



2024 MPN Challenge
Request for Applications (RFA)
FUNDING PROGRAM SUPPORTED BY THE MPN RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Call for Proposals: November 6, 2023

The MPN Research Foundation (MPNRF) is ready to unveil our latest Request for Applications (RFA), inviting visionary researchers and trailblazers from diverse disciplines to embark on a journey of groundbreaking discovery. **The 2024 MPN Challenge**, a grant program launched by MPNRF, aims to invest in research that will eventually lead to better treatments and a cure for patients with the following myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs): essential thrombocythemia (ET), polycythemia vera (PV), and myelofibrosis (MF). This is achieved by requesting proposals that have a potentially positive impact on patients that are both novel and clinically relevant. The MPN Challenge has historically succeeded in achieving this goal.

It's a significant innovation that MPNRF has incorporated a Patient Impact Council into the 2024 MPN Challenge. This novel approach underscores our commitment to involving patients in the decision-making process, marking a positive shift towards greater patient-centricity in our research funding endeavors. Ultimately, a Patient Impact Council not only serves as a moral imperative but also a practical necessity to focus our research on meaningful advancements in healthcare that directly benefit those they intend to serve—patients and their caregivers.

We have identified a number of focus areas for the **2024 MPN Challenge** through discussion with patients, our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), and dedicated meetings with clinicians and researchers. *It is important to note that MPNRF will consider any application that advances our knowledge of the pathogenesis and treatment of the classical MPNs.*

However, we are especially encouraging applications that address the following research focus areas:

- **Harnessing the immune system to improve long-term outcomes for patients with an MPN** – research directed at developing novel immunotherapeutic strategies by exploring multiple avenues relating to the immune system and MPNs.

- **Strategies directed at earlier intervention and/or prevention of MPNs** – While open to all approaches, this is intended particularly towards new, non-conventional, research approaches that involve combining traditional and complementary therapies.
- **Quality of Life (QoL)** – Research projects that lead to reduction of symptom burden including anemia/fatigue; augmenting existing therapies with alternative treatments such as nutrition, coping strategies for anxiety, and depression using meditation, movement, sound, activities, etc.
- **Spatial analysis of the bone marrow microenvironment towards personalized therapeutics development** – Use of spatial analysis of individual patient bone marrow provides the opportunity for more personalized therapeutic strategies and development of new drug targets. We are seeking proposals that will help adapt this currently costly, low throughput approach for clinical care of MPN patients.
- **Research using relevant human disease models** – we are seeking more research that uses primary human MPN samples and/or human disease derived models to enhance decision-making for future therapeutic targets and treatment strategies.
- **Biology of progression of chronic phase MPN to AML** – research leading to a greater understanding and exploiting the mechanisms that lead to transformation to acute myeloid leukemia (AML).
- **Optimize patient therapy decisions** – with many new treatment options available or under investigation for MPN patients, we are seeking proposals that utilize patient genomic and/or other clinical characteristics to optimize success with their choice of treatment.

Criteria for Evaluation for all applications:

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Relevance to mission and goals of accelerating access to high quality, effective, and even curative therapies for people living with ET, PV, and MF.**
- **Research Strategy and Feasibility.** Are the project's objectives, experimental layout, procedures, and analyses well-developed and integrated? Does the principal investigator (PI) recognize risks and hazards that can arise? Is it fair to anticipate that the research will provide significant results within the grant's two-year duration?
- **Innovation.** We are in favor of ideas that allow for the preliminary research of novel concepts that might lead to the opening of fresh lines of inquiry. MPN Challenge projects are generally NOT meant to promote the logical progression of an already existing research effort.

- **Potential for Near-Term Patient Impact.** Will the accomplishment of the specific aims advance our knowledge of MPN causes, prevention, or cure? Is it clear from the narrative that this research has the potential to impact patients?
- **Research Environment and Support.** MPNRF believes that sharing data is critical for advancing science as rapidly as possible. We recognize that the research process is confidential. However, it is our expectation that all data will be made available to the public within a year of their generation. We encourage scientific papers, presentations at the American Society of Hematology (ASH) conferences or comparable venues, smaller meetings, and website publication.

Significant Dates:

2023	
November 6 th	Call for Proposals
2024	
January 30 th	Proposal Due Date
April 18 th	Peer Review Meeting
May 6 th – 7 th	Notifications of Awards at MPN Roundtable

The application for the 2024 MPN Challenge can be accessed here [APPLY](#).

Peer Review Process:

A dual peer review process is planned for all proposals. The scientific subject matter experts will focus on the scientific merit of the research and its potential impact on patient outcomes and the MPN scientific field. Patient advocates will review proposals with a focus on the overall lay project summary, its relevance to our mission, and its potential to have an impact on patients.

Term of Award:

Projects will be awarded for a maximum of \$100,000 a year for two years, with the second year of funding contingent on satisfactory progress and approval. This will be assessed by interim and annual progress reports and teleconferences with

MPNRF staff. A third-year competitive renewal will also be offered based upon progress, a competitive proposal, and the availability of funding.

MPNRF enlists best practices in peer review, modeled after NIH scoring. The peer review panel provides scoring and commentary with recommendations to the MPNRF Board of Directors, who have the final decision on selection and funding amounts.

All MPNRF award recipients are invited to the MPN Roundtable, an annual scientific symposium where they can network with other MPN specialists and stakeholders from both academia, industry, and patients. Awardees present their work at the MPN Roundtable, receive feedback, and are asked to take part in a larger conversation with the MPN science community.

Award Agreement Considerations:

New requirements have been added to our award agreements to detail MPNRF's expectations for progress reporting and no-cost extensions.

Provisions Related to Intellectual Property:

The MPN Research Foundation is committed to translating the results of basic and translational research to MPN patients. To that end, we include in our contracts with the institutions of our awardees Intellectual Property language meant to ensure that no critical results are left without productive follow-up. Should your proposal be selected for an award, we will provide you with this language and ask you to work with your grant office to achieve a timely agreement on these provisions.

Limitation on Contract Negotiation Period:

Following award notification, the MPN Research Foundation will interact with each grantee's institutional grant or research administration office to establish a contract for each award. It is our experience that this process can be completed in a 3-month period, especially if the terms of the grant (including Intellectual Property as described above) are reviewed by the grant office prior to submission of the proposal. MPN Research Foundation reserves the right to cancel a grant if it is not possible to complete contract negotiations within three months of the award notice.