

NEWS RELEASE

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Scleroderma Foundation
June 29, 2021

Scleroderma Foundation More than Doubles Research Commitment

Annual research funding increases to \$2.723 million

DANVERS, MA. On the occasion of *World Scleroderma Day*, June 29, the Scleroderma Foundation announces an increase of its peer-reviewed scientific research funding to \$2.723 million annually, more than doubling its commitment. In addition to the increase in funding made available, the Foundation is also increasing the amount of its awards by \$50,000 per grant to \$200,000. These changes are effective for the 2022 grant funding cycle, which has a proposal submission deadline extended from September 15 to September 30, 2021, to accommodate the change in funding opportunities. The funding increase includes specific requests for proposals in two key areas: **scleroderma-related lung disease research** and **pediatric scleroderma**. A specific, donor-funded grant of \$200,000 will be awarded to an established investigator conducting scleroderma-related lung disease research. Pediatric-scleroderma research is earmarked for up to \$500,000 in awards and is open to submissions from new and established investigators. Information about the Scleroderma Foundation's Peer Review Research Program, including application guidelines is available at scleroderma.org/researchapply.

"The visionary leadership of the Foundation's National Board of Directors, and the steadfast commitment of our donors makes this increase in research funding possible, even in challenging economic times," said **Robert J. Riggs, CEO**. "The need to accelerate the pace of discovery in scleroderma research is urgent, and we are proud of our leadership role in advancing scientific discovery and doing so with the integrity of the peer review process."

The Foundation's Peer-Review Research Committee is comprised of medical and research experts from across the United States, who use the same merit-based scoring system as the National Institutes of Health.

ABOUT SCLERODERMA

Scleroderma is a rare disease that affects connective tissue and the vascular system. Generally classified as an autoimmune rheumatic disease, an overproduction of collagen (fibrosis) hardens tissue and damages organs. Commonly affecting the skin (called localized), scleroderma also affects internal organs (systemic sclerosis) and can be life-threatening. Anyone can have scleroderma. No one knows what causes the disease, although there are many clues including genetic predisposition. There is no cure and no drugs that halt the progression of the disease or reverse it. The fibrosis at the center of scleroderma makes it prototypic for all other fibrotic diseases.

ABOUT THE SCLERODERMA FOUNDATION

The Scleroderma Foundation's threefold mission provides emotional **support** and disease **education** while funding innovative **research** to *discover the cause, understand the mechanisms and overcome scleroderma forever*. With historical roots from the 1970s and a nation-wide network of chapters, the Foundation's signature *National Scleroderma Conference* provides access to expert information and is the centerpiece of the community. The Foundation's *Medical & Scientific Advisory Board* is comprised of world-renowned scleroderma experts who guide the organization's health-related policies. Its *Peer-Review Research Program* emphasizes scientific merit, and its novel *Patients as Partners* program promotes collaboration between pharmaceutical and biotech entities and people living with scleroderma in the design of clinical trials.

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