Guide to the 2026 Cycle for Applicants & Mentors

- Workshop Goals
- AAOF Mission & Achievements
- Award Types & Eligibility Criteria
- 11 Required Components
- Review Process & Criteria
- Your Role & Your Mentors'/Chair's Roles in Ensuring Your Success
- Questions & Answers

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Workshop Goals

- Share information on
  - Award categories & requirements
  - Review process, criteria & funding decisions

- Improve
  - Quality & completeness of applications
  - Chances of your success
  - Discovery & education in Orthodontics
  - Justification for fundraising efforts of AAOF

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Mission & Achievements

Mission: The Mission of the AAOF is to advance the orthodontic specialty by supporting exceptional education and research that leads to excellence in patient care, and by promoting orthodontic charitable giving.

Vision: To strengthen the future of the specialty by providing the resources to engage and empower all Orthodontists to excel in practice, research, and academics and impact the communities in which they live

Since 1994:
- The AAOF has funded over **500** fellowship and research awards totaling **$16.7 million**
- 76% of faculty supported by AAOF awards remain in full-time academics after 5 years

For 2025, the foundation received **50** proposals and approved 26 for funding

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Funding for the 2026 cycle

1. Funding amounts for the following
   a. OFDFA – $30,000 with a cap on salary of $20,000
   b. BRA – $40,000
   c. RAA – $6,000
   d. CA – $25,000 per year; maximum of 3 years. (Type 4 CA, $50,000 max – see CA General Description)
   e. PFA – $50,000 per year; maximum of 2 years. (One proposal per year per program)
   f. Application deadline: October 10, 2025 – 5:00 pm central time

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Award Types & Eligibility Criteria

- All Award Categories
  - Commitment to academic career (teaching/research)
  - US/Canadian institutions
- Fellowships (OFDFA, PFA), BRA, CA
  - US/Canadian citizens
  - Green-card holders/applicants
- Distinction between full-time, part-time and residents by Award category

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Application Submission Process

Our application website is online at
https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=aao

- If you are new to the system, you will **Create New Account or if you are a previous user, log into** the system using your previous information. Then you will be on the **Apply page** and can choose the appropriate category. Use the same email and password each time you log in.
- Applications will automatically save. You can log out and log back in at any time to complete the application before the deadline. Once you are finished, click the **Submit** button.
- You cannot change your application after it has been submitted.

Award Types & Eligibility Criteria: Junior Faculty

- Orthodontic Faculty Development Fellowship (OFDFA)
  - ≤$30,000 for one year
  - Full-time faculty ≤5 years in 1st appointment

- Postdoctoral Fellowship (PFA)
  - ≤$50,000 per year for 2 years (with 3rd year possible)
  - Orthodontist with PhD (or equivalent)
  - For post-doc research training (lab or clinical)
  - High potential for future extramural (NIH) funding
  - Only one proposal per orthodontic program

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Award Types & Eligibility Criteria: Experienced Faculty

- Biomedical Research Award (BRA)
  - ≤$40,000 for one year
  - Full-time faculty for ≥3 years
  - Any rank
  - Multiple applications per orthodontic program permitted

- Now eligible: Cleft/Craniofacial Orthodontists
  - Full-time
  - Teaching commitment (stated in LOS)
  - ACPA-accredited Team

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Award Types & Eligibility Criteria: Residents/PT Faculty

- Research Aid Award (RAA)
  - ≤$6,000 per year for one year
  - Criteria
    - **Resident** committed to part-time/full-time academic career
      - **Letter of support should state academic interest in 1st/2nd year**
      - **≥1 year from start of award (7/1/2026) to complete project**
      - **Not a previous RAA recipient**
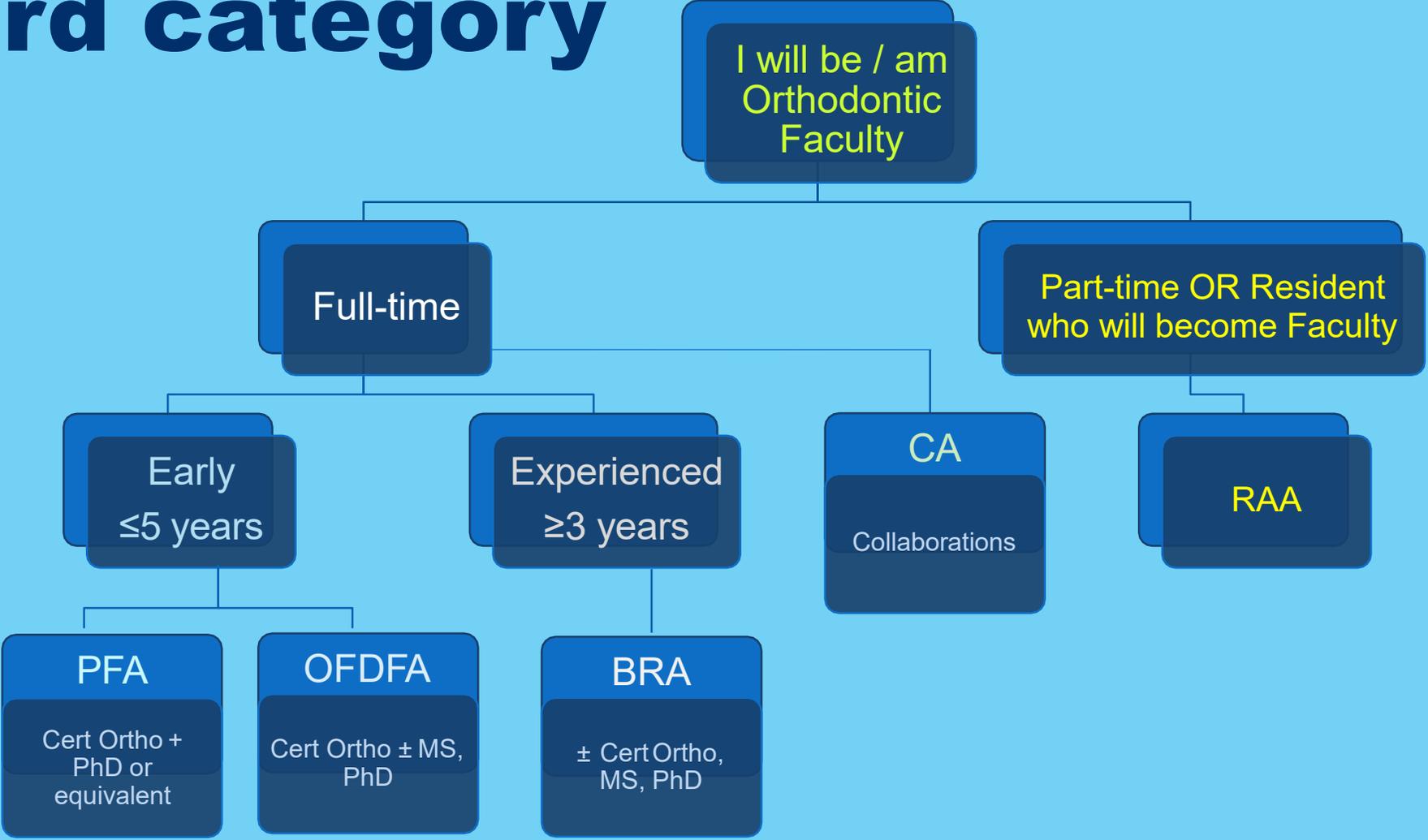   - **Part-time orthodontic faculty**

Award Types & Eligibility Criteria: Collaborations

- Center Award (CA)
  - ≤$25,000 per year for up to 3 years
  - No seniority limit
  - To enhance collaborations within and between institutions
  - Four types

Decision Tree: Selecting correct award category

Questions?

🌐 aaofoundation.net

Previous AAOF Awards and Outcomes

- Reflects on:
  - Academic accomplishments
  - Success in career development and scholarship
  - Future chances of success with additional funding

- Important outcome measure for AAOF and donors

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Budget & budget justification

- All eligible expenses only
  - Itemized list
  - Justification: why needed
- Follow guidelines – especially re: what is allowed (± salaries) and limits (travel)

- If other funds are planned to complete proposal, identify
  - What parts will be funded by AAOF/other funds
  - Must: Source of other funds (agency, amount)

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Budget & budget justification

- Fellowships only – if requesting stipend/salary
  - Describe alternative funds (sources, amounts) for proposed plans
- Reviewers assess
  - Appropriateness for proposed activities
  - Completeness
  - Reasonable cost estimates
  - If not in budget, are essential equipment, supplies, resources available to perform studies/plans
  - Help out: provide information

Bio Sketches

- Required for all individuals named on Title Page

- ≤4 pages
  - Personal Statement
  - Positions and Honors
  - Contribution to Science
  - Research support
    - Ongoing
    - Past 3 years

Roles of Applicant(s)

- Include all individuals named on Title Page
  - Role(s)
  - Responsibilities
  - % effort

- Follow award-specific instructions, e.g.
  - OFDFA mentor/advisor(s)
    - Role/s
    - Plans for meetings with applicant
    - Skills, background

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Proposed Plan

1. Abstract (≤1 page)

2. Project Plans(s)
   - Different character limits & content for different award types
   - Resubmissions only: Introduction page (see next)

3. Timetable (≤1 page)

4. References (no page limit)
   - Include all cited materials

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Resubmission Applications: Introduction Page

- Resubmissions are encouraged

- Applicant/s must
  - Make appropriate & major changes to the re-submitted application

- Include previous AAOF PARC review

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Resubmission Applications: Introduction Page

- 1 page maximum

- Summarizes:
  - Substantial additions, deletions, & changes to the previous application

- Includes:
  - Responses to all of the "weaknesses" provided in the six sections of the critique

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Letters of Support

- No page limits
- Required for all award categories
- Award-specific instructions
- Importance as specified in instructions
- Avoid extraneous letters

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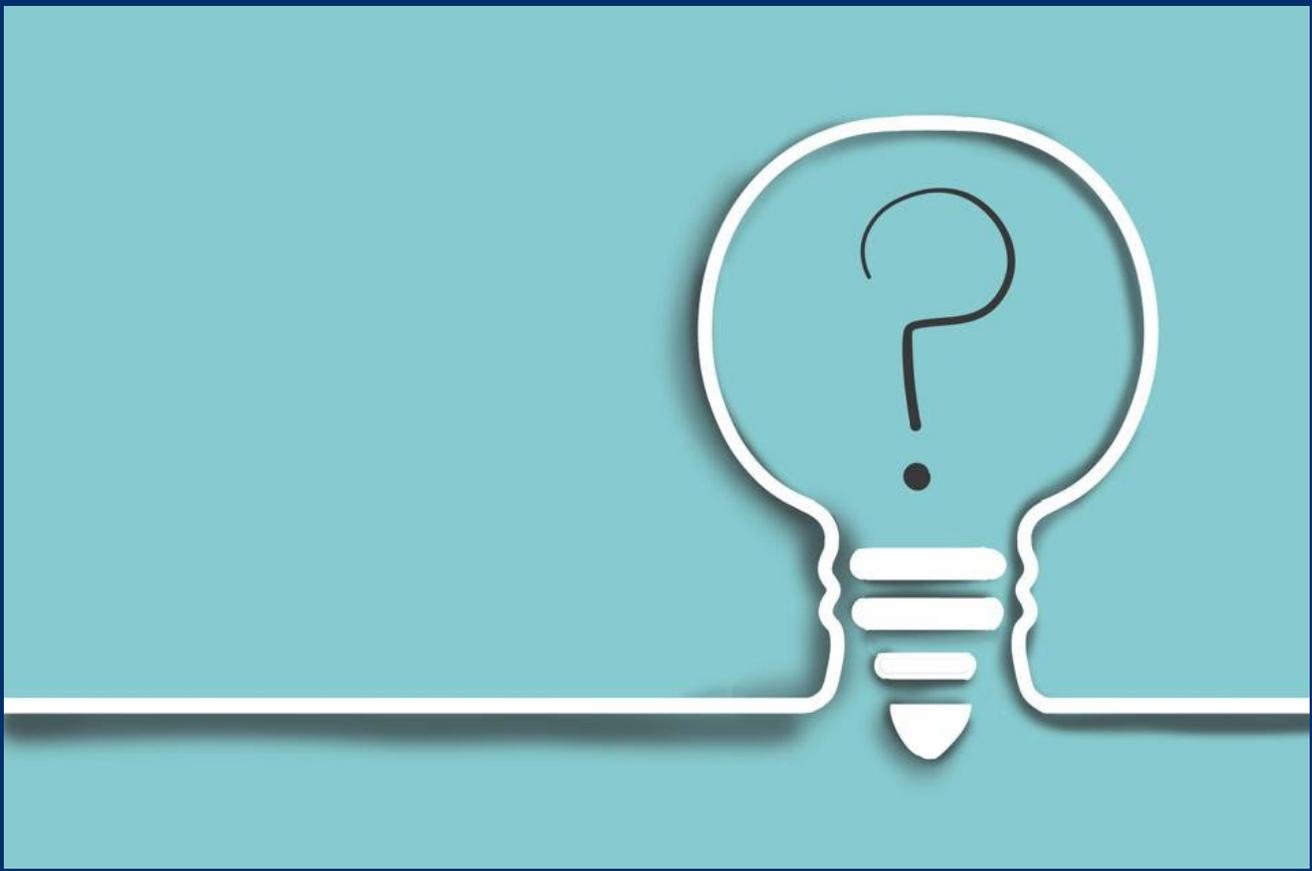AAO | American Association of Orthodontists®

Appendix

- No page limits
- If applicable
  - Human Research: IRB approval status
    - Describe status
    - Include notice if approved
  - Animal Research: IACUC approval status
    - Describe status
    - Include notice if approved
- Accepted & published manuscripts
  - Not required
  - ≤3 authored by applicant
  - Directly relevant to application

OFDFA & PFA: Specifics

- <u>Project Plans</u> - Page limits
  - OFDFA ≤6 pages
  - PFA ≤10 pages
- 4 Developmental Plans:
  - Required (programs, activities)

1. Educational
2. Clinical skills
3. Teaching skills
4. Research

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Orthodontic **F**aculty **D**evelopment **F**ellowship **A**ward
Postdoctoral **F**ellowship **A**ward

OFDFA & PFA: Specifics

- <u>Letters of Support</u> -Page limits: None
  - At least 3 supporting letters: choose references who can
    - Describe abilities/future potential, qualifications re: goals of OFDFA or PFA
  - Individuals named on Title Page
    - Principal advisor(s)/mentor(s), Co-I(s), Consultant(s)
    - Verify participation, plans for support
  - Institutional official
    - Verify support of/resources for 4 Developmental Plans
  - Chair
    - Verify eligibility, support & time
    - Confirm appointment as FT faculty as of July 1 of funding period

Orthodontic **F**aculty **D**evelopment **F**ellowship **A**ward
Postdoctoral **F**ellowship **A**ward

OFDFA & PFA: Specifics

- <u>Project Plans</u> – Areas of emphasis
  - OFDFA: 1 or more
  - PFA: Research must be focus
- Provide
  - Sufficient detail for evaluation
  - Note: History/previous accomplishments ≠ Plans
- Key Advisors for each Developmental Plan
  - Should review, mentor on application prior to submission
  - Provide letter of support

Orthodontic **F**aculty **D**evelopment **F**ellowship **A**ward
Postdoctoral **F**ellowship **A**ward

OFDFA & PFA: Other Info

- Proposals allowable per orthodontic program
  - 1 PFA
- PI may apply for both OFDFA & PFA
  - Only 1 will be funded
- Current residents may apply if they have
  - FT faculty position starting July 1st of funding year
  - Verification of appointment required from chair

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OFDFA & PFA: Other Info

- "Stipend" (cash gift) for salary support
  - Allowed by the AAOF for OFDFA & PFA only
  - Note: Some institutions will not allow additional income as "salary"
    - Other options if this is not allowed by your institution
      - Separate LOAs for institution AND PI
        - Need institutional official to sign both LOAs
        - IF not possible, suggest re-designing budget and justifications

Orthodontic **F**aculty **D**evelopment **F**ellowship **A**ward
Postdoctoral **F**ellowship **A**ward

BRA & RAA: Specifics

- <u>Project Plans</u>
  - Page limits
    - ≤ 10 pages for BRA
    - ≤ 5 pages for RAA
  - Background & Significance
  - Preliminary Studies
  - Experimental Design, Methods & Statistical Analyses
  - Expected Outcomes
  - Alternative Approaches
    - What if outcomes are not as expected?
    - How to trouble-shoot
    - Demonstrate that all aspects have been considered

Biomedical **R**esearch **A**ward
Research **A**id **A**ward

BRA & RAA : Specifics

- <u>Letters of Support</u> - Page limits: None
- Individuals named on Title Page
  - Co-I(s), Consultant(s): Verify participation, plans for support
- Institutional official
  - Verify support of/resources for Project Plan
- Chair - Verify eligibility, support & time
  - BRA: Confirm ≥3 yrs as FT faculty as of July 1 of funding period
    - Cleft/Craniofacial Orthodontists: confirm teaching activities
  - RAA
    - Resident:
      - Highlight strong interest in a future academic career
      - Time to complete project while in program
  - PT faculty

Biomedical **R**esearch **A**ward
Research **A**id **A**ward

BRA: Other Info

- Investigator-initiated research
  - Orthodontics & related topics
  - Expected to lead to
    - Publications
    - Preliminary data: external grant applications (e.g., NIH)
  - Scientific merit emphasized
- No limit: # of proposals per orthodontic program
- PI may
  - Apply for both BRA & PFA – only 1 will be funded
  - Cannot apply if PI/Co-PI on another application in same or other category

Biomedical Research Award
Research Aid Award

Center Award

- Four types – support for
    1. Establishing a "center" of investigation
    2. Established "center" of investigation
    3. Special collections & databases
    4. Collaborative inter-institutional symposia / workshops to expedite discoveries & technology transfer

- Project Plan ≤10 pages

- Content depends on Type 1 to 4

- Need to demonstrate
    - Genuine cooperative and collaborative undertaking
    - Not merely an expanded BRA

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Application, Review & Funding Processes

Applicant & Institution

- Apply for funding & perform proposed activities
- Agree to Terms
- Provide progress & final reports

AAOF VP & Staff

- All administrative aspects
- Fundraising & grant administration
- Only contact for Applicants
- Address all inquiries from applicants

AAOF Board of Directors

- Fundraising
  - Priorities & approaches
  - Activities
- Final decisions on all awards (recommended by PARC)

AAOF Planning & Awards Revew Committee

- 9 member panel (ad hoc if needed)
- Reviews & scores applications
- Recommends
  - Applications for funding
  - Revisions or new funding mechanisms

Process Flow

- AAO Foundation Executive Director and Staff
  - AAOF Awards materials issued
  - Receive all applications
  - Review for meeting deadline, eligibility and completeness
  - Incomplete, ineligible or late applications triaged

Process Flow

- PARC (Planning and Awards Review Committee)
  - Applications
    - Assigned by Chair to PARC members generally based on area(s) of expertise, no COI
    - Initially scored by 2 reviewers using specific scoring criteria
    - Receive written reviews and preliminary overall impact scores (scale of 9 to 1)
      - Additional reviewers sought when scores vary by more than 2 points

Process Flow

- PARC Meeting
  - Reviewers with conflicts of interest leave the room
    - Do not participate in any discussion or scoring
  - Application Reviews
    - Presented by assigned reviewers with preliminary scores
    - Discussed
  - Final scores
    - Provided by all assigned reviewers
    - PARC members without COI
      - Score by confidential ballots
      - Declare if voting outside of range of assigned reviewers and state why
    - Averaged
    - Remain anonymous (not linked to applicant's name) for any further discussion by the PARC

Process Flow

- PARC
  - Makes funding recommendations to AAO Foundation Board on basis of funding available and quality of applications
- AAO Foundation Board of Directors makes final funding decisions
- Applicant receives
  - Funding decision
  - Critique

Review Criteria

- Overall Impact
  - Scale of 9 (best) to 1 (worst)
- Scored Review Criteria
  - Significance
  - Investigator(s)
  - Innovation
  - Approach
  - Environment including mentors & resources
  - Success and Productivity of Previous Funding Provided
- Strengths and Weaknesses (major, moderate, minor)
- Additional Review Criteria
  - Human or Animal Research Approval Status
  - Budget
    - Appropriate & justified
    - Ineligible requests

Scoring Scale & Guidelines

Impact	Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strength/Weaknesses
	9	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
High	8	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	7	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
	6	Very Good	Strong with numerous minor weaknesses
Medium	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	4	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
	3	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
Low	2	Marginal	A few strengths and few major weaknesses
	1	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Questions?

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Where Do Applicants Trip Up

- Quality of application
  - How strong is it in each of the criteria?
  - Is it proposing novel ideas and approaches?
  - Does the application test a hypothesis?

- Formatting & completeness of application
  - Did you submit by the deadline?
  - **Did you READ <u>and</u> FOLLOW the instructions diligently?**
  - Are all required materials included?
  - If reworking a previous non-AAOF application:
    - Reformat to the AAOF guidelines

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Where Do Applicants Trip Up

- Award category
  - Are you eligible for the category for which you have applied?
  - Is this the category in which you are most competitive?
- Accomplishments from prior funding
  - Did you achieve the goals of your previous funding?
  - Have you filed your reports with the AAOF?

Where Do Applicants Trip Up

- Mentorship & Consultants
  - Important to seek
    - Strong, relevant mentors/consultants
    - Input early and often
  - Mentors/Consultants
    - Need to review application and provide input to ensure
      - Application is correctly written and compiled
      - Research question is strong and current

Best Practices

- Start 6 months prior to submission
- Awards Materials typically posted by July 1
  - www.aaofoundation.net
- Research: Define excellent & novel
  - Questions
  - Experimental design
  - Contemporary, appropriate methodologies
  - Provide any preliminary data to support your ideas
- For career development
  - Seek out new approaches to designing curriculum and teaching methods
  - Take relevant courses, workshops and classes

Best Practices

- Mentorship
  - Strong, supportive and dedicated mentorship in research, teaching and career development
- Application Refinements
  - Present and discuss your proposals with your mentors and consultants frequently, have them read/revise them
- Have you done all your own work?
  - Complete well organized proposal
  - Attention to detail
  - Make it easy for the reviewers
  - Will reviewers have to search for needed information?
    - Place content where it should be

Awards Types for 2026

- Junior Faculty
  - OFDFA
  - PFA

- BRA
  - ≥3 years of full-time academics

- Center Award

- Research Aid Award

Orthodontic **F**aculty **D**evelopment **F**ellowship **A**ward
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Biomedical **R**esearch **A**ward

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Awards Not Offered in 2026

- Education Innovation Award (EIA)

The Future

- Continue building on
  - Quality of applications
  - Discoveries in orthodontics
  - Faculty development successes
  - New processes for identifying Calls for Proposals

- Continue enhancing quality of review and feedback
- Implementation of AAO Foundation Vision 2030

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Looking for Projects

- AAOF would like to fund more Research and Development projects on rapidly evolving topics:
  - Over the years development has been slow
  - Machine learning (*ML*) is on the rise and should be explored
    - With the aid of *ML,* instruments can report on intraoral conditions such as, periodontal changes, soft tissue compliance and behavior, appliance malfunctions, in addition to somatic growth status with comparisons to initial diagnosis, and planned treatment mechanics
  - Artificial Intelligence (*AI*) can work together with *ML*
    - *AI*-facilitated planning for qualitative treatment mechanics in 3D is possible while *ML* could "qualitatively" assess the conditions the patient presents, and to design the mechanotherapy
    - Could be instrumental in doing marketing, based on patients' persona and preferences for behavior, services and esthetics

Questions?

For more information contact:
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800.424.2841 (#605)

Brett Schott

George Reinarman Jr.

Mindy Copp

https://www.aaofoundation.net/awards-program/about-the-aaof-awards-program