

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FROM YOUNG INVESTIGATORS CONDUCTING BASIC AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH TO PREVENT OR CURE CANCER, ARTHRITIS, HEART DISEASE, MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY, RETINITIS AND/OR MACULAR DEGENERATION**

The Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Fund seeks proposals for the Voelcker Fund Young Investigator Award program from young researchers working in the areas of cancer, arthritis, heart disease, muscular dystrophy, retinitis and/or macular degeneration. Awards will provide up to \$450,000 over a three-year period to enable investigators to innovate and develop data that might generate follow-up funding from other funders. Up to three such awards, for a total commitment of \$1,350,000 may be made in 2026.

### **Program Background**

The mission of the Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Fund is to advance medical research with emphasis given to research to find cures for cancer, heart disease, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, retinitis, and/or macular degeneration of the retina.

Recognizing that a vibrant biomedical research community requires a pipeline of talented biomedical researchers, the Voelcker Fund Young Investigator Award program targets scientists at the assistant professorial level or equivalent position from San Antonio institutions conducting research relevant to cancer, heart disease, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, retinitis and/or macular degeneration.

### **APPLICANT GUIDELINES & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

This program is open to investigators at the assistant professorial level or equivalent position at University Texas Health, San Antonio, Texas, University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas, the Texas Biomedical Research Institute, San Antonio Children's Hospital, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Trinity University, St. Mary's University, University of Incarnate Word and the Retina Foundation of the Southwest.

Candidates should:

- Hold a tenure track **or equivalent position** at the time of application.
- Have a PhD, MD, or MD PhD degree, or equivalent.
- Be citizens or permanent residents of the United States at the time of application.
- Have received their undergraduate degree within twenty five years of application for the Voelcker Fund Young Investigator Award.
- Be able to allocate at least 50% of their time to research.
- Have a mentor.

The sponsoring institution must demonstrate that it can provide the environment necessary for successful research as well as appropriate mentors.

## THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The Application and Selection Process is as follows:

### **Step One: Submission of Pre-Proposals**

Pre-proposals containing the following information should be submitted by *December 6, 2024*:

1. Cover sheet
2. Standard NIH Bio Including Publications (starting from most recent) and the Candidate's Current and Pending Research Support.
3. A *Brief Description* (1-2 Pages) of the Proposed Research Organized into 3 Sections:
  - a. Project Aims
  - b. Rationale and Background for Project
  - c. Experimental Approach
4. Letter of Support from Mentor

Electronic submissions in PDF format are encouraged to [emilyliljenwall@gmail.com](mailto:emilyliljenwall@gmail.com). Pre-proposals will be reviewed by the Voelcker Fund's Scientific Advisory Committee. The top ranked candidates will be notified that they are invited to submit Full Proposals no later than January 16, 2026.

### **Stage Two: Submission of Full Proposals**

The top ranked pre-proposal candidates will be invited to submit a Full Proposal by *March 6, 2026*. Application forms and instructions for submitting Full Proposals will be consistent with prior year's applications, will be emailed to all advancing candidates, and available for download from the Voelcker Fund website. Full Proposals will be subject to a peer review process by scientific experts in the relevant research areas.

During this stage of the competition, proposals will be scored primarily for the quality and originality of the research, the methodology used and the research plan, and its potential to advance knowledge in and/or clinical care for cancer, heart disease, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, macular degeneration and retinitis. Proposals that contain novel ideas and new approaches for probing difficult problems will be considered more competitive. The track record of the candidate and his or her potential to carry out the research also will be assessed as well as the mentor's support and scientific environment of the sponsoring institution.

Written critiques of unfunded proposals will not be provided.

### **Timeline**

December 5, 2025	Pre-Proposals due
January 16, 2026	Finalists invited to submit full-proposals
March 6, 2026	Proposals due
June 1, 2026	Funding Decisions Announced

June 30, 2026

Awards Funded

**Proposals should be submitted to:**

**Emily Harrison Liljenwall**

**The Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Fund**

**153 Treeline Park, Suite 120**

**San Antonio, TX 78209**

**(210) 886-8496**

**[emilyliljenwall@gmail.com](mailto:emilyliljenwall@gmail.com) and**

**[voelckerfund@scs-law.com](mailto:voelckerfund@scs-law.com)**

Application instructions and proposal information are posted on the Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker website at [www.voelckerfund.org](http://www.voelckerfund.org).

***Applicants should direct their questions to Emily Harrison Liljenwall at [emilyliljenwall@gmail.com](mailto:emilyliljenwall@gmail.com).***