundation events (e.g., research symposia, Urology Care Foundation Honors Program & Reception, Early-Career Investigator Showcase, etc.) occurring during the AUA Annual Meeting. Failure to do so without prior approval from the AUA Office of Research may result in the forfeiture of the award and potential ineligibility for future Urology Care Foundation award funds.

#### 4. OVERLAP IN FUNDING

Applicants are not eligible to hold a LEAD Program award if they currently or previously accepted a career development award (NIH K-level or comparable). In addition, accepting, actively possessing, or previously receiving a large independent investigator award(s) including or comparable to a NIH R01 is incompatible with applying to or accepting a LEAD Program award. Applicants are not eligible to hold a LEAD Program award if they currently possess or accept a competing award that detracts from the 80% effort required for the research project period. Applicants are not eligible to hold a LEAD Program award if they are awarded other grants supported by the AUA or its Urology Care Foundation for the same research project.

Provided there is no reduction of effort and no overlap in direct costs, a LEAD Program award may be used to support a research project that is awarded funding from other extramural organizations or government agencies.

Applicants are required to report previously received and active funding within their biosketch. Applicants must detail applications submitted to other funding sources in their proposal and must provide the AUA Office of Research notice of funding secured after submitting a LEAD Program application or during the award period.

#### 5. INSTITUTIONAL MATCHING FUNDS

Host institutions are not required to provide matching funds for the awardee. However, they must indicate acceptance of the required 80% protected time during the research project period. Institutional commitment to the resident's research training and project must be demonstrated through the required letters of support (see *Section II, Subsection E: Confidential Letters of Support*), and will be evaluated by peer review and contribute to the funding decision.

#### 6. ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

The intent of LEAD Program award funds is to provide minimally restricted support in the form of any direct costs that benefit the project during the resident's research training. These funds are to be used for research costs not typically covered by residency programs, including: purchase of research supplies, services, and/or database access; research education (coursework or workshops related to the proposed research project); and other non-personnel resources needed to conduct the proposed research project.

#### 7. PROHIBITED USE OF FUNDS

Urology Care Foundation funds cannot be used for institution indirect costs, applicant salary support, or costs for or related to any personnel other than the awarded resident.

#### 9. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Urology Care Foundation funds will be paid directly to the awardee's sponsoring institution via wire transfer in one installment in July, contingent upon receipt of required onboarding information. The Urology Care Foundation does not withhold taxes from awards (federal withholding, social security, local or state taxes, etc.). It is the responsibility of the host institution and/or awardee to ensure that appropriate federal and local taxes are accounted for.

## II. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The LEAD Program application process consists of a full proposal. Applicants should review this Program Announcement in its entirety to understand and begin preparing the required components. Questions on eligibility, application materials, etc. should be directed to the AUA Office of Research via email at [grantsmanager@auanet.org](mailto:grantsmanager@auanet.org).

Applicants are responsible for composing, compiling, and submitting complete materials. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all required items are submitted electronically via the proposal submission system, including those requested from the mentor(s), additional letters of support, and letters from collaborators if applicable, prior to

the proposal deadline. Applicants assume all responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of materials, and that materials are received in full in advance of submission deadlines.

A proposal is required and must be received by **October 31, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time**. Proposal information undergoes administrative compliance review by the AUA Office of Research to gauge applicant eligibility, document compliance, and to prepare for peer review. Following administrative review by the AUA Office of Research, submissions found to be compliant and eligible will be moved into peer review and scored by a panel of expert urology physician-scientists.

Institutions should encourage the submission of proposals from all eligible and highly qualified urologic research trainees and early-career faculty in need of support. Within any given funding year, however, the Urology Care Foundation prefers to provide support to as many institutions as possible, provided each institution has submitted a highly meritorious proposal. Therefore, funding decisions will be impacted by not only the merit of the proposal and the alignment with awards available, but also may be impacted by the intent to distribute Urology Care Foundation funds to qualified proposals from as diverse a distribution of institutions as possible.

#### **Formatting Guidelines:**

The following guidelines are applicable to all documents submitted for the letter of intent and proposal. Applications that do not abide the formatting guidelines will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award.

Documents should use Times New Roman font in 12-point format with 1 to ½ inch margins. Paragraphs should be single-spaced, and figure/image legends/axes must be present and clearly visible. Documents from letter of reference writers, institution administrators, etc. must be submitted on official institution letterhead, include full credential lines, signed and dated.

#### **Electronic Registration**

Applicants must submit a letter of intent, proposal, and all required documents electronically via ProposalCentral at <https://proposalcentral.com/>. Submission of materials via email, fax, or postal mail will not be accepted.

To prevent emails from ProposalCentral from being identified as spam, it is strongly recommended that applicants, individuals providing letters of support for the proposal, and institutional representatives add [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com) to their address books or safe sender lists. Applicants requiring technical support related to the grant submission portal should contact ProposalCentral directly.

## **B. EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

Applications violating any of the following conditions are deemed noncompliant and thus will not be advanced for review and are ineligible for award consideration. Attempts to appeal the triage will not be considered and final determination is at the sole discretion of the AUA Office of Research.

- Noncompliance with formatting guidelines
- Applicant biosketch not included in submission materials
- Primary mentor biosketch not included in submission materials
- Primary mentor letter of support not included in submission materials
- Missing or incomplete Proposal Agreement form
- Any materials in excess of prescribed page limits

## **C. PROPOSAL AGREEMENT FORM**

The Proposal Agreement Form may be downloaded from the Download Templates & Instructions section in ProposalCentral. All information should be typed into the Proposal Agreement Form: illegible information will not be accepted. This form must be completed in its entirety, including all necessary signatures from key personnel and the

institutional representative, and submitted prior to the proposal deadline: inclusion of a fully executed form at the letter of intent submission deadline is preferred. Proposals omitting the Proposal Agreement Form and/or forms not fully executed will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. Primary mentors are required to describe their involvement in the development of the proposal. Applicants must provide contact information for a grant administrator who is responsible for receiving award payments.

## D. APPLICANT BIOSKETCH

Applicants are required to submit an NIH-style biosketch with the letter of intent and full proposal, strictly limited to five pages, including descriptions of any research experience as well as research interests and career goals. The biosketch must also report any pending or awarded grants and describe how those funds will be allocated differently than the funding provided by the LEAD Program. A biosketch template is provided in the Download Templates section. Submissions that do not include the applicant's biosketch and/or documents that exceed the page limitations will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award.

## E. CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Confidential letters of support are required from the applicant's primary mentor(s), Residency Program Director, and Urology Department Chair. Applicants are responsible for assigning letter writers to their proposals immediately after access is granted to the full proposal. It is critical to assign letter writers as soon as possible to allow ample time to submit required letters by the proposal deadline (see *Section III, Number Eight: Confidential Letters of Support*).

Once the applicants assign a letter writer to their proposal, ProposalCentral will send an automated email to the letter writer with an upload link that will enable them to submit their letter confidentially. Applicants have the ability to log into their proposals at any time to check the submission status of their letters of support and may resend notification emails as needed.

Applicants are highly encouraged to contact their respective letter writers prior to the letter of intent deadline and should instruct them to add [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com) to their address books or safe sender lists.

### 1. PRIMARY MENTOR(S) LETTER OF SUPPORT

The proposal must contain one letter of support from the project primary mentor, limited to two pages. Letters that exceed the page limitations will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. If the primary mentor letter of support is not received by the proposal deadline, the proposal be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. In instances where two individuals are equally sharing primary mentorship responsibilities, a jointly written and co-signed letter may be provided. Clearly demonstrate that the mentor is strongly supportive of both the research project and the applicant's training, and that the mentor has the expertise required to provide sufficient scientific guidance and oversight for the respective portions of the research project and training. Primary mentor letters should describe the applicant's research training program and the mentor's specific involvement in and commitment to providing training, career development, and mentorship in urologic research. Specifically, the letter should address the following:

- Assurance that any funds needed beyond those provided by the award are available through the mentor's or institution's funding.
- Commit to any additional laboratory, departmental, and/or institutional resources (supplies, core facilities, additional mentors, collaborators, etc.) that will support the resident's research training and project.

### 2. RESIDENCY PROGRAM DIRECTOR LETTER OF SUPPORT

The proposal must contain one letter of support from the Residency Program Director, limited to one page. Letters that exceed the page limitations will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. If the Residency Program Director letter of support is not received by the proposal deadline, the proposal be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. The Residency Program Director letter of support should include the following:



- Attest to the applicant's strong performance in residency thus far.
- Attest to the applicant's demonstrated aptitude for a career in urology research.
- Commit to a project duration of two years.
- Provide 80% protected time for research for the duration of the project and indicate any additional allowable time for research beyond the assured, protected time.

### 3. UROLOGY DEPARTMENT CHAIR LETTER OF SUPPORT

The proposal must contain one letter of support from the Urology Department Chair, limited to one page. Letters that exceed the page limitations will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. If the Residency Program Director letter of support is not received by the proposal deadline, the proposal will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. The Urology Department Chair letter of support should include the following:

- Attest to the departmental support for research for the duration of the proposed project.
- Attest to the availability of research facilities and environment necessary to conduct the proposed research project.
- Commit to the provision of adequate research supplies and other support.

### F. LETTERS FROM COLLABORATORS

Collaborator letters of support (e.g., for promised materials or other research support) are not required for this award; however, if applicable, they are permitted. These letters are not confidential, and the applicant is responsible for uploading them into ProposalCentral by the full proposal deadline.

### G. APPLICANT CAREER PLAN

The Applicant Career Plan is strictly limited to one page. Applications that exceed the page limitation will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. Applicants should describe how they intend to build on this research award to continue on a path that includes research in their career as a urologist or urology surgeon-scientist. The career plan may further include descriptions of any intended fellowships, coursework, conferences, seminars, teaching or clinical responsibilities, grant writing, or other activities that applicants plan to use in their career development. Including a timeline is recommended.

### H. MENTOR BIOSKETCH(S)

An NIH-style biosketch is required for each mentor, limited to five pages each. Applications that exceed the page limitation and/or do not include the primary mentor's biosketch will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award.

### I. RESEARCH FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT DESCRIPTION

The Research Facilities and Environment Description is limited to one page. Applications that exceed the page limitation will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. Applicants should describe the institution's research and clinical facilities, funding, and technical assistance available to the project. Applicants should also include their specific duties, clinical activities, relationship to mentor's ongoing research program, and immediate supervisor as applicable during each month of the proposed research. Applicants must indicate their time committed to research (no less than 80%) in bold font.

### J. RESEARCH PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Research Project Abstract is strictly limited to one page. Applications that exceed the page limitation will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. Abstracts should summarize the following elements of the proposed research project and training under the following headings:

- Problem to be addressed
- Specific aims and experimental design

- Mentoring/Training plan
- Potential impact of the project on the applicant's career development
- Potential impact of the project on urologic research and clinical practice

The Research Project Abstract submitted as a proposal attachment is not synonymous with the project abstract required in the online application form: the latter is meant to capture an abbreviated abstract (e.g., 1,500 characters). While not synonymous, the Research Project Abstract document should be closely aligned with the abstract submitted in the online form.

## K. RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Research Project Description is strictly limited to three pages, inclusive of figures and tables, and must use the section headers in sequence as ordered below. Applications that exceed the page limitation will be deemed noncompliant and will not advance to review or receive consideration for an award. References cited page(s) and abbreviation/acronyms lists do not count against the page limit and are uploaded as a separate document in ProposalCentral.

### **Section 1: Background and Specific Aims** (suggested length: one page)

Introduce the problem to be addressed, providing the major reasons why this is an important problem to study and citing the appropriate literature. Define the major hypothesis to be tested and list specific aims proposed to test the hypothesis. Ensure that the aims are appropriate for the proposed duration of the project.

### **Section 2: Supporting Data** (suggested length: one page)

Provide any preliminary data pertinent to the proposed experiments. Present either research data that the applicant has generated or data that has been generated by the laboratory of the mentor(s) and is related to the proposed project. Unpublished data or published data (with references) may be included. Data in this section should support the hypothesis of the proposed work.

### **Section 3: Experimental Plan** (suggested length: one page)

Describe each experiment such that reviewers can determine the feasibility of the methods and how they will address the hypothesis and aims. Outline the rationale for each experiment, possible or anticipated results, and the approaches that will be used for data analysis and statistical interpretation, as appropriate. Briefly describe alternative experimental approaches should the initial approaches prove unsuccessful. If collaborators are present, clearly describe the role of each collaborator.

## III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

After creating a ProposalCentral account and logging into the system, the applicant can locate the LEAD Program by clicking on the "Grant Opportunities" tab and searching for the American Urological Association as the Grant Maker. The letter of intent can be accessed by clicking the "Apply Now" button. Letter of intent sections are listed below with additional guidance on how to complete each section. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of all materials, and that materials are received in full before the proposal deadline.

### **1. Title Page**

- Provide a title for your proposal (do not use all capital letters).
- Indicate number of months the proposed research project will require.

### **2. Download Templates & Instructions**

- Proposal Agreement Form – This form must be completed in its entirety, including all necessary signatures and contact information. Submitting a fully executed form at the letter of intent deadline is preferred, however it must be submitted with the full proposal.
- Biosketch Template – This is a reference document to assist applicants in completing a biosketch.

### **3. Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal**

- This section enables applicants to give other users access to the letter of intent but is not required.

- 4. Applicant/PI**
  - Applicants will need to toggle between their “Professional Profile” in ProposalCentral and sections of the letter of intent to reference and complete the required information.
  - ORCID Identifier – In accordance with the NIH policy requiring ORCID iDs from all applicants beginning October 2020 “to simplify applicant reporting and improve the tracking of career outcomes”, all Urology Care Foundation award mechanisms will also require applicants to provide ORCID iDs. Applicants can register for ORCID iDs at <https://orcid.org/>.
- 5. Eligibility**
  - AUA Section Information – Applicants should select the AUA Section in which the proposed research will be conducted. Applicants who intend to conduct their research at an institution within the state of New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania should reference the institution’s zip code to select the appropriate Section (see <https://www.AUAnet.org/membership/who-we-are/aua-sections-and-demographics>).
- 6. Institution & Contacts**
  - Applicants should confirm that the Lead Institution is correct and are required to indicate an Institution Representative or Signing Official to their proposal.
- 7. Key Personnel**
  - Applicants have the option of adding/removing key personnel who were previously included in the letter of intent.
- 8. Confidential Letters of Support**
  - This section enables the applicants to invite their primary mentor(s), Residency Program Director, and Urology Department Chair (letter writers) to complete and submit their letters of support through ProposalCentral. Applicants should complete this immediately upon gaining access to the full proposal.
  - Applicants may resend the invitation to individual letter writers and track whether the letters have been received. All letters of support must be received before the proposal deadline for the proposal to be considered for funding.
- 9. Project Information**
  - Applicants are required to provide a lay and technical abstract for the proposed project. By submitting the full proposal, the applicant thus gives consent for its use in Urology Care Foundation or AUA publications, advertising, fundraising, or other media activities.
- 10. Program Statements and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement**
  - Applicants are required to provide a one-paragraph Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement.
  - Applicants are required to provide information on the following prompts:
    - i. How the AUA Office of Research programs involved in the LEAD Program award would contribute to their immediate professional development during residency;
    - ii. The potential impact of the LEAD Program on their overall research acumen; and,
    - iii. How acceptance of the LEAD Program award would enhance their ability to actualize a long-term career plan to becoming a physician-scientist in urology.
- 11. Budget Detail**
  - Applicants are required to provide an itemized budget for the research project period, not to exceed \$10,000, on allowable items (see *Section I, Subsection D, Parts 6&7: Allowable and Prohibited use of Funds*).
- 12. Budget Summary**
  - Applicants are required to provide a budget justification narrative for each line-item expense.
  - Applicants should confirm budget information is correct and does not exceed \$10,000.
- 13. Other Research Support**
  - Applicants are required to report any other pending or awarded grants for the proposed research project and describe how those funds will be allocated differently than the funding provided by the LEAD Program.
- 14. Upload Attachments Here**
  - The applicant must upload all proposal components as portable document files (PDFs) with each component adhering to its specific page limitations.

## 15. Validate

- This section will check for any required information or files missing from the full proposal.

## 16. Print Full Application with Uploads

- No action is required in this section.

## 17. Submit

# IV. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

## A. PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals are evaluated by an independent peer review panel of expert physician-scientists and researchers. Each proposal is considered according to established criteria for determining merit as described below.

All review processes are conducted confidentially to maintain the integrity of the selection process. Peer reviewers agree to a nondisclosure statement that all proposal and evaluation information will not be disclosed outside the peer review panel. Violations of confidentiality can result in the voiding of peer review results and other corrective actions. In addition, the applicant, mentor(s), and other individuals involved in or otherwise standing to benefit from the proposal's funding are prohibited from contacting persons involved in the review process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process. Violations of these prohibitions will result in the disqualification of the proposal.

Following the completion of peer review and from the pool of proposals deemed fundable, the most highly meritorious proposals will be matched to available awards. Given the complexity of this process and the various stipulations of each award, along with programmatic considerations, it must be understood that the highest scoring proposals may not be automatically funded; however, every effort is made to support all proposals with the highest merit. All funding decisions are at the sole discretion of the AUA Office of Research and approved by the AUA Research Council Chair.

## B. REVIEW CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated against the following review criteria:

### **Applicant**

- To what degree the applicant's achievements to date, as reflected by awards, honors, previous publications, etc., indicate the applicant's potential for a successful career that includes urologic research.
- To what degree the applicant's stated career goals and the letters of support indicate a strong commitment to pursuing urologic disease research throughout the applicant's career.

### **Mentor(s)**

- To what degree the mentor letter(s) of support demonstrates the applicant's potential to pursue career-long involvement in urologic research.
- To what degree the mentor letter(s) of support includes a realistic time frame and describes the availability of necessary resources for the applicant's research project.
- To what degree the mentor(s) can provide the necessary expertise and track record to provide sufficient scientific guidance and oversight for the research project and training.
- To what degree the mentor has outlined a solid training plan for the applicant.

### **Institution**

- To what degree the institution provides a training environment with ongoing urologic disease research and the necessary resources that will promote the development of the applicant.

### **Residency Program Director and Urology Department Chair**

- To what degree the letters of support indicate the applicant's strong performance in residency thus far, the applicant's potential for career-long involvement in urologic research, and the appropriateness of the proposed length of the research project period with at least 80% of protected research time.

### Research Project

- To what degree the research project is appropriately designed and will provide the applicant with research experience and training to promote the development of long-term involvement in urologic research.
- To what degree the experimental plan is appropriately designed to achieve the aims of the project and achieve them within the proposed time frame. Expected results, potential obstacles, and alternative strategies should be discussed.
- To what degree the proposal is well organized, clearly presented, and suggests the applicant's ability to think clearly and to present an argument in a logical, compelling way.
- To what degree the research project has an appropriate budget to support the applicant and the applicant's proposed studies.

### Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement

- Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the extent to which the applicant's DEI statement adequately reflects the intent of the AUA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- This review criterion will not affect the overall impact score of an application but may be considered when determining appropriate alignment of the grant portfolio with DEI goals as outlined by the AUA and Urology Care Foundation.

## C. NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSAL REVIEW RESULTS

LEAD Program applicants will be notified of funding decisions through ProposalCentral and/or in writing via email. To prevent emails from the proposal submission system from being identified as spam, it is strongly recommended to add [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com) to your address book or safe sender list. Please note that results will not be given over the phone. Applicants selected for the LEAD Program must:

- Send an email to [grantsmanager@AUAnet.org](mailto:grantsmanager@AUAnet.org) to confirm or decline the award within 48 hours.
- Submit a high-quality headshot (file size typically  $\geq 1$ MB) in professional dress or laboratory/white coat via ProposalCentral within a week of accepting the award. With the submission of this photo, the applicant thus gives consent for its use in Urology Care Foundation or AUA publications, advertising, fundraising, or other media activities.
- Confirm AUA membership within a week of accepting the award by submitting their AUA member IDs or proof of application.

## C. NOTICE OF AWARD

For applicants selected for funding, a Notice of Award letter will be issued prior to the first payment to notify the awardee, primary mentor, and institutional representatives that an award has been made and to specify the terms and conditions of the award.

The Urology Care Foundation and the sponsors for their award programs do not assume responsibility for the conduct of the activities that the award supports, or for the acts of the award recipient, because both are under the direction and control of the award recipient's institution and subject to its medical and scientific policies.

## V. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

### A. RESEARCH AWARD

The LEAD Program begins with research funding support for urology residents. Award recipients are selected to conduct mentored research training and are provided with a \$10,000 stipend for direct costs to conduct a two year project where the awardee will dedicate no less than 80% effort toward the project.

## B. SCHOLAR TRAVEL SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Urology Care Foundation Scholar Travel Support Program is administered by the AUA Office of Research and is intended to provide opportunities for Urology Care Foundation-funded investigators to attend and present their research findings at scientific or professional meetings relevant to urologic research.

This program provides up to \$1,500 of travel support to LEAD Program awardees during their award performance period to help cover costs associated with travel, food, lodging, registration fees, and childcare. Awardees should refer to the Notice of Award for information regarding travel support applications and limitations.

## C. UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION HONORS PROGRAM & RECEPTION

This event is held every year during the AUA Annual Meeting to recognize the achievements of Urology Care Foundation-funded investigators who are completing their research projects, acknowledge the newest research awardees, and present special “Awards of Distinction” to individuals who have made major contributions to the field of urologic research.

It is the vision of the LEAD Program to build a community of LEAD Program alumni, all of whom will regularly interact during each year’s Urology Care Foundation Honors Program and Reception. To that end, LEAD Program participants are required to attend the Urology Care Foundation Research Honors Program and Reception for two consecutive years, beginning with the selection year, to present their work as well as network with the AUA and Urology Care Foundation Boards of Directors and other urologic research leaders. After their award performance period LEAD Program alumni will have a standing invitation to attend the reception.

## D. UROLOGY SCIENTIFIC MENTORING AND RESEARCH TRAINING (USMART) ACADEMY

The Urology Scientific Mentoring and Research Training (USMART) Academy fosters creative and impactful mentorship by pairing experienced, highly-accomplished physician-scientists and researchers with early-career investigators to provide scientific and career guidance. This program has seen measurable success by way of mentees’ career advancement and successful conflict management, scientific accomplishments, and new research funding.

LEAD Program awardees will have access to structured external mentorship as part of the USMART Academy. This mentorship is meant to complement, not supersede, existing institution-based mentors.

## E. EARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATORS WORKSHOP

The Early-Career Investigators Workshop (ECIW) is held annually to support career development in urologic research by providing participants with a solid foundation for successful grant writing. Activities include one-on-one and small-group mentoring sessions with scientific advisors, learning how to navigate federally-funded grant programs, opportunities to directly interact with funding agency representatives, mock peer review, and guidance on developing a fundable research project.

The LEAD Program requires awardees to participate in the highly-successful ECIW once during their award performance period. Awardees also have access to one additional complimentary registration to ECIW up to three years after the end of the award performance period to enable awardees to attend once during the research year of their clinical fellowship or first year of faculty appointment.

## F. ONLINE RESEARCH EDUCATION COURSES

The AUA Office of Research produces online education courses relevant to the urologic research community. Courses include areas such as “Big Data and ‘Omics’ Analysis in Urology,” “Writing a Successful Career Development Award Application,” and “Establishing Your Independent Urologic Research Lab.”

As requests are received by the AUA Office of Research, LEAD Program awardees will have complimentary access to these courses during the award performance period.

## VI. AWARD REQUIREMENTS

### A. REGULATORY APPROVALS AND EXEMPTIONS

#### 1. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Awardees must provide a letter of approval or exemption from the local IRB if activities involving human subjects are planned during the proposed research. IRB letters of approval or exemption are not required at the time of proposal submission. Should the proposal be selected for funding, the award will be contingent upon receipt of a copy of the current IRB approval or exemption letter by the AUA Office of Research. Documentation should be submitted through the proposal submission system. If IRB approval or exemption for the project is not obtained within 90 days of the award performance period start date, the Urology Care Foundation reserves the right to terminate the award.

#### 2. INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

Awardees must submit a letter of approval or exemption by the IACUC if activities involving vertebrate animals are planned during the research. IACUC letters of approval or exemption are not required at the time of proposal submission. Should the proposal be selected for funding, the award will be contingent upon receipt of a copy of the current IACUC approval or exemption letter by the AUA Office of Research. Documentation should be submitted through the proposal submission system. If IACUC approval or exemption for the project is not obtained within 90 days of the award performance period start date, the Urology Care Foundation reserves the right to terminate the award.

### B. REPORTING

Failure to adhere to reporting requirements and/or provide appropriate documentation may result in a delay in payments of other awards to the institution or suspension of the awardee, mentor(s), or institution from eligibility for subsequent Urology Care Foundation funding opportunities. Unless approved by the Urology Care Foundation, failure to complete the duration of the research period will result in repayment of unspent funds to the Urology Care Foundation.

#### 1. PUBLIC ACCESS PUBLISHING AND SHARING OF GRANT INFORMATION

All Urology Care Foundation awardees are subject to a public access policy. In addition, the AUA is a member of the Health Research Alliance (HRA)—a national consortium of non-governmental, nonprofit funders of biomedical research and training—and has agreed to deposit grant information in the HRA database of privately funded grants, HRA Reporter.

The AUA and its Urology Care Foundation reserve the right to include information relating to the grant (such as the grantee name and project title) in materials issued by or on behalf of the AUA and Urology Care Foundation, including periodic reports, newsletters or news releases, the website, or in any other materials issued by or on behalf of the AUA and the Urology Care Foundation. The following award information will be provided to the HRA Reporter database and may be shared with the public: investigator name, degrees, clinical specialty if applicable, institution, project title, abstract, grant start date and duration, grant amount and ORCID iD of the investigator if applicable. HRA aggregates these data for its member organizations and for periodic publication.

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## 2. AWARDEE REPORT

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### Interim Report

Awardees are required to submit an interim progress report and personal statement by June 1 following the first funding year to the AUA Office of Research via ProposalCentral. The second year of the award is contingent upon the receipt of a satisfactory progress report.

### Final Report

Within 30 days after the end of the funding period awardees must submit a final report via ProposalCentral and include all information outlined in the Notice of Award.

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## 3. PRIMARY MENTOR REPORT

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### Interim Report

The primary mentor interim report should be approximately one page and evaluate the awardee's performance, progress on the research project, and any other information outlined in the Notice of Award. The mentor is responsible for uploading this report to ProposalCentral by June 1.

### Final Report

The primary mentor's final report should be approximately one page and evaluate the awardee's performance as well as detail the future career plan for the awardee. The mentor is responsible for uploading this report to ProposalCentral within 30 days after the funding period.

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## 4. INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (IAR)

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An IAR must be completed by institutional grant administrators and submitted via ProposalCentral either 30-days after the completion of the research project, or no later than December 31 of the first funding year. This report reaffirms that the institution is adhering to all terms of the award, especially the provisions of institutional support and level of effort requirements. Continued participation in the LEAD Program is contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory report.

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## 5. OUTCOMES REPORTING

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Following the completion of the project period, the AUA Office of Research may contact previous awardees to collect additional award outcomes information including, but not limited to, publications, funding, invited speakerships and presentations, mentorship, and leadership positions within the AUA or affiliated organizations.

## C. CHANGES TO CONTACT INFORMATION, PROJECT, PERSONNEL, INSTITUTION, OR FUNDING

Any changes impacting the research project (i.e., primary mentor, key personnel, host institution, available facilities, applicant contact information, etc.) that occur after the proposal submission deadline must be reported to the AUA Office of Research. The AUA Office of Research will review the situation and determine whether the submitted proposal may continue to peer review or must be withdrawn.

Urology Care Foundation mentored research awards are intended to support individual early-career urologic researchers showing significant promise. Requests to change the award applicant will result in automatic application withdrawal and/or award ineligibility. Requests for exemption will not be considered. All decisions made by the AUA Office of Research are final.

If the applicant accepts funding after applying to the LEAD Program, the awardee must contact the AUA Office of Research to discuss appropriate courses of action. The AUA Office of Research will review the competing funding and determine whether the submitted proposal may continue to peer review or must be withdrawn. If the awardee does not meet this requirement, applicants may be ineligible to apply for future Urology Care Foundation funding opportunities.



If the awardee is selected for any additional funding from organizations other than the Urology Care Foundation after being selected for a LEAD Program award, the awardee must immediately contact the AUA Office of Research to discuss appropriate courses of action. If the awardee does not meet this requirement, return of any used or unused funds may be required.

#### D. PUBLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Awardees are required to send electronic copies of articles published based on LEAD Program-funded research to the AUA Office of Research at [grantsmanager@AUAnet.org](mailto:grantsmanager@AUAnet.org). Any publication or presentation arising from work supported in whole or in part by this award must include the following acknowledgment:

“This work was supported in part by the Urology Care Foundation Leadership in Education, Achievement, and Diversity Program and Sumitomo Pharma America, Inc.”

#### PUBLIC ACCESS PUBLISHING AND SHARING OF GRANT INFORMATION

All Urology Care Foundation awardees are subject to a public access policy. In addition, the AUA is a member of the Health Research Alliance (HRA)—a national consortium of non-governmental, nonprofit funders of biomedical research and training—and has agreed to deposit grant information in the HRA database of privately funded grants, HRA Reporter.

The AUA and its Urology Care Foundation reserve the right to include information relating to the grant (such as the grantee name and project title) in materials issued by or on behalf of the AUA and Urology Care Foundation, including periodic reports, newsletters or news releases, the website, or in any other materials issued by or on behalf of the AUA and the Urology Care Foundation. The following award information will be provided to the HRA Reporter database and may be shared with the public: investigator name, degrees, clinical specialty if applicable, institution, project title, abstract, grant start date and duration, grant amount and ORCID iD of the investigator if applicable. HRA aggregates these data for its member organizations and for periodic publication of findings (see <https://www.healthra.org/hra-platforms/hra-reporter-public/> for more information)

#### VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions related to the 2025 LEAD Program Announcement or submission requirements should be directed to the AUA Office of Research. The preferred method of communication is email at [grantsmanager@auanet.org](mailto:grantsmanager@auanet.org). Phone calls, when necessary, may directed to 410-689-3762. Assistance is typically available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. Please allow two business days for response time.