Minority Medical Student Award Program Application Guidance
The following guidance is provided to assist individuals who are considering submitting an application for the Minority Medical Student Award Program (MMSAP).

General Principles for the Student Applicant
It is important to understand the various components of the application process so that you can build a strong application. Your application should address your specific interest in hematology in your personal statement, and reflect a good understanding of your proposed project in your project description. Reviewers will consider these and the other items listed below when scoring your application.

A. Program Overview
The American Society of Hematology (ASH) created the Minority Recruitment Initiative in 2003 to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in hematology. MMSAP is a part of this initiative, and is designed to introduce minority medical students to both hematology and hematology research. The centerpiece of the program is a summer research experience of eight-to-12 weeks with a hematology investigator (laboratory or clinically-based) during the summer break between your first and second years of medical school. In 2016, a MMSAP flexible option was introduced for medical students in their second, third, or fourth year of medical school which allows awardees to complete the eight-to-12 week research project (approximately 320-480 hour commitment) over the course of a year. You will have the opportunity to present the results of your project in person at the ASH annual meeting in December. Attendance at the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition provides students with outstanding opportunities for networking with national and international leaders in the field of hematology.

Connecting with a Potential Mentor
The first step in the application process is to identify a research mentor. You can do this on your own as long as the individual you identify is an ASH member or you can request assistance from ASH staff. ASH staff maintains a list of mentors associated with MMSAP. You can choose a research mentor at your own medical school or request a mentor in another geographical location within the United States or Canada. If you have a particular area of interest in hematology such as sickle cell disease or leukemia, ASH staff can also help connect you with a mentor who is an expert in that area.

Developing your Proposal
The proposal is an important component of the application, and requires meeting your mentor in person if they are at your medical school or phone conversations if they are at an outside institution. Your mentor will help you identify a specific project. It is critical that you have a good understanding of your proposed project, and that the project can be completed within an eight-to-12 week time frame. The research proposal should be hypothesis-based, and MUST be written in your own words.
B. The Review Process – what criteria do the reviewers use to score applications?

Make sure you specifically address each item below!

1. Research (Academic Potential)
   a. Does the student have a track record of performing well academically as evidenced by their GPA, publications, and/or presentation experience?
   b. Does the student have a history of previous research experience?

2. Leadership/Service
   a. Does the student have evidence of leadership or service experience as evidenced by leadership roles in organizations or volunteering?

3. Research Mentor/Proposed Project
   a. Is the project clearly described, including the hypothesis to be tested, the experiments to be performed if laboratory-based, the expected outcomes, and the methods of data analysis?
   b. Does the student have a clear role on the proposed project?
   c. Can the project be completed in 8-12 weeks for summer applicants or in an 8-12 week time frame (approximately 320-480 hours) over the course of one year for flexible option applicants?
   d. Is IRB approval (approval to conduct research on human subjects) required, and, if so, has this been obtained yet? It is important to indicate the date of IRB approval.
   e. Is there clear evidence the student will be meeting regularly with the research mentor (i.e., weekly meetings etc.)?
   f. Is the proposal well-written and edited for typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors?

4. Interest in Hematology
   a. Does the student have an interest in hematology clearly articulated in their personal statement?
   b. Does the student indicate an interest in a potential career as a hematologist or in a hematology-related field?

5. Timeline/Research Schedule (For flexible MMSAP applicants only)
   a. How does the student plan to integrate their research project with their course work/clinical rotations over the course of the year?

6. Strong letters of recommendation
   a. Choose letter writers who know you and who can speak to your strengths as an applicant

C. Making the Most of Your Research Experience

As with any successful research project, planning is essential to optimize the time you will spend working with your mentor during your experience. We highly encourage MMSAP awardees to have active discussions prior to the start of their experience with their research mentors. You should discuss the sequence and timing of planned research activities, suggested reading relevant to the research project, and any required training. If your research project requires IRB approval, it is essential that this be obtained before
the proposal begins.

D. **Role of Career Development Mentor**
   In addition to a research mentor, MMSAP awardees will also be paired by ASH staff with a career development mentor. This is a benefit as you move through medical school to graduation and beyond. The career development mentor will help guide you along in medical school, provide you with advice on pursuing additional hematology-related experiences, including residency and fellowship training. This individual will also serve as a sounding board and a conduit to other initiatives supported by ASH.

E. **Preparing for the ASH Annual Meeting**
   During the ASH annual meeting, held the first week of December, MMSAP awardees will give brief scientific presentations of the results obtained from their research projects. A travel stipend related to the meeting will be provided by ASH to help offset the cost of travel and housing. Attending and presenting at the ASH meeting provides awardees with a rich and unique educational experience, and is a key requirement of the program. You will gain valuable skills in delivering a scientific/medical presentation in a national forum, and have the opportunity to meet prominent leaders in the field of hematology. This is an opportunity to showcase yourself. You may also consider submitting a formal abstract to the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition for an oral or poster presentation at one of the specialized simultaneous sessions held during the ASH annual meeting.

F. **ASH Annual Meeting**
   In addition to your brief oral presentations at the Promoting Minorities in Hematology Dinner, MMSAP awardees will be invited to a special luncheon attended by past MRI participants, committee members, and other interested ASH members. The highlight of the luncheon is the address by the keynote speaker, a prominent underrepresented minority hematologist, who typically provides their perspective on succeeding in a career in hematology. MMSAP awardees will also have the opportunity to hear the latest breaking news in hematology and interact with the more than 25,000 individuals from all over the world who attend the ASH annual meeting. It is an outstanding educational experience for medical students.

G. **Opportunity for a Second MMSAP Experience**
   You will have the opportunity to extend your hematology research experience to a second summer experience or a full-year experience with the MMSAP flexible option. This would require submission of another application. ASH is very supportive of second applications, and encourages all students with an interest in hematology to do this.