



LEUKEMIA &
LYMPHOMA
SOCIETY®

SMART

Medical Student Opportunity

Student Mentorship and Research Training

Request for Applications

July 2026 - June 2027 Academic Year



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Goal:

To provide opportunities for medical students to engage in full time blood cancer laboratory research for 1 year. This experience will provide students with exposure 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 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 relocation costs. 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:

Students enrolled in LCME or COCA accredited medical schools within the United States and are in good standing by the application due date may apply. *Students must be from schools which are **not** affiliated with an NCI-Designated Cancer Center* **OR** from schools where opportunities for malignant hematology research are limited.* Applications are ideally from those who are in their 3rd or 4th year (as of the application due date), but we also welcome those who are in their 2nd year (as of the application due date), with an expressed interest in hematology/oncology.



See map of **NCI designated cancer centers** with legend below.



**Part of the National Institute of Health, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) is the federal government's principal agency for cancer research and training. An NCI-designated cancer center means a cancer center has met standards for cancer prevention, clinical services, or research as determined by the NCI. A Comprehensive Cancer Center meets the NCI standards in all three of those categories. Source: Cancer.gov. A complete alphabetical list of centers can be found [HERE](#).*

All applicants must be US citizens or permanent resident of the US or a US territory.



Selection:

Students will write an application that contains a personal statement which details their interest in blood cancer research and/or treatment. *Interest or experience in wet laboratory research is a plus.* 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, the dean's letter 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 rank their top 3. Students will then interview with their top choice, and if a match is made, additional interviews will not be necessary. If a first-choice match is **not** made, interviews will then be scheduled for their second and third 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 at least 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. The student will also be requested to complete an anonymous exit survey. 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, which is due **September 1st** after completion of the program.

Each student will be provided the opportunity to attend ASH twice: once during their research year and once the following year. Students will be **required** to become a member of ASH, which will both facilitate and make attendance more economical, enabling stipend funding to be put to greater use. 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 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 for the 2026-2027 Academic Year

Phase	Date
Program opens for applications	June 1, 2025
Applications due	December 15, 2025, 3 PM (ET)
Notification of acceptance into program	February 2026
Selection and interview process with potential lab hosts begins	February 2026
Notification of lab placement	March 2026
Proposal for research projects due	May 1, 2026
Contracts signed by all parties	May 1, 2026
Student research	July 1, 2026 -June 30, 2027
Lay project description/headshot for web page due	August 15, 2026

Questions:

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