



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY®

**LLS URM Medical Student Research  
Opportunity**

Request for Applications

**July 2024 –June 2025 Academic Year**



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## **Goal:**

To provide opportunities for underrepresented minority (URM) medical students to engage in full time blood cancer laboratory research for 1 year. This experience will provide students with opportunities that may open new interests, with some students later pursuing careers as physician-scientists or physicians, with either choice focusing on blood cancer. Though there is no requirement for future career choices, our goal is to increase the number of URM physician-scientists who are at the interface of blood cancer research and treatment.

## **Funding:**

Provide \$75,000 as a stipend to the student for their living expenses. Up to \$5,000 will be provided for travel expenses. The host lab will be provided \$10,000 to help pay research costs. Up to \$3,000/year will be provided for attendance at The American Society of Hematology (ASH) annual meeting for up to two years (during and immediately after the research year).

## **Eligibility:**

URM medical students who are in an LCME-accredited medical school within the United States and are in good standing by the application due date may apply. All applicants must be US citizens. Applications are ideally from those who are in their second year (as of the application due date), but we also welcome those who are in their third or fourth year (as of the application due date).

To define “URM,” we use the terminology provided by the NIH, who define the following groups as underrepresented in biomedical research: “Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.” \*

*\* Notice of NIH's Interest in Diversity (NOT-OD-20-031), November 22, 2019, release date*

## **Selection:**

Students will write an application that contains their most recent medical school transcript and a personal statement which details their interest in blood cancer research and/or treatment. A letter is required from a dean of the student’s medical school. A second letter is required from another senior administrator with a doctoral-level degree or from



professors who are directly involved with the student's education. These letters must indicate student's high academic achievement and overall high motivation for excellence. In addition, these letters must show support from the medical school for the student regarding taking time away from medical school while maintaining medical school student status as well as affirming support for the student's medical coverage.

LLS will convene a small group of independent reviewers to evaluate the applications for acceptance into the program.

## **Research:**

LLS has selected academic researchers who will host a student. These researchers represent both diverse scientific interests and broad geographical locations. They are generally physician-scientists or will have access to other physician-scientists at the institution. Physician-scientists will provide optimal mentorship to medical students who want to pursue a career straddling the laboratory and the clinic.

The host will provide direct mentorship and oversight of the research. The host will provide options for an important research project (or sub-project of an existing project) that is appropriate for a 1-year timeframe. The student will work closely with a lab champion, who will often be a postdoctoral fellow, but can be any experienced and enthusiastic lab member, who will directly oversee the day-to-day research training of the student. The student will be a full member of the lab during their stay.

## **Choosing Research Location:**

Students accepted into the program will be presented with a list of choices, and the student will select their top 3. Students will then interview with each of the 3 hosts of their top 3 labs. Students will rank the choices after the interviews, while hosts will rank their choices (if necessary). LLS will not require any host to accept any student; their personnel decisions are entirely up to them. In the unlikely event a student is not matched with one of their top 3 choices, LLS will work to identify additional opportunities.

This research lab should be at a separate institution from their medical school to provide greater exposure and mentorship to the student (with some consideration of extenuating circumstances that might make this difficult).

After identification of a suitable lab, the lab host will work with the student to write a proposal: background, research aims/plan, pitfalls, and alternatives, etc., as well as the identification of a lab champion within the lab (see next section for "lab champion")



discussion). This will be done prior to relocating to the research lab and will be provided to LLS scientific staff for LLS oversight.

### **Research lab experience:**

The lab host will assign the student to a lab champion (prior to the student coming to the lab) who will be the direct mentor of the student in the lab. This lab champion should be someone established in the lab that has enough knowledge of lab techniques/approaches to mentor the student. The student will work with their lab champion on the project, with the goal of some independence of the student over the conduct of the research. It will be important that the student have ownership over that project (which may be a sub-project of an existing project).

The lab host will meet with the student once per week to discuss progress and overall issues. This will also provide an opportunity for the lab host (who will generally be a physician-scientist) to convey their knowledge of the physician-scientist career path. In the event that the lab host is not an MD, another physician-scientist in the department will serve as an extra mentor.

The student will participate in the weekly lab meetings and present when appropriate. Other informal learning opportunities may be identified by the host, such as attending clinical rounds, departmental grand rounds, journal club, and other educational opportunities as appropriate and available.

### **Outside Mentorship:**

LLS will identify clinical mentors who will be another source of mentorship for the student. Each student's clinical mentor must be from an institution distinct from their medical school and from their host institution. The clinical mentor and the student will meet quarterly via Zoom.

### **LLS Oversight:**

LLS will facilitate matching the student to the lab and have light oversight of the project development (mentioned above).

LLS scientific staff will meet quarterly with the student via Zoom to discuss their ongoing experience. This will be open-ended, providing the opportunity for the student to lead the discussion. A brief PowerPoint prepared by the student may be helpful to guide the discussion.



LLS scientific staff will have a debrief with the student at the end of their research to understand what we might do to improve the program. We would also separately have a debrief with the lab mentor and the lab champion to understand the experience from their perspective.

### **Presentation of research:**

Each student will present a final report to LLS on their experience using an LLS template.

Each student will be provided the opportunity to attend ASH twice: once during their research year and once the following year. Though not guaranteed, it is hoped that the student will be an author on a presentation (abstract or oral) resulting from their research. Their authorship on the presentation will be commensurate with their contribution. Note that even 1 year of full-time research will likely not be enough to make the student a first author of the presentation; their research will likely be an important part of a larger project. Therefore, they should be an author, but it is unlikely that they would be a first author.

Any manuscript published that includes the student’s research will include the student as an author commensurate with their contribution.

### **Keeping in Touch:**

LLS seeks to provide research opportunities to URM medical students. As such, we will be interested in following their careers and we encourage them to keep in touch with us. In addition, former members of this program may serve as contact and additional mentors for future students in the program.

### **Timeline:**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Date</b>
Program opens for applications	June 1, 2023
Applications due	November 1, 2023, 3 PM (ET)
Notification of acceptance into program	By February 1, 2024
Selection and interview process with potential lab hosts begins	February 1, 2024
Notification of lab placement	By March 1, 2024



Proposal for research projects due	May 1, 2024
Contracts signed by all parties	May 1, 2024
Student research	July 1, 2024 -June 30, 2025
Lay project description/headshot for web page due	August 15, 2024

## **Questions:**

For questions about the program, please contact [researchprograms@lls.org](mailto:researchprograms@lls.org) or call (914) 821-8497.