

Young Investigator Research Grant Awards

Purpose:

The AO Spine North America Research Committee (AO SNARC) established research funding that is available to new investigators (within 5 years of first appointment) who have a desire to perform high-quality, clinically relevant spinal or spinal cord research in basic or clinical science. The purpose of these grants is to encourage new investigators by providing start-up funding of up to \$20,000.00 for one year. Consideration is given to two-year applications (1 project), however, the 2nd year of the grant will require a separate application, peer review, and funding is not guaranteed. Previous winners of the grant are excluded from future YIRGA grant inclusion unless continuation of funding for a second year.

The deadline for application submission is December 15, 2021. Award winners will be contacted in February/March 2022.

All applications and questions should be e-mailed to:

Allison Babb
Research Coordinator
AO Spine North America
research@aona.org

Eligibility Requirements:

- The primary applicant must be a subscribing member of AO SNA but cannot be a “disqualified person” with respect to AO SNA, as that term is defined in Internal Revenue Code Section 4946(a).
- The applicant must be a physician, surgeon, or researcher with focused interest in disorders of the spine/spinal cord and with an appointment at a university or hospital-based research institution.
- The purpose of the grant is to support researchers in their young/early career. Therefore, the application must be less than 45 years of age and within five year of clinical appointment.
- The grant application requires evidence that the investigator has the experience and resources to complete the proposed research.
- Neither (i) members of AO SNARC (AO SNARC Members), (ii) members of the family of an AO SNARC Member (as defined in Internal Revenue Code Section 4946(d), nor (iii) any persons over whom AO SNARC Members have substantial influence and/or control (i.e., via employer-employee relationship), are eligible to apply as an applicant.
- Prior principle grant winners are not eligible to re-apply.
- Successful applicants must agree to present their research findings at the Annual AO Spine North America Fellows Forum the following year.

- AO SNA must be cited as the source of funding in any publication, presentation or in any publicity resulting from the award or its results.
- The number and amount of research grants awarded each year are at the discretion of AO SNARC.

General Guidelines:

- Application deadline is on December 15, 2020.
- Completed applications should be e-mailed to research@aona.org.
- All correspondence will be sent to the Primary Investigator. It is the responsibility of the Primary investigator to provide information to co-investigators.
- If the research involves animals, applicants must complete the animal study supplement form.
- Funds are for work to be performed, not works in progress or already completed.
- Indirect costs shall not exceed 5% of the overall budget.
- A Progress Report, regarding the research project, must be submitted to AO SNARC six (6) months after the work commences. A Final Report must be submitted at the end of the 12-month period and should include a description of the grant's accomplishments and an accounting for the funds received under the grant.
- If the work cannot be completed within the 12-month time frame, AO SNA must be notified and a written request to extend the grant must be submitted to AO SNARC for approval to extend the grant. If approved, interim reports will be requested at various intervals (but at least once each calendar year) at the discretion of AO SNARC throughout the remainder of the project.
- When the reports above or other information (including the failure to submit reports) indicate any part of a grant is not being used for its intended purpose, AO SNARC has a duty to investigate. During such investigation, AO SNARC shall withhold further funding. Upon completion of the investigation, further funding may be continued if the investigation concludes that no part of the grant is being used for improper purposes. If, however, the investigation concludes that any part of the grant is being used for improper purposes, AO SNARC must comply with the procedures outlined in Federal Treas. Reg. Section 53.4945-4(c)(4).
- AO SNARC reserves the right to discontinue the grant, with return of full funding by the grantee, if for any reason, it is determined that the activities for which the grant is intended to address cannot be met.
- Each award will be in the amount of \$20,000.00. The number of awards provided per calendar year will be determined based on the allocation of funds determined by the AO SNA Board of Directors.
- Funds will be distributed in the following manner:
 - \$10,000.00 – distributed at the beginning of the 1-year award cycle

- \$10,000.00 – distributed at 6-month interval. Subject to the other requirements of these General Guidelines, funds will not be distributed until the 6-month Progress Report (and other Progress Reports as deemed required) has been filed with AO SNA.
- Payments will be made to the Institution and not to the individual applicants, provided that the Institution agrees to hold such payments in accordance with the terms of the specific grant.

Selection Process:

- All grant applications are reviewed by AO SNARC.
- Grants that are match funding are viewed favorably.
- The application has been changed to a 6-page format Applications are rated on their scientific merit. Include the following criteria:
 - Page 1: Research question plus ABSTRACT
 - Page 2: APPROACH – Aims clear and methodology sound?
 - Page 3: SIGNIFICANCE – How will this improve spine care?
 - Page 4: FEASIBILITY – Can the investigator get this done?
 - Page 5: Supplemental figures (optional)
 - Page 6: References (no page limit)
 - NIH-formatted bio-sketch of the primary applicant (no need to review collaborators/references)
 - The page parameters: 1-inch borders, 12-point Times Roman font. Any deviation in the format may disqualify the grant.
- All persons submitting applications do so with the understanding that they will abide by the conditions, deadline policies and decisions of AO SNARC.

Members and the election process of AO SNARC are defined in the By-Laws of AO SNA.

Retention of Records:

- AO SNA shall retain all records pertaining to all grants to institutions to include:
 - Grant applications
 - Names of Reviewers
 - Scoring Sheets by Reviewers
 - Correspondence
 - Progress Reports
 - Distribution of funds