

Passano Foundation Clinician-Investigator Awards for Career Development at the University of Maryland School of Medicine

July 2025 revision

Background and Purpose

To promote the research career development of young faculty clinician investigators, the Passano Foundation and the School of Medicine (UMSOM) have, together, created a mechanism to provide partial salary and fringe benefits for clinician-investigators in the early stages of their faculty appointments. This initiative is intended to address the increasing pressures on young faculty clinician-investigators to spend substantial clinical time and effort, in order to generate sufficient funds to support their salaries. The specific purpose of these Passano Clinician-Investigator Awards is to help protect the research time, and thereby further the acquisition of experience and preliminary results by qualified young UMSOM faculty clinician-investigators during the time that they are applying for external research career development and other research grant support. Awards will be based on a competitive application process that is tied closely to the concurrent efforts of junior UMSOM faculty physician-scientists to obtain external research support.

Eligibility

- MD or MD-PhD degree (PhD alone does not suffice).
- Full-time appointment as instructor or assistant professor in a clinical department, as of the time of initiation of the Passano Clinician-Investigator Award.
- Nomination letter from the clinical department chair that includes specified Departmental commitment to support at least 75% of the candidate's effort toward overall research if a Passano Clinician-Investigator Award is made. *This % effort relates to all of the candidate's effort dedicated to **any** research, not only the research in this specific project.* An exception may be granted for a candidate to devote only $\geq 50\%$ of effort toward overall research, if the career development rationale for this is strongly supported by candidate in the application as well as the Chair's letter and other support letters, and especially if the applicant's clinical/educational efforts are convincingly related to their research. Nevertheless, devotion of $<75\%$ effort toward research may reduce reviewer enthusiasm.
- Candidate must have submitted or be about to submit an application (new or revised) for external research support, especially career development/mentored awards (e.g. NIH K08, K23) or other career awards for new clinician-investigators obtained through a competitive peer review process (federal or non-federal). However, an R01, R21 or similar multiyear grant application to any funding source is an acceptable substitute (instead of a career development award).
 - If the candidate has previously submitted a career development grant application to an external funding agency, the candidate must include with this submission any available reviewer critique (e.g. "summary statement" from NIH eRA Commons, also known as "pinksheets") and the candidate's final or draft response to this critique.
- Applicants who have already received grant funding through a K award mechanism are still eligible if they are now in the process of applying for another grant, e.g. NIH R01. To be clear, active support on a career development (K or similar CDA grant) shall not disqualify an applicant, but in this case, the applicant must submit a new application for additional external research support beyond the career development grant (e.g. NIH R01 application).
- Individuals who have already, at the time of application deadline, received NIH R01 grant funding are not eligible.
- Active role at UMSOM as a clinician in any medical specialty or subspecialty.
- *Candidates may compete no more than twice for a Passano Clinician-Investigator Award.*

Deadlines for Internal Submission of Applications for Passano Foundation Clinician-Investigator Awards

- **Monday, October 6, 2025 by 5pm EST.**
- Each year, UMSOM will recommend 1 candidate yearly to the Passano Foundation, usually in November of each year.
- Then, the Passano Foundation Board, based on its interest in the research and accomplishments of the candidate, will select 1 new clinician-investigator/year for 2 years of funding, usually in December of each year.

Application Submission

- Submit application to UMSOM as a single PDF (by email to **Dr. Marey Shriver** at mshriver@som.umaryland.edu; UMSOM Center for Advanced Research Training & Innovation (CARTI).

Application Format and Content

Application must be organized in the order specified below in a single PDF:

- Letter from applicant addressing:
 - Overall plans for research career development.
 - Specific impact of successful application (include information on the quantity (% effort) and nature of your clinical responsibilities if the Passano Clinician-Investigator support is awarded).
 - *If this is not your first application* for the Passano Clinician-Investigator Award, describe in your letter specific details of your progress since your earlier submission and how the revised grant application addresses critical reviews of your external grant application(s).
- Abstract (same format and rules as for PHS 398 application "Project Summary")
- Applicant's Biographical Sketch and Other Support documents (Current PHS 398 format; Other Support must list all prior, active, pending and planned research grants/contracts), and full curriculum vitae (UMSOM-format).
- Letter of support from applicant's clinical department chair addressing:
 - Qualifications of applicant and career plans.
 - Description of applicant's active role as a clinician and specific statement that the award of a Passano Clinician-Investigator Award will be accompanied by protection of 75% of the candidate's effort for overall research. This % effort relates to all research conducted by the candidate, not only to the research in this specific project (*required; see exception above*).
 - A clinical division chief and/or research mentor may co-author this letter, if appropriate, or write a separate letter of support as requested below.
- Letters of support:
 - In addition to the above letter from applicant's Chair, at least 2 letters should be provided from mentors who are familiar with applicant's qualifications. One of these letters must be from the research mentor for the applicant's project proposed herein. A letter from the applicant's principal research mentor must be included. In addition, a letter may be provided by the relevant clinical division chief, Center/Institute leader, or an external current or former collaborator or mentor.
- Copy of pending (submitted externally) or draft (not yet submitted externally) application for external career development *support or research support from an external sponsor (federal or private) which makes awards based on a peer review process. If you are unsure about whether your application/sponsor qualifies, please discuss by email with Dr. Marey Shriver at mshriver@som.umaryland.edu.*

- *If you submit an external application that has been reviewed already, include a copy of the sponsor's review of that application (e.g. the "summary statement" from NIH eRA Commons) along with your application.*
- Supplemental material, e.g. reprints, preprints or other supporting materials (only if absolutely necessary).

Criteria for Selection

- Quality and potential of the applicant -- including the productivity of the applicant, in prior publications and in the development of preliminary data for the grant.
- Quality of the grant -- Is the enclosed grant sufficiently focused and is the applicant able to articulate the potential strengths (in significance, innovation, experimental design) and weaknesses (pitfalls, alternatives) in the application? Can the applicant address questions that any prior reviews have raised?
- Quality of the mentor/applicant relationship.
- Commitment of the mentor, division chief and department chair to provide sufficient resources and protect at least 75% of the applicant's research time (*required; see exception above*).
- Strength of the recommendations.
- Likelihood that the applicant will complete the specific aims of the grant, publish important results in peer reviewed journals, and receive external career development funding.

Terms & Conditions of Award

- All Passano awardees are strongly encouraged to participate in the review and selection of future Passano applications.
- All Passano awardees must be participating in a physician-scientist career development program at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Center for Advanced Research Training & Innovation (CARTI).
- To document the benefit of this program, successful applicants will be required to report to the Committee and the Passano Foundation on their research, publications and funding for several years following their award.

Allowable Expenditures

- Awards will be made for \$37,500 per year for a maximum of 2 years, usually to support only the applicant's salary and fringe benefits (although exceptions may be granted by UMSOM).
- Note that the funding is derived as follows: \$12,500/yr per fellow from the Passano Foundation matched by \$25,000/yr per fellow from UMSOM [\$12,500 from UMSOM Dean plus \$12,500 from UMSOM Department, Center and/or Institute]).

Second Year Funding

- A second year of Passano Clinician-Investigator Award funding is usually awarded at the level of the first year, provided that the candidate has demonstrated sufficient progress, has submitted the required external grant application(s) with encouraging critique, will re-submit application(s) for external funding, and has a continuing need for salary support.
- If a draft application was used to apply for the first year of Passano Clinician-Investigator Award funding, an application for a research project or career development award must be submitted to a peer-review sponsor prior to applying for the second year's funding.
- Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the continuation of this Passano Clinician-Investigator Award program and a satisfactory progress report from the applicant.

Cognizant Office

Further information on this Program may be obtained by emailing **Dr. Marey Shriver** (mshriver@som.umaryland.edu) in the UMSOM Center for Advanced Research Training & Innovation (CARTI).

Application Checklist

Application must be organized in the order specified below in a single PDF:

- Letter from applicant
- Abstract (same format and rules as for PHS 398 application “Project Summary”)
- Applicant's Biographical Sketch and Other Support (Current PHS 398 format), and full curriculum vitae (UMSOM format)
- 2 or more letters of support, including Department Chair's letter
- Copy of submitted or draft grant application, including:
 - Specific Aims
 - Introduction to Resubmission (when applicable)
 - Research Strategy
 - Candidate Information and Goals for Career Development (for career development applications only)
 - Key Personnel/Budget Justification (for research applications only)