

2024 Uplifting Athletes Young Investigator Draft Grant Request For Applications

Last Updated: July 31, 2023

Application Deadline: Friday, October 6, 2023, 11:59 p.m. EST

Uplifting Athletes
8 Atkinson Drive
P.O. Box 574
Doylestown, PA 18901
grants@upliftingathletes.org

Please visit upliftingathletes.org/RFA for the most recent version of the Request for Applications.





Abstract

Uplifting Athletes (UAI) is seeking rare disease patient advocacy organizations who A) have identified a promising young investigator to be nominated for the 2024 Young Investigator Draft and B) are willing and able to provide a match of \$10,000, or greater, so that the nominated researcher will receive an unrestricted grant of at least \$20,000.

Project Overview

The Young Investigator Draft is the result of Uplifting Athletes' ongoing commitment to cultivating resources that accelerate scientific advancements for rare disease treatments and potential cures while facilitating the next generation of rare disease researchers. The Young Investigator Draft grants fund research that is collaborative and translational to positively impact treatments and potential cures for the entire rare disease community. The Young Investigator Draft stage provides a platform to celebrate these scientists, spread awareness of their efforts, and highlight the importance of their research, along with its impact on the rare disease community.

Project Goals & Target Audience

Researchers spend upwards of 40 percent of their time chasing money through grants to support their research. That is valuable time wasted that could be spent conducting life-saving research. At Uplifting Athletes, we aim to be a part of the solution by working through reputable patient advocacy organizations that emphasize supporting research within the disease state of their patient community. We work with these organizations to recognize investigative researchers who are conducting research to identify, advance, and improve treatments, and one day, develop cures for those patients.

Organizations that apply should meet the following criteria:

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) with a specific focus on rare disease(s) and an emphasis on research within that disease state
- Located in the U.S. or Canada
- Patient advocacy organization that is willing and able to match Uplifting Athletes \$10,000 grant to the nominated Young Investigator
- Has an established Medical and/or Scientific Advisory Board with advanced knowledge of the disease(s) that are the focus of the advocacy organization



The Goals of the Young Investigator Draft

1. To fund current and aspiring young investigative rare disease researchers.
2. To share the unique platform we have developed with patient advocacy organizations and researchers. Furthermore, the Young Investigator Draft hopes to engage with patient-focused advocacy organizations emphasizing research within their disease state. Uplifting Athletes wants to work with advocacy organizations that prioritize research and support researchers who understand the needs of the patient community and are working to resolve those unmet and underserved needs. Uplifting Athletes will provide the Young Investigator Draft stage as a platform to celebrate and elevate these investigative rare disease researchers.

Underrepresented Researchers in Medicine

This year, we will continue the Underrepresented Researchers in Medicine (URM) Initiative. Uplifting Athletes recognizes and celebrates our responsibility to play a role in diversity, equity, and inclusion in medicine. The URM Initiative will guarantee that at least one (1) underrepresented researcher will be selected through the Young Investigator Draft. The URM initiative includes broadened outreach through partnerships with organizations that work with underrepresented researchers to expand the pool of nominated researchers.

Key Dates

Application Open Date	August 1, 2023, 12:00 PM EST
Application Close Date	October 6, 2023, 11:59 PM EST
Award Notice	November 2023
Award Execution	January 2024
Project Start/End Dates (estimated)	February 2024 - February 2025

Principal Point of Contact

For questions or concerns about any aspect of the Request For Application, please email grants@upliftingathletes.org.



The Uplifting Athletes Young Investigator Grant

The Young Investigator Grant is a 1-year award designed to support scientists in the early stages of a rare disease research career, such as postdoctoral or clinical fellows. Outstanding mentorship and demonstration of a career plan that shows commitment to rare disease investigation are critical components of a successful applicant.

The grant will be for a minimum of \$20,000 USD (\$10,000 USD from UAI and a matching \$10,000 USD from nominating advocacy organization). It will be issued to the institution of the young investigative researcher with the caveat that the funds will be used at the sole discretion of the identified young investigator to move their research forward.

Restrictions:

- Funds from UAI may not be used for indirect costs (including tuition remission).
- The grant may not be renewed.
- No-cost extensions are strongly encouraged.
- Funds must be granted to nonprofit institutions/organizations or federal government labs operating in the U.S. or Canada. Researchers need not be United States citizens.
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is expected to be sought when studies in humans are planned. Animal care committee approval is required for animal studies.

Who Qualifies as a Young Investigator?

Applicants must meet the following criteria to qualify for the Uplifting Athletes Young Investigator Grant:

Note: Please contact Uplifting Athletes before applying if eligibility questions remain after reviewing these guidelines.

- A clinical or basic researcher (MD, DO, Ph.D., or international equivalent) working in the U.S. or Canada who is currently in postdoctoral training at an academic medical institution AND
(1) within ten (10) years of obtaining their doctoral degree at the time of grant submission OR
(2) within five (5) years of initiating rare disease research.
- Be planning, or actively engaged in, an investigative career in rare disease research. An institutional commitment for a faculty appointment is not required at the time of grant submission. Still, the applicant should work in a rare disease laboratory or clinical research setting.
- Have a mentor in the proposed research field from the sponsoring institution. The mentor must assume responsibility and guide the research.
- Eligible applicants may hold only one grant from Uplifting Athletes at a time.



How To Apply

Please follow the “Application” section of the RFA and submit one PDF file containing the requested information to grants@upliftingathletes.org before the application deadline of October 6, 2023, at 11:59 PM EST.

Review Process

The Uplifting Athletes Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) will review all proposals submitted to grants@upliftingathletes.org. Once proposals are submitted, the committee will determine the number of grants that meet or exceed the minimum criteria for funding. If the number of qualifying grants exceeds ten (10), the committee will determine a minimum of ten (10) young investigators to be awarded and honored at the 2024 Young Investigator Draft. The grant awardees will be notified ahead of the 2024 Young Investigator Draft.

Reporting Requirements

We ask that a report be issued to Uplifting Athletes one year after the grant has been received by the investigator to detail progress made with the research and how the grant impacted the researcher and their work.

About Uplifting Athletes

Uplifting Athletes is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 that harnesses the power of sport to build a community that invests in the lives of the more than 30 million people impacted by rare diseases in America. Since its inception, Uplifting Athletes has raised more than \$8 million by engaging athletes in order to positively impact the rare disease community through driving action, awareness, and funding research. To learn more about Uplifting Athletes visit upliftingathletes.org.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the purpose of this grant?

The purpose of this grant is to generate preliminary data and prepare for a K or R grant from the NIH, or larger funding source.

How does the grant matching work? What will qualify as a match?

For the 2024 Young Investigator Draft, we require that all advocacy organizations selected provide the funds to Uplifting Athletes for the matching gift amount, and Uplifting Athletes will process the grant at no cost. We are doing this to streamline the grant award process and ensure that the entire grant award is received and utilized at the sole discretion of the nominated researcher.

What happens if your organization and researcher are selected?

If your organization and young investigator are selected, you will be notified by phone or email in November 2023. You will be asked to verify all information provided in the application.

What expectations do we have of the advocacy organization concerning the promotion leading up to and on the day of the event?

We ask that you share the information about the Uplifting Athletes Young Investigator Draft with your network. We will provide social graphics and content to distribute.

Who will review the grant application?

The grant submissions will be reviewed by the Uplifting Athletes Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) and they will use an established rubric to assess each application. The rubric will be released alongside the RFA so that patient advocacy organizations and researchers will know what the SAC is looking for.

Where does the money go?

Each Uplifting Athletes Young Investigator Draft recipient will receive access to the full \$20,000 grant award through their research institution. At this time, we do not pay indirect expenses on the grants given to researchers, and the money is earmarked to be used at the sole discretion of the grant recipient to move their rare disease research forward.

Can an advocacy organization submit more than one application?

*Yes. We ask that you submit one application per researcher nomination. All applications will be reviewed independently. **Organizations may submit a total of two applications, but it is likely only one application from your organization would be selected.***

Does my organization need a scientific or medical advisory board?

Yes. We ask that all organizations have their scientific or medical advisory board review the research project details and sign off on the project before submitting the application.



Step-by-Step Instructions

Overview on how to submit an application:

A complete application consists of one (1) PDF document that is filled out by the nominating patient advocacy organization and the nominated researcher. The mentor letter may be added to the same PDF document, or be sent as a separate PDF attachment.

Formatting Requirements:

Font: Use 11-point font size unless noted otherwise. Smaller font sizes are acceptable for use in tables, figure legends, biographical sketches, and cited literature.

Line Spacing: Single-spaced text body.

Page Margins: Page margins must not be smaller than 0.5 inches on all sides.

Page Limits: Do not exceed the page limits stated for each section.

Page Numbers: Please number the pages.

Summary of Application Components:

Patient Advocacy Organization Section (Pages 9-11):

- Organization Overview
- Nomination (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Additional Information (*Instructions on page 7*)

Researcher Section (Pages 12-24):

- Researcher Overview
- Career Purpose (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Interaction with Patient Community (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Abstract (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Background (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Hypothesis/Statement of Work (*Instructions on page 7*)
- Methods (*Instructions on page 8*)
- References
- Funding (*Instructions on page 8*)
- Project Timeframe (*Instructions on page 8*)
- Biographical Sketch (*Instructions on page 8*)
- Personal Statement
- Positions and Honors
- Mentor Statement (*Instructions on page 8*)



Patient Advocacy Organization Section:

Nomination (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

From the perspective of a leader of the nominating patient advocacy organization, please describe why you have chosen to nominate your selected researcher. Please describe what his/her research means for your community. It is also a chance for you to describe the personal commitment and relationships the researcher has with your community and what kind of person the nominee is.

Additional Information (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

You may use this section to provide additional information about your organization, disease state, or patient community. You may also decide to provide additional information about why you nominated your selected researcher, their accomplishments, or other pertinent information.

Researcher Section:

Career Purpose (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

In this section you should describe your reasons for choosing rare disease research, your specific disease state, and your future plans in the field and the rare disease community.

Patient Community Interaction (*Limit: One-half page maximum*)

In this section the applicant should describe how they have connected with the rare disease community. Applicants should discuss if they have met with the patient community in person, plans to collaborate with the patient community, and what engagement activities have occurred.

Abstract (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

In this section the applicant should outline their proposed research project. Applicants should address the timeline for the project, anticipated pitfalls, and alternate strategies.

Background (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

In this section the applicant should address the following:

What is the research question being addressed?

Why is your proposal important and original?

What are prior or concurrent studies being conducted?

What preliminary work has already been completed on this subject?

Hypothesis/Statement of Work (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

Clearly state the hypothesis being tested and the corresponding proposed specific aim.



Methods (*Limit: Two pages maximum*)

Describe the procedures and methodology that will be used to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed project. Be sure to specify the number of patients, experiments, or observations to be evaluated to prove or disprove the hypothesis. *Applications submitted without this information are not eligible for review.*

Funding (*Limit: One-page maximum*)

Provide a budget justification for the proposed expenses. In addition, if this project will cost more than the \$20,000 allotted funding, please describe your plan to secure additional funding.

Timeline (*Limit: One-half page maximum*)

Detail the timeline of your proposed project. If your project is a subset of a larger project, then justify how your portion can be completed within one year.

Biographical Sketch

A biographical sketch must be provided for the researcher, and should be in the current NIH format.

Mentor Statement (*Limit: One-page max*)

The mentor statement can be attached to the application or be submitted as a separate attachment. Only one (1) mentor statement is required.



Application

Uplifting Athletes intends that this application is completed by a representative of a Patient Advocacy Organization in collaboration with the researcher being nominated for the grant award.

Patient Advocacy Organization Section

- 1. Name:**
- 2. Website:**
- 3. Tax Identification Number (also known as the Employer Identification Number or EIN):**
- 4. Point of Contact Name:**
- 5. Point of Contact Email:**
- 6. Point of Contact Phone Number:**
- 7. Disease(s) represented:**
- 8. Has the applying advocacy organization provided research funding to this Young Investigator in the past 12 months?**
- 9. Has your Scientific Advisory Board or Medical Advisory Board reviewed the research project details specified? If requested, please be prepared to verify your review process.**
- 10. Medical/ Scientific Advisory Board Members (Please Attach List):**



11. From an advocacy organization perspective, why should Uplifting Athletes select this Young Investigator? (Please limit to one-page maximum)



**12. Please provide any additional information that you feel may be relevant to the review committee.
(Please limit to one-page maximum)**



Young Investigative Researcher Section

- 1. Project Title:**
- 2. Young Investigator Name:**
- 3. Current Institution:**
- 4. Phone Number:**
- 5. Email address:**



6. Career Purpose: Why did you come into rare disease research? What are your future plans in the field?
(Please limit to one-page maximum)



7. Patient Community Interaction: Describe your engagement activities with the patient community and patient advocacy organization for your disease state. **(Please limit to one-half page maximum)**



8. Abstract: Outline the planned research. Please include anticipated timelines for the project, as well as anticipated pitfalls and alternate strategies (**Please limit to one-page maximum**)



9. Background: Include the problem, its significance, prior or concurrent studies conducted, and any preliminary work the investigator has completed on this subject. **(Please limit to one-page maximum)**



10. Hypothesis/Statement of Work: A statement outlining the question to be answered or the premise to be investigated. **(Please limit to one-page maximum)**



11. Methods: Include a precise description of the methods of data collection, analysis, and research model to be used. Specify the planned number of patients or experiments or observations to be evaluated to prove or disprove the hypothesis with power analysis. Methods should be described in detail to allow peer reviewers to appraise their scientific merit critically. *Note: A grant submitted without this information will not be eligible for review. (Please limit to two-page maximum)*



12. References List scientific references if pertinent.



13. Funding: How do you plan to utilize the funding from this grant? If your project will cost more than the \$20,000 in funding allotted from this grant please address where you will secure additional funds. **(Please limit to one-page maximum)**



14. Project Timeframe: Is your project a subset of a larger project? How confident are you that it can be completed within the one-year timeframe? **(Please limit to one-half page maximum)**



15. Biographical Sketch

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
DO NOT EXCEED TWO PAGES.

NAME:

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE <i>(if applicable)</i>	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement (Please limit to one-half page max)

B. Positions and Honors



16. Mentor Statement (Please limit to one-page maximum):



17. Which disease category/categories would this research impact? Please check ALL that apply.

- Rare Muscular and Neurological Diseases
- Rare Autoimmune Diseases
- Rare Cancers
- Rare Blood Disorders
- Rare Genetic Disorders
- Other _____

18. The National Institute of Health (NIH) recognizes that there are underrepresented groups in medicine and includes the following groups as underrepresented in biomedical research:

- Individuals from racial and ethnic groups such as Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (as defined in the [November 22, 2019 Guide notice](#))
- Women from the above backgrounds at the graduate level and beyond in scientific fields

Do you identify with one or more of these underrepresented groups as defined by the NIH?

- Yes
- No

Criteria for Evaluation of the Proposals Refer to RFA for more detailed information.	Points Possible	Points Awarded
Researcher Evaluation Relevant Education & Training - 10 Points Possible Environment - 5 Points Possible Related Publications - 5 Points Possible Comments:	20	
Scientific Approach Feasibility & Assessment of Project Summary - 25 Points Possible Comments:	25	
Impact and Innovation Significance Of Proposed Project Within: Specific Disease State - 15 Points Possible Rare Disease Community - 5 Points Possible Comments:	20	
Purpose / Patient Engagement Purpose & Future of Pursuing Rare Disease Research - 10 Points Possible Patient & Family Engagement - 5 Points Possible Relationship to Patient Advocacy Organization - 10 Points Possible Comments:	25	
Budget Justification Budget Explanation - 10 Points Possible Comments:	10	
Total	100	0