

ALS Scholars in Therapeutics: Request for Application

The Sean M. Healey & AMG Center for ALS at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in partnership with ALS Finding a Cure® (ALSFAC) and FightMND is issuing a request for applications for the ALS Scholars in Therapeutics Program to empower young investigators to learn how to develop new treatments for people living with ALS.

This two-year program is designed to engage clinician-scientists and post-doctoral fellows to gain training and experience in therapy development for ALS at their home institution with an optional industry experience in year two. All ALS Scholars will be part of the broader ALS global community. We believe strongly in identifying, supporting, and mentoring the next generation of researchers and are continuing this tradition through the **ALS Scholars in Therapeutics Program**.

ALS Scholars will be an integral member of the Healey & AMG Center for ALS at Mass General and will benefit from mentorship by world renowned scientists and clinicians. While working closely with their mentors at their home institution, the Scholars will also attend Healey Center and ALSFAC meetings and learn first-hand current approaches to therapy development. Importantly, Scholars will have the opportunity to engage directly with people living with ALS. In addition, successful candidates interested in understanding the drug development process from an industry perspective, will benefit from an optional six-month internship in industry during the second year of their scholarship.

[Meet the 2021 Scholars here.](#)

Award Details

- 2 years of funding to support a clinician-scientist or post-doctoral fellow working in the ALS field anywhere in the world.
- \$150,000 USD award/funding year (inclusive of maximum 15% indirect costs)
- Recipient must commit at least 75% effort to the proposed ALS research plan

Eligibility

- Applications from clinician scientists and postdoctoral fellows focused on translational research.
- Candidates with Ph.D. or M.D. with a strong publication record. *International applicants are encouraged to apply.*
- The ALS focused proposal must have a strong scientific rationale and should be largely developed by the candidate with guidance from his/her mentor.
- Eligibility for this award is based on the date the candidate attained their degree/qualification. For MDs, scholars will be considered if they have completed their specialist qualification (i.e., US Residency; Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, etc.) For PhDs they can be no more than 5 years post- degree.

Available resources: NEALS Biorepository, Target ALS post-mortem Tissue Bank, PRO-ACT, Answer ALS resources e.g. IPSC lines banked at Cedar Sinai, the Answer ALS Data portal, etc.

Budget

The ALS Scholars in Therapeutics will be awarded \$150,000 USD per year (inclusive of direct and maximum 15% indirect costs) for a maximum of 2 years. These funds can be used for salary support, personnel, and/or supplies relevant to the outlined project. Year one funds will be provided by the Healey & AMG Center philanthropic fund. Year two may be funded by an industry partner, contingent on matching the Scholar with company.

Application

Full application will require the following:

1. Administrative information: signatures from the applicant and organization acknowledging the terms and conditions of the award
2. Scientific abstract: (300-word maximum) and lay description (150-word maximum)
3. Research Proposal: focused on a translational effort in the ALS field (5-page maximum not including references) must include specific aims, significance, innovation, experimental plan
4. Timeline & Milestones
5. Bibliography
6. Career plan: outline of applicant's training plans and career goals (one page maximum)
7. List of other funding sources for the applicant
8. Two letters of reference: One letter must be from primary mentor
9. NIH-style biographical sketch for the applicant and mentor
10. Budget (in \$USD) and budget justification: including key personnel

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the following five criteria:

1. **Candidate:** Strong publication track record, evidence of independent thinking, and a creative approach to problem solving. *For clinicians, applicants should demonstrate capabilities as a clinician scientist based on prior achievements.*
2. **Mentor:** Ideally a principal investigator committed and actively working within ALS or related field.
3. **Project Feasibility:** While preliminary data is not essential for the application, sufficient supporting data for the proposed aims is required to ensure that the project is feasible and can be completed within the two-year time frame.
4. **Scientific Rigor and Reproducibility:** the research proposed must be well thought through, include details of experimental design, blinding, power calculations and approaches to promote reproducibility including validation of key reagents. In addition, the applicant should state how they will share their findings, data, reagents with the scientific community.
5. **Research Environment:** Quality and nature of training provided by mentor as well as institutional support.

Reporting

The ALS Scholars will submit semi-annual financial and scientific progress reports to the Healey & AMG Center who will share with funding partners. The ALS Scholars will also attend and present their findings at one of the semi-annual Healey & AMG Science Advisory Council and ALSFAC meetings during the funding period.

Application Due Dates:

Release of RFA:	March 2, 2022
Applications Due:	April 29, 2022
Notification of Award:	June 2022
Initiation of Award*:	July 1, 2022 (flexible once contracts signed)

**Note: Once the award has been finalized the Healey & AMG Center for ALS will work with the successful candidate to secure an industry internship in the second year of the fellowship.*

For queries contact: HealeyCenterforALS@mgh.harvard.edu

To download an application form: [Click Here](#)

Submit Application as single PDF document to HealeyCenterforALS@mgh.harvard.edu

About the Sean M. Healey & AMG Center for ALS at Mass General

The Sean M. Healey & AMG Center for ALS at Mass General is comprised of a diverse group of researchers and clinicians at Massachusetts General Hospital, working with collaborators around the globe to find novel therapies for people who are affected by ALS. Under the leadership of Merit Cudkowicz, MD, MSc, Chief of Neurology, and a Science Advisory Council (SAC) of international experts, we are in pursuit of life-saving therapies and treatments for ALS.

While current progress in the pre-clinical realm has been remarkable and new therapies for ALS are beginning to emerge, the fight ahead is more urgent than ever. To ensure this continued progress, we need the most innovative, creative and determined minds to work together to find real solutions for people with ALS today. At the Healey & AMG Center for ALS, we identify and support courageous forward-thinking innovators who can join our cause and make game-changing discoveries.

We are dedicated to collaborations that will have a worldwide impact, with a broader reach than any single researcher could achieve alone, and we encourage and believe in the free flow and exchange of scientific ideas. Together, our goal is to attract the best physicians, scientists, and engineers from across the globe so that in the future, ALS will become a disease of the past.

About ALS Finding a Cure®

The sole purpose of the ALS Finding a Cure® Initiative is funding research to find a cure.

Our goal is to bring together some of the top minds in ALS to develop novel biomarkers and diagnostics, provide resources to help advance new therapies to the clinic, accelerate innovation in clinical trial design, and expand access to shared research resources.

Our team of researchers is led by our Chief Medical Officer Dr. Merit Cudkowicz, Chief of Neurology and Director of the Sean M. Healey & AMG Center for ALS at Massachusetts General Hospital, and the foundation is overseen by Peter N. Foss and Denis Rizzuto. ALS Finding a Cure® is a program of the Leandro P. Rizzuto Foundation. We are proud to report that 100% of donations go directly to funding research.

ALS Finding a Cure® is inspired by and is a tribute to Christie Rizzuto, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2009 at the age of 41. It is Christie, and the many others like her, who drive our work.

About FightMND

FightMND is one of the world's largest independent funders of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) research.

Established in Australia in 2014, FightMND has invested more than \$55.9 million into research across the world to find effective treatments and a cure for MND. This includes 12 clinical trials, 22 drug development projects, five career fellowships and PHD scholarships, a world-first drug screening platform and 25 IMPACT projects to accelerate the development of effective therapies for MND.

FightMND works closely with other relevant MND bodies, taking a lead role in advancing promising new drugs, innovative research and clinical trials with a sense of urgency and equality on behalf of those currently fighting the insidious disease.

We hope that increased awareness of MND may lead to better care for those living with MND and increased funding to ultimately rid the world of MND.