



Clinical Trial Readiness Program Professional Development Scholarships

Cure SMA recognizes the importance of professional development and continuing education in equipping clinical researchers to serve patients well. Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a complicated disease and having a strong foundation in clinical research concepts, as well as access to specialized resources and training to support ongoing development, is invaluable. With support from the Cure SMA Industry Collaboration, Cure SMA offers scholarships to support the professional development of principal investigators (PIs), physical therapists (PTs) and clinical evaluators (CEs), and clinical research coordinators (CRCs) working in SMA.¹

Types of Scholarships

Cure SMA offers a variety of scholarships to support professional development, which are available through a standardized application process. Awards include:

- *Early Career Professional Scholarship:* These awards support early career professionals who are involved in SMA clinical trials and want to build a strong foundation in clinical research and understanding of care, including treatments and multidisciplinary care, that are relevant in SMA. Awards are intended to enable access to trainings that will expand the awardees' knowledge of these concepts and range from \$250-\$500. Funds may be applied to online and in-person trainings in foundational concepts in clinical research and SMA patient evaluation.
- *Career Advancement Scholarships:* Career advancement scholarships are for individuals who have been in their field for at least 3 years and are looking for opportunities to advance their career. Scholarships can be applied to online and in-person courses and certifications that have clear relevance to SMA and clinical research and are intended to help recipients deepen their expertise and competency. The size of awards varies based upon the specific activity or activities that the award will be used for and the relevance of that activity to SMA. Awards may cover full or partial costs of the proposed activities and are capped at \$2,000.
- *Professional Engagement Scholarship:* These awards support attendance at in-person workshops and conferences that will enable participants to learn about topics relevant to SMA clinical trials, in addition to promoting engagement with peers from other institutions. Awards range from \$500-\$1,000 and may be applied to cover registration costs, travel, and lodging for qualified events.

¹ The SMA Industry Collaboration is a multi-faceted partnership that brings together pharmaceutical companies, Cure SMA, and other nonprofit organizations, to share information, ideas, and data. The SMA Industry Collaboration works together to address scientific, clinical, and regulatory topics that are critical to advancing drug development in SMA and will benefit the broader SMA community.

Application Process

Applicants are responsible for identifying the specific professional development activities that they would like to pursue and demonstrating the relevance of those activities to the goals of this program. Interested individuals apply for scholarships via a standardized scholarship form that encompasses all three types of scholarships. For a detailed description of information that will be required as part of the application process, please see [Appendix 1](#).

Applications will be reviewed by Cure SMA in accordance with the review timelines provided at the time of application. The following criteria will be considered when applications are reviewed:

1. **Relevance to the Clinical Trial Readiness Program's Objectives:** Will the activities support the program objectives of equipping clinical trial sites to manage SMA clinical trials in an effective and patient-centered way?
2. **Demonstrated Benefit to the Applicant & Career Goals in Field of SMA:** Is it clear that the activities supported with scholarship funds will have a clear benefit to the applicant, their career in the field of SMA, and support their professional development goals?
3. **Demonstrated Commitment to the SMA Community:** Has the applicant exhibited commitment to the SMA community and a desire to serve this community in a patient-centric way?

Timelines and Notification of Selection for Funding

Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis until the program funds expire, and applicants will be notified of decisions in accordance within 4-6 weeks of submission of their application. If you are selected to receive a scholarship, Cure SMA will provide you with a notification of selection and agreement for you to sign that addresses how funds will be disbursed, used, and what information Cure SMA will need from you.

Eligibility Requirements

Proposals may be submitted by researchers from U.S. entities, including medical centers, public and private universities, and non-profit research organizations. Any scholarship-specific eligibility criteria in the application form must also be met.

Reporting Requirements

Individuals who receive scholarships over \$1,000 may be required to provide a report to Cure SMA on how scholarship funds have been used, and how the activities that the scholarship supported have benefitted them. If reporting is required, this will be addressed in the scholarship agreement.

Limit on Awards per Research Site

While multiple professionals from a site may apply for funding awards, no more than two (2) individuals from the same site may receive an award in one funding cycle.

Inquiries

All inquiries concerning scholarships should be addressed to trialreadiness@curesma.org.

Appendix 1: Required Information for Scholarship Applications

This appendix is provided to explain information that will be required as a part of scholarship applications. Please note that all applications must be submitted through Cure SMA's online application form to be eligible for consideration.

Scholarship applications must include the following information:

1. Contact Information

2. Relevant Education and Experience

- a. Current role and responsibilities (1-2 sentences)
- b. Years of experience working with SMA patients (adults and children)
- c. Years of clinical research experience (generally and in SMA specifically)
- d. Resume or CV (as attachment)

3. Type of Scholarship You are Applying For

4. Activities that You Wish to Pursue with the Scholarship

- a. Description of specific activities that you plan to pursue
- b. Explanation of why these activities are relevant to your professional development and work in SMA
- c. Information about total costs associated with participation in these activities

5. Short Essays

- a. Professional Development Goal Essay (250 words; required for all applications)
 - i. What is your top professional development goal, and how will meeting this goal improve your ability to serve patients?
- b. Essay on Personal Experiences in SMA (250 words; one topic required for all applications)
 - i. What do you see as the biggest challenge in caring for SMA patients today?
 - ii. What has been the most influential experience you have had working with SMA patients and families, and how has it affected the way you approach your work?
 - iii. (CRCs only) Describe the most significant challenges and opportunities that you see when it comes to retention of CRCs who work in SMA.
- c. Additional 250 Word Essay Required for Career Advancement Award
 - i. What opportunities do you see to improve the way that the clinical and research communities serve SMA patients? How might you contribute to making these improvements?

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