

SCLERODERMA CLINICAL TRIALS CONSORTIUM
BETTY Z. BENEDICT AWARD
2026 Request for Proposals to Advance Clinical Trials and
Translational Medicine in Systemic Sclerosis

PURPOSE: The purpose of the 2026 SCTC Betty Z. Benedict Award is to provide support for an innovative, high-impact, and collaborative project to advance the conduct of clinical trials for patients with systemic sclerosis and to find better treatments for the disease. **This funding mechanism supports projects utilizing clinical, epidemiological, or translational scientific methods that aim to improve the design and conduct of clinical trials.**

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be from a SCTC member institution in good standing (<https://sclerodermaclinicaltrialsconsortium.org/about-the-scleroderma-clinical-trials-consortium/membership-application>). This funding mechanism is not restricted to the SCTC-based Working Groups; however, they are eligible to apply. Funding decisions are based primarily on merit, although favor will be given to collaborative proposals involving multiple institutions.

FUNDING LEVEL: Maximum funding for a 1-year project is \$100,000 and \$200,000 for a 2-year project. For a 2-year project, second-year funding will depend on progress shown in the year 1 report.

Beyond year 1 or 2, depending on the initial length of the project, the grantee may apply for further funding but will compete with all other new applicants for the following cycle. All awardees are expected to provide a final progress report 60 days after the end of the award period in order to be eligible to apply for continued funding in the following cycle.

The committee may award funding for a single application or split the available funding across 2 or more fundable projects. An offer of partial funding and/or for a shorter period may be made if it is felt a project could be completed more efficiently or requires the achievement of one or more milestones to justify ongoing funding.

COSTS: This award is meant to support the actual project, and no indirect costs are permitted. Faculty salary support is permitted.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: The deadline for receipt of the application is midnight (EDT) on October 1, 2026.

REVIEW AND RANKING OF THE APPLICATIONS will be done by the SCTC Scientific Research Committee. Projects will be judged based on scientific merit, contribution to the mission of the SCTC as stated on the website (<https://sclerodermaclinicaltrialsconsortium.org/index.php>), feasibility, budgetary factors, and the extent of collaborative effort.

The decision to fund a project will be made and applicants will be notified in November 2026. The awardee will be given one week to accept or decline funding. Funding will begin January 1, 2027.

The SCTC Executive Committee, upon recommendations from the SCTC Scientific Research Committee, reserves the option of not funding any applications if none meet the standards and expectations set forth; furthermore, the Committee may seek clarification from applicants or may choose to fund only portions of the proposals.

CRITERIA FOR FUNDING: Projects will be judged based on scientific merit, contribution to a shared mission of the SCTC (<https://sclerodermaclinicaltrialsconsortium.org/index.php>) as stated above, feasibility, budgetary factors, and the extent of collaborative effort. Applicants are strongly encouraged to be inclusive in participation of centers and junior investigators.

GENERAL FORMATTING FOR APPLICATIONS AND PROGRESS/FINAL REPORTS:
Arial font, 11-point type, single-spaced with ½ inch margins should be used.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING THE APPLICATION:

Title page including the application title, Principal Investigator, Institution, amount of funding requested, and the name and address of the institutional official who would process the grant. In the title page, please indicate whether the proposal is for a one-year or two-year project.

Key Personnel page (including collaborating investigators) listing positions and institutions.

Budget and budget justification: Please include whether you have submitted a similar application to another funding source, and if there is any budgetary overlap with current or pending applications. Please include detailed information on supplemental funding if required to complete the project.

Biosketch of Principal Investigator and all Key Personnel in NIH format. Please include a list of current and pending grant support of the PI(s).

Introduction: For resubmissions only (either Working Group or Betty Benedict prior submissions), please include up to 1-page of point-by-point responses to reviewer comments.

Body of grant: This portion of the application cannot exceed 5 pages (excluding references) and must include a Project Summary, Specific Aims, and the Approach to accomplish these aims. A section entitled, 'Applicability to clinical trials' should be included. Applications are strongly encouraged to specifically include the involvement of trainees or junior faculty investigators and detail the exact roles on the project and anticipated credit/authorship of the trainees/junior investigators. Similarly, collaborative/multicenter projects will be favored. Applications for clinical trials must include a plan for safety monitoring.

Letters of support/agreement from collaborating investigators, if applicable.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING **PROGRESS REPORTS DUE ON September 1ST FOLLOWING THE FUNDING YEAR:**

Title page including the application title, Principal Investigator, Institution, and the name and address of the institutional official who would process the grant.

Summary Accounting from prior year(s)

Budget and budget justification for year 2 or if requesting no-cost extension at the end of award

Biosketch of Principal Investigator in NIH format

Body of report: This portion of the application cannot exceed 3 pages (excluding references) and must include: brief Project Summary; brief summary of Specific Aims; summary of progress over the past year; problems encountered over the past year; changes in research plan and rationale; and work plan for continuation of the project. Applicants are encouraged to include a plan for continued funding after the two-year period ends.

Publications emerging from the project: published, in press, submitted, abstracts and works in preparation should be included

SUBMISSION PROCESS: Proposals and progress/final reports should be collated in the proper order, converted to a single PDF document, and submitted to Ms. Adara Borys by e-mail (sctcinc01@gmail.com). If you have any questions about the eligibility of a project or the formatting of the grant, please email sctcinc01@gmail.com