



MYOTONIC  
DYSTROPHY  
FOUNDATION

# MDF Fund-a-Fellow Postdoctoral Research Award

# 2016

## **Purpose:**

The Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation (MDF) supports scientific investigations to enhance the quality of life of people living with myotonic dystrophy and advance research focused on finding treatments and a cure for this disease.

As a part of this effort, the Foundation funds annual post-doctoral research fellowships (similar to a NIH fellowship award) to expand the knowledge and understanding of myotonic dystrophy.

This is a two year award with a budget of no more than \$55,000/year for a total award amount of \$110,000.



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## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fund-a-Fellow (FAF) Postdoctoral Award Program Guidelines

The Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation (MDF) supports scientific investigations to:

Enhance the quality of life of people living with myotonic dystrophy and advance research focused on finding treatments and a cure for this disease.

As a part of this effort, the Foundation funds annual post-doctoral research fellowships (similar to a NIH fellowship award) to expand the knowledge and understanding of myotonic dystrophy.

### Grant Focus Areas:

Myotonic dystrophy (DM) is a chronic disease with multiple dimensions that affects the lives of DM patients and their families every day. There are two major types of myotonic dystrophy: type 1 (DM1) and type 2 (DM2). Both types of myotonic dystrophy are inherited autosomal dominant disorders affecting all areas of the body. The primary clinical physical manifestation is characterized by progressive muscle wasting and weakness affecting the lower legs, hips, hands, shoulders, neck, and face in DM1 and progressive muscle wasting and weakness affecting the proximal leg muscles, hips, shoulders and neck in DM2.

People with this disorder may have prolonged muscle contractions (myotonia) and may not be able to relax certain muscles after use, affecting grip and speech for example. They may also develop cataracts, cardiac conduction defects, and infertility. Many patients also experience CNS effects that sometimes manifest as white matter lesions and patient-reported symptoms including central fatigue, excessive daytime sleepiness and difficulty in executive function, sometimes described as “brain fog.” A variation of DM1 called congenital myotonic dystrophy includes weak muscle tone (hypotonia), breathing problems, CNS involvement, delayed development, and intellectual disability.

Recognizing that the symptoms and the severity of the condition vary widely among affected people and often severely impact activities of daily living and functioning, **MDF is expanding the scientific research endeavors eligible for Fund-a-Fellow awards to include research focused on improving treatment, care and support of the DM patient and his/her family, as well as molecular biology and basic science.**

MDF is actively soliciting fellowship proposals for basic, clinical, or applied research related to myotonic dystrophy in:

- Pathogenesis of myotonic dystrophy
- DM progression related to the development of therapeutic trials
- Molecular basis of phenotypes (Type 1, 2, congenital)
- Identification and validation of drug treatment endpoints
- Best practices and clinical management, including nursing, social work, and psychology
- Standards of care and care integration
- Epidemiology, economics and support services

- Therapeutic and diagnostic development

Applicants must have a Ph.D., M.D., D.O or other doctoral degree in their profession from an accredited institution. Degree must be received within no more than three years before the fellowship period. U.S. and international applicants are invited to apply.

### **Duration of Fellowship**

The fellowship is for a two-year period, with second year funding dependent on successful completion of the first year's stated objectives. Prior to the actual awarding of the grant, the applicant must have fully met all of the requirements of her/his institutional country for residency, where applicable.

### **Payment:**

- Award: \$1100,000 for salary, benefits, travel and research support, paid over two years:
  - \$55,000 will be paid no later than one week prior to activation date of the first year
  - Assuming the first year report is satisfactory, \$55,000 will be paid at the beginning of the second program year.
- MDF awards are not to be used to fund institutional capital cost recovery, overhead or other indirect costs.
- Travel funds of approximately \$5000/year are included to fund attendance by MDF Fellows at the annual International Myotonic Dystrophy Consortium meeting (IDMC) and the annual MDF National Conference. Travel funds not used for these purposes must be returned to MDF at the end of each year of the funding period.
- Second year funding of an MDF Fund-a-Fellow award is contingent upon documentation of satisfactory progress. A progress report satisfactory to MDF is required eleven months after the award is activated.
- The Foundation can cancel the award for non-compliance with any of the eligibility rules herein, or due to non-performance.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

1. **Degree requirements.** The applicant must have a Ph.D., M.D., D.O. or other doctoral degree in his/her profession from an accredited domestic or foreign institution before an MDF Fund-a-Fellow award can be activated. Degree must be received within no more than three years before the fellowship period.
2. **Commitment to myotonic dystrophy research.** MDF supports postdoctoral new investigators with outstanding potential to make contributions to myotonic dystrophy research. Previous work in this area is not required. However, the applicant should document how previous experience and interests will enhance the Fund-a-Fellow research to address important questions related to myotonic dystrophy. The applicant and sponsor must demonstrate a strong and enduring commitment to current and future research in this area.
3. **Sponsor.** The applicant must identify a qualified sponsor to directly oversee and supervise the research activities. That sponsor must have background experience in myotonic dystrophy or a field of study relevant to the candidate's application, and be willing to actively support the applicant. The sponsor must document the availability of space, facilities, and research support to provide an outstanding training experience. For applicants who propose continued work at an institution where they have been engaged for more than one year, it is important that the sponsor document how the MDF award will enhance the opportunity for new research experiences and broaden the scientific and/or clinical background of the applicant. (A sponsor who knows of a promising candidate can encourage and assist the prospective Fellow in applying.)

### **Review and Selection:**

- All applications must be received by 5:00 PM Pacific Time on Friday, September 4, 2015.
- The 2016 FAF Advisory Committee will score and prioritize candidates based on the following criteria:
  - The impact the proposed research could have on the quality of life of people living with DM. Foundation staff will rank proposals based on the case for impact made by the applicant in the "Lay Summary"

component of the application (approximately 40% of total score).

- The likelihood that the Fellow will continue to advance knowledge relevant to improving the quality of life of people living with DM. This will be assessed based on the information provided by the applicant in the “Statement from the Applicant” component of the application, and via the submitted letters of support (approximately 30% of total score).
  - The feasibility and scientific quality of the propose research. This will be assessed by a subject matter expert selected by the Foundation based on the research description provided by the applicant. Applicants may suggest expert reviewers in their field for the Foundation to consider engaging for this evaluation (approximately 30% of total score).
- 
- Proposals deemed to be infeasible or of poor scientific quality will be a low priority for funding regardless of the proposal’s scores on the other two dimensions.
  - Applicants are encouraged to consult with the MDF Research Director Dr. Sharon Hesterlee ([sharon.hesterlee@myotonic.org](mailto:sharon.hesterlee@myotonic.org)) for refinement of their proposals before submission. Technical issues should be directed to MDF Grants Manager Elizabeth Habeeb-Louks at [elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org](mailto:elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org).
  - The 2016 FAF Advisory Committee will recommend final candidates to the MDF Board of Directors.
  - The MDF Board of Directors will consider the 2016 FAF Advisory Committee recommendations and determine final grant awards.

Awards are made at the sole discretion of the MDF Board of Directors. Availability of fellowships does not signify a commitment to award any fellowships. If no applicant is deemed of sufficient scientific merit, expertise and/or skill, MDF may choose not to award a fellowship during this grant cycle.

**Progress Reports:**

Each recipient must submit two progress reports to MDF during the course of the two-year fellowship:

- A **progress report** to be received by MDF eleven months after commencement of the research;
- A **final report** (including an abstract in lay language) submitted to MDF no later than three months after completion of research at the end of the second year.

**Expense Reports:**

Each recipient must submit an expense report to MDF during the course of the two-year fellowship:

- A **final expense report** (including the original proposed budget and final expenses on the grant) submitted to MDF no later than three months after completion of research at the end of the second year and should be submitted along with a check for any unexpended funds on the grant.
- A request for a “**no-cost extension**,” if required, must be submitted in writing at least two weeks before the end of the grant year for which the extension is requested and may be granted for no more than six months.

**Final Publication:**

Fund-a-Fellow recipients are also encouraged to submit at least one scientific paper for publication within six months of the conclusion of the research reporting the research findings. MDF should be clearly credited as a funding source for the work. The recipient’s work is further expected to result in other publications, conference presentations and other public contributions to the field.

**Timeline:**

**September 4, 2015:** Applications must be received by MDF by 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

**September 8 - November 20, 2015:** Applications reviewed by 2016 FAF Review Committee.

**December 18, 2015:** Fellowship recipients will receive informal notification of award

**January 8, 2016:** Fellowship recipients will receive formal award letter

**January 31, 2016:** By this date, recipients must notify MDF of acceptance or rejection of award.

**February 1, 2016:** Earliest activation date of award

**April 15, 2016:** Latest activation date of award.

**Fund-a-Fellow recipients are also highly encouraged to complete one grant writing training workshop provided by MDF during the course of the fellowship period. A Grant writing PowerPoint presentation is available for viewing on the MDF Web site at <http://www.myotonic.org/research/grant-programs>.**

#### **Conference & Publications:**

- Fellow must attend annual MDF conference and annual IDMC conference (travel and expenses to be paid for by MDF).
- MDF may publish the lay summary that accompanies the application for funded projects. This description should not contain information the Fellow does not wish to divulge to the general public.
- When a paper based on the work supported by an MDF fellowship is accepted for publication or presented before a scientific organization, an advance copy of the paper must be sent to the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation electronically at [info@myotonic.org](mailto:info@myotonic.org). MDF will respect journal embargos and you are not violating the authorship terms by providing us with an advance copy. We need advance copies so that we can determine, what, if any, publicity we may wish to provide around the research. No public disclosures of the contents will be made until after the journal embargo date. Also, while MDF understands that publishers have varied requirements regarding republication of papers selected for publication, MDF requires that each award recipient submit a request to the publisher encouraging them to allow MDF to post the paper published on its website, [www.myotonic.org](http://www.myotonic.org). The publisher's decision on this matter shall be final and will not affect the research award or any future grants by MDF to the award recipient.
- If the fellow is aware that a press release is being prepared about the work or the fellow has been contacted by a journalist, please let MDF know this is taking place. Fellows should encourage their University press offices or outside journalists to contact MDF so that publicity can be coordinated. Press releases regarding the study funded by MDF shall be emailed to [info@myotonic.org](mailto:info@myotonic.org).
- All papers, exhibits, and press releases directly resulting from MDF funding shall carry a credit line to the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation.
- Within 12 weeks of the conclusion of the fellowship, each recipient must submit an abstract of the results in lay language to MDF to be used for publication in its newsletter, annual report and other appropriate places.
- The title of each study funded by MDF, together with the lay language abstract of the research, the names of the Fellow, and the sponsor and the institution, will be published on the MDF website, in MDF newsletters, in annual reports and wherever else MDF deems appropriate. The Fellow will always be clearly acknowledged.



# MDF Fellowship Application: Instructions for Submission

## Requirements for Submission:

In order to submit your application, please complete the following:

- **MDF Application Form**
  - Section 1: **Administrative Information**
  - Section 2: **Budget**
  - Section 3: **Research Plan Summaries**: one in scientific language and one in lay language; each not to exceed one page each.
  - Section 4: **Research Plan**
  - Section 5: **Regulatory Documentation (Animal Care and Use Committee and Institutional Review Board application and approvals) Funding Overlap Statement**
  - Section 6: **Funding Overlap Statement**
- **Candidate Curriculum Vitae** – including previous research and teaching experience.
- **Sponsor Biosketch** – not to exceed four pages and using National Institutes of Health (NIH) form PHS 398 as a guide.
- **One letter of support written by the sponsor** describing the commitment and training to be provided and a brief overview of the other projects underway that might enhance the experience of the Fellow. This letter should also include a brief description of the laboratory or clinic space, equipment, and environment where the Fellow will be working.
- **One letter of recommendation** in addition to letter from sponsor. This letter should not be mailed to the applicant. Instead, we ask that the letter be a blind recommendation with a signed, hard copy either faxed directly to the MDF at: 415-800-7687, or emailed to the Research Director, Dr. Sharon Hesterlee, in care of “MDF Grants Manager” at [elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org](mailto:elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org) no later than 5:00 PM Pacific Time, Friday, September 4, 2015. Subject line should be “FAF Letter of Recommendation-[Applicant’s last name]”
- **Statement from the Applicant** including applicant’s name, contact information, a listing of current funding, a description of other pending applications for research funding during the funding period, a description of how previous experience and research interests will align with this fellowship training to address important questions related to myotonic dystrophy, and demonstrable, long-term commitment to research related to myotonic dystrophy.
- **Proof of applicant’s** successful completion of **Ph.D., M.D., D.O. or other doctoral degree** in the applicant’s field. This requirement may be satisfied following the application date, provided that the applicant submits proof of successful completion prior to Friday, December 25, 2015

## Where to Submit:

All application materials must be submitted electronically to the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation Grants Manager at [elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org](mailto:elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org) as a single PDF file (with the exception of the letter of recommendation, which will be sent separately) with the subject line “MDF Postdoctoral Fellowship Application” and received no later than 5:00 PM Pacific, Friday, September 4, 2015.

Please use the list of requirements above as a checklist when submitting your application, and keep a copy for your records. If you have specific questions about completing the application, you may contact the MDF Grants Manager Elizabeth Habeeb-Louks at [elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org](mailto:elizabeth.habeeb-louks@myotonic.org) or at (520) 834-5812. Final fellowship awards will be published on the MDF website in January 2016.





2016

**MDF Fund-a-Fellow  
Postdoctoral  
Research  
Award Cover  
Page and  
Signatures**

**Section 1  
Administrative  
Information:**

Please fill out the fields below, print and add signatures and then scan to submit with your electronic application.

**Section 1 – Administrative Information:**

**PROJECT TITLE**

**FULL TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**ABBREVIATED TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

**NAME** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**DEGREES** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**INSTITUTION** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**STREET ADDRESS** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**CITY** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**COUNTRY** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**TELEPHONE** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**EMAIL** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**TITLE AND POSITION** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**DEPARTMENT** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**STATE OR PROVINCE** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**ZIP CODE** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**FAX** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**SPONSOR**

**SPONSOR NAME** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**SPONSOR EMAIL** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**SPONSOR TITLE AND POSITION** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**SPONSOR TELEPHONE** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**SPONSOR FAX** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**AMOUNT REQUESTED**

Up to \$110,000

**CERTIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE**

The undersigned agrees to (1) pursue the scientific investigation described in the Research Plan, (2) acknowledge support from the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation in any publication resulting from an award, and (3) comply with all of MDF’s eligibility requirements set forth in the MDF Fund a Fellow guidelines and this application. Failure to comply with these requirements shall be considered a material breach of this application. Copies of reprints or manuscripts supported by this grant shall be made available to the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT)

TYPED NAME OF SIGNATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE OF SPONSOR)

TYPED NAME OF SIGNATOR

“I certify to the best of my knowledge that the statements contained within are complete and accurate and acknowledge that applicant is an employee of the institution in good standing. I further certify that I am authorized by the Institution to make these representations on its behalf.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE OF INSTUTION OFFICIAL)

TYPED NAME OF SIGNATOR

**MAILING ADDRESS FOR CHECKS:**

**PAYABLE TO** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**INSTITUTION** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**STREET ADDRESS** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**CITY** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**TELEPHONE** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**EMAIL** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**DEPARTMENT** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**CONTACT PERSON** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**STATE/PROVINCE AND ZIP** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**FAX** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER** [Click here to enter text.](#)

## Section 2 – Budget:

Please complete the fields in the budget table below to the nearest U.S. dollar. Once you have completed the fields you can save an electronic copy of the budget for your records and for inclusion with your electronic application submission.

Please also print a copy of the budget to be included with your hard copy submissions.

	AMOUNT OF FUNDS YEAR ONE	AMOUNT OF FUNDS YEAR TWO	TOTAL FUNDS FOR TWO YEAR PERIOD
Stipend	\$	\$	\$
Benefits	\$	\$	\$
Travel	\$ 5000	\$ 5000	\$ 10,000
Other	\$	\$	\$
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	\$	\$	\$

Please complete two Research Project Summaries and the Research Plan (Sections 3 and 4 as described below) to be included as attachments to Sections 1 and 2 of the application form. Submit electronic copies of both Summaries and the Research Plan with your electronic submission and print copies to be included with your hard copy submissions.

## Section 3 – Research Project Summaries

1. **Abstract of Research Plan:** A complete, scientific description of the proposed work so that it may be separated from the application. This abstract will not be made public. (maximum one page)
2. **Lay Summary:** A general, non-scientific description of the proposed work. If funded, the lay summary is to be used and published in appropriate places by the MDF (maximum one page).

## Section 4 – Research Plan

Please write a **Research Plan** that includes the following information (total should not exceed 9 pages):

1. A summary of the specific aims of the project (1 page)
2. Anticipated collaborative agreements if applicable (1 page)
3. The background and significance of the project (max. 2 pages)
4. Preliminary studies with figures if applicable - (2 or 3 pages)
5. Methods, expected results, data analysis, interpretation and significance - (2 or 3 pages)

## Section 5 – Regulatory Documentation

**Human Subjects:** If your project requires an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, please note dates of approval and expiration and attach copies of the IRB form and approval. If approval is pending, please indicate expected date of approval.

**Animal Use:** If your project requires an Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval, please note dates of approval and expiration and attach copies of the IACUC form and approval. If approval is pending, please indicate expected date of approval.

**Section 6 – Funding Overlap Statement:** List and additional support received by the applicant, including: Grant name; Source; Award status; and Award amount.

**Please use the following document specifications for all of the application attachments including the research project summaries and research plan documents:**

Page Setup: One-inch margins, single line spacing. Font: not smaller than 11pt Arial for text, 10pt Arial for tables and figures, 6pt (or larger) Arial for letters and numbers within fig. All supporting documents to the electronic application must be submitted in .doc (Word) or .pdf (Adobe) format.