

ASH Minority Resident Hematology Award Program Application

General Principles for the Prospective Mentor

A. Program overview

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) created the Minority Recruitment Initiative (MRI) in 2003 to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in hematology. The Minority Resident Hematology Award Program (MRHAP) was introduced in 2016 by the Committee on Promoting Diversity to serve as a new program component of the MRI. The MRHAP was designed to provide support for underrepresented minority residents in medicine who are currently in an internal medicine, pathology, or pediatric residency program to conduct hematology focused research. This program was crafted with the alumni of the Minority Medical Student Award Program (MMSAP) in mind as a ‘next-step’ in the MRI’s longitudinal pathway. Applicants who did not participate in the MMSAP program but are in an ACGME or RCPSC-approved residency program in the United States or Canada are eligible as well as residents in an ACGME or RCPSC-approved residency program in the United States or Canada who have already matched into a hematology-oncology fellowship program will be considered for this award program. The intended outcome is increasing interest in hematology research and choice of fellowship.

The MHRAP requires that the applicant develop a research proposal with their proposed mentor. The application process is competitive and applications are reviewed by members of ASH’s Committee on Promoting Diversity. Awards are given to the highest scoring applicants. MRHAP awardees will present the results of their projects in person at the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition in the December that follows the completion of their research project. Attendance at the ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition provides award recipients with outstanding opportunities for networking with national and international leaders in the field of hematology.

B. Connecting with potential mentees

As a potential mentor in the MRHAP, it is important in this competitive application process that reviewers get a strong sense that you and your prospective mentee have directly connected with each other, either in person or by phone, and that you have had follow-up discussions of the proposed research project. Your involvement is critical in both helping the applicant develop and conduct a hypothesis-based research project and in providing them with an intellectually stimulating hematology research experience. Applicants are expected to develop self-contained research projects that can be completed within a year and with an approximate commitment of at least 320-480 hours (equivalent of 8-12 forty-hour weeks) over the course of the award year. Research proposals should be written in the applicant’s own words. It is important that the applicant understand the project to a sufficient degree that they are able to write up the project in their own words in a way that is convincing, and have an understanding of the hypothesis as well as the methods proposed to test it.

If the project involves a clinical trial, biospecimens, or other activities that require IRB approval or approval by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee or similar regulatory body, it is important that the approvals be obtained in advance of the start date of the project. The date of approval needs to be clearly indicated in the application. In addition to helping the applicant develop their research project and supervising them in the lab, you will be expected to guide them in preparing their oral presentation to be delivered at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting in the December that follows the completion of their research project. The presentation year will be selected by the applicant at the time of the application.

C. Assisting the Applicant in Development of Their Proposal – what criteria do the reviewers use to score applications?

1. Resident Applicant's Research Proposal

- a. Is this a well written proposal with a clearly defined role for the resident?
- b. Will the applicant be able to obtain preliminary results within a year, with a minimum commitment of at least 320-480 hours (equivalent of 8-12 forty hour weeks)? If not, will there be preliminary results available for the applicant to present at the Promoting Minorities in Hematology event during the ASH annual meeting?
- c. Is this a significant problem in hematology and will the applicant's participation in this project potentially lead to an interest in pursuing hematology as a sub-specialty?
- d. What are the applicant's career goals? Do they have a long-standing interest in hematology or were they recently introduced to the sub-specialty and hoping to learn more?

2. Mentor's NIH Biosketch

- a. Does the mentor have a sustained record of NIH grant support or support from relevant scientific grant awarding agencies?
- b. Does the mentor have relevant publications in competitive journals?
- c. Residents working with both a junior and senior research mentor must submit NIH biosketches for both mentors with their completed application.

3. Research Mentor's Letter of Support (refer to D below)

- a. Is there a mentoring plan in place? How frequently will the mentor meet with the mentee? If the prospective mentor is a junior faculty, is there a more senior co-mentor or a mentoring team assembled?
- b. Is there a strong research environment? Will the mentee have the opportunity to attend clinical discussions and journal clubs?
- c. Does the mentor or mentoring team have a track record in mentoring others? If so, how many, and what is their current status?
- d. Is there evidence of interaction between the applicant and mentor in the design of the research proposal? Is there evidence the mentor has reviewed the mentee's research proposal and provided feedback on content as well as spelling and grammatical errors?

D. Your (Mentor's) Letter of Support

This is a very important component of the MRHAP application. It is important that your letter detail your record of mentoring medical trainees, residents, fellows, and post-docs. If there is more than one mentor involved, it is important that they each provide a separate letter of support detailing their specific role. You should include specific comments about your interactions with the applicant as well as your assessment of the applicant's perceived interest in hematology, career goals, and leadership qualities. Research mentors must also include a statement in their letter of support that they have discussed and agreed to the applicant's ASH presentation date at an ASH annual meeting which is held annually during the first week of December. Potential MRHAP awardees select their presentation date at the time of their application and can choose to present during their award year or the subsequent year.

E. The Review Process

The review process is competitive. All applications are reviewed by members of ASH's Committee on Promoting Diversity using an NIH Study Section format and the NIH scoring system. Applications are scored as described above, using the following criteria: strength of the applicant, career goals, evidence of the applicant's engagement in leadership positions and community service, strength and feasibility of the research proposal, role of the mentor on the research project and in cultivating the mentee's interest in hematology, mentor's track record of mentoring, and commitment to the successful completion of the applicant's project.

F. Helping Your Mentee Make the Most of Their MRHAP Experience

It is important that you connect with your mentee as soon as possible after they receive word of their award in April. Understanding that the MRHAP awardee may not begin their research until June of their award year, it is crucial to meet with your mentee soon after notification of their award to review the sequence and timing of their planned research activities as well as to suggest any reading that is relevant to their research project and any required training they need prior to day one. This will give the mentee adequate time to plan and initiate the steps required for the project to be successful. During the interval in which they are waiting to start their project, you are encouraged to meet one-on-one with your mentee to further discuss their project and to connect them with your laboratory personnel. MRHAP awardees will be assigned a career mentor who will meet with them as well. You are still encouraged to provide advice to the mentee.