



# Military Advanced Surgical Treatment (MAST) Summit Research Initiative

## Overview

---

The Arthroscopy Association of North America (AANA), in conjunction with the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) and the Society for Military Orthopaedic Surgeons (SOMOS), are seeking research proposals that advance military-relevant orthopaedic care. This initiative supports pre-clinical and clinical research aimed at improving orthopaedic treatment, surgical techniques, and patient outcomes — with a central focus on military duty and readiness.

All applications are reviewed and deliberated on by representatives of all three partner organizations. Finalists are presented to a review panel at the MAST Summit in early October, with award recipients announced following the Summit.

### Two grants will be awarded:

\$150,000 Grant	\$50,000 Grant
One (1) recipient	One (1) recipient
1st disbursement (50%) upon execution of research agreement	1st disbursement (50%) upon execution of research agreement
2nd disbursement (25%) upon receipt of 1st progress report	2nd disbursement (25%) upon receipt of 1st progress report
3rd disbursement (25%) upon receipt of 2nd progress report	3rd disbursement (25%) upon receipt of 2nd progress report

*This initiative is funded by the United States Federal Government and is subject to all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and requirements. The receiving entity must not be debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from the use of federal funds.*

*Disbursement dates vary and are contingent upon timely return of the executed research agreement and submission of progress reports at each required interval — recipients are expected to adhere to all reporting deadlines to avoid delays in funding. Upon study completion, a grant reconciliation form will be issued; any unused funds must be returned to AANA.*



## Application Timeline

---

<b>June 15, 2026</b>	Applications Open
<b>August 7, 2026</b>	Applications Close — 11:45 PM CST
<b>August 8 – August 21, 2026</b>	Submission Review / Finalists Selected for MAST Summit Panel
<b>August 22 – September 15, 2026</b>	Award Recipients Notified
<b>September 16 – October 1, 2026</b>	Recipients Prepare Presentations for MAST Summit
<b>October 2–3, 2026</b>	MAST Summit — Colorado Springs, Colorado

## Priority Research Areas

---

All research supported by the MAST Research Initiative must maintain a clear connection to military duty and readiness — from surgical intervention through rehabilitation and return to service.

- **Return to Military Duty and Readiness:** Research examining the optimization of surgical treatment, postoperative protocols, and rehabilitation strategies that directly support a service member's return to full duty. Proposals may include digital health tools, wearable devices, and patient-reported outcome measures.
- **Biologics:** Research focused on novel biologic approaches for joint preservation, tissue repair, and accelerated healing in arthroscopic procedures, with the goal of reducing recovery time and restoring physical capabilities required for active military service. Proposals may include regenerative medicine strategies such as stem cell therapies, platelet-rich plasma, and growth factors.
- **Surgical Skill Development:** Research projects designed to develop high-fidelity surgical simulation tools and platforms that equip military orthopaedic surgeons to perform at the highest level in austere and operational environments. Proposals may incorporate virtual reality, haptic feedback, and artificial intelligence.
- **Patient-Reported Outcomes:** Projects focused on developing strategies and tools that leverage patient-reported outcomes, occupational and duty-specific variables, and clinical data to support precision medicine approaches tailored to the demands of military service.

The MAST Research Initiative also welcomes innovative proposals that advance arthroscopy, sports medicine, and orthopaedics beyond the priority areas listed above, provided they address a clear military readiness need.



## Eligibility

---

- Investigative teams must include at least one member of AANA, AOSSM, or SOMOS in good standing.
- Residents and attending faculty within two years of completion of training are eligible to serve as principal investigators. Resident submissions must include an active member of one of the partner organizations on the protocol.
- Studies addressing musculoskeletal joint or soft tissue traumatic injuries, combat injuries, epidemiological assessment, and/or surgical interventions are especially well-suited for this opportunity.
- Awardees are required to attend the MAST Summit (October 2–3, 2026, Colorado Springs, Colorado) in person to formally accept their award and present an overview of their project. Applicants unable to attend will not be eligible to receive funding.

## Application Requirements

---

All applications must be submitted in full. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Submissions must be in Word (.docx) or PDF format. The following elements are required:

- Technical Abstract (1–2 pages) including:
  - A brief overview of the problem or issue within the orthopaedic community
  - Objectives and specific aims, emphasizing the definitive and applicable impact of the proposal
  - Implementation plan
  - Anticipated results and longitudinal impact
  - Military Relevance [Optional]: Describe how your project is relevant to military populations
- Biographical Sketch / CV (3 pages maximum per investigator) for all key personnel, including PIs, coordinators, faculty, and consultants
- References Cited — each reference must include: title, all author names, source (book or journal), volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. References should be limited to relevant, current literature.
- Budget Outline including a budget summary, breakdown of phases and tasks, and preliminary cost of materials, staffing, and instruments
- Research Plan (5 pages maximum) addressing:
  - What does the study team intend to present?
  - Why is the proposed work important to the orthopaedic and military community?



- What has already been done, and why is further research needed?
- How will the work be conducted?

## **Recommended Research Plan Outline**

---

A strong research plan should include the following sections:

### **A. Background**

Describe the rationale for the study, including a literature review, preliminary studies, and any existing data that led to the development of the proposed project. The Background section should clearly establish the basis for the study objectives, hypotheses, and specific aims.

### **B. Military Relevance**

Identify the focus area(s) addressed by the proposed project. Explain how the study impacts return to duty or activity performance, describe the significance of the project's outcome measures, and identify a clear deliverable related to improving military readiness.

### **C. Objectives / Specific Aims / Hypotheses**

Provide a detailed description of the study's purpose, specific aims, and research questions or hypotheses.

### **D. Research Design and Methods**

Describe the experimental design, methods, and analyses in sufficient detail for evaluation. Address study population, inclusion/exclusion criteria, recruitment methods, subject-to-group assignment procedures, and a data and statistical analysis plan. Identify potential problem areas and alternative approaches.

### **E. Study Personnel**

Identify key team members, their roles, and any conflicts of interest.

### **F. References Cited**

List all references used in the Research Plan. Does not count toward the 5-page limit.

### **G. Budget**



Present the proposed budget in any format, identifying all anticipated major expenses individually with a brief description and total amount. Supplies under \$500 do not need to be itemized. Separate financial accounts must be maintained for each grant and must be available to AANA representatives at all times. Any unexpended balances of \$500 or more at the conclusion of the project must be refunded to AANA within 60 days.

## **H. Appendix (Optional)**

Surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments, clinical protocols, raw data, and relevant figures, tables, or photographs may be included.

## **Funding**

---

Each grant is disbursed in three increments over a 24-month period, contingent upon the timely submission of progress reports at the 8- and 16-month timepoints. Progress reports are reviewed by the AANA Research Committee to confirm adequate project progression.

At the conclusion of the funded study, grantees must submit a final expenditure report signed by the responsible financial official of the parent institution, along with a narrative summarizing research findings, potential impacts, and future directions. Manuscripts under consideration for or accepted for publication are also acceptable as a final report.

Grant funds may not be used for remodeling or construction costs, or to pay institutional overhead/indirect expenses.

## **Publication and Acknowledgment Requirements**

---

Recipients agree to acknowledge MAST funding, and Arthroscopy will be given the right of first refusal for publication. The following credit line must appear as a footnote on the first page of all manuscripts and at any professional or scientific meeting presentation based on funded research:

*“Supported by a grant administered by The Arthroscopy Association of North America (AANA), with funding provided by the Military Advanced Surgical Treatment (MAST) Program.”*

## **Ethical Guidelines**

---

By submitting a proposal, applicants confirm their research meets industry-recognized ethical standards, including:

- Accurately presenting research findings with an objective examination of their significance
- Upholding accurate authorship and accreditation, including only those who qualify and clearly stating their contributions
- Disclosing any actual or perceived conflicts of interest at the time of submission



- Presenting data and methods with full transparency and attention to detail

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Data and image files must be presented without manipulation, enhancement, or fabrication — including selective exclusion of data points, obscuring contradictory results, or alteration of original interpretations.

Research involving human subjects requires IRB approval confirming Good Clinical Practices (GCP) prior to undertaking the study. For non-interventional studies, participants must be fully informed of the research purpose, data use, and associated risks. Written or electronic informed consent for publication must be obtained from all participating patients.

Violation of ethical guidelines gives AANA authority to rescind future funding installments and may result in legal action.

### **Fiscal Procedures and Policies**

---

Grant recipients and their institutions are expected to provide all necessary facilities and services normally available in professional research environments. The following are expected to be provided by the grantee institution unless otherwise agreed upon:

- Laboratory space, furniture, and operational expenses
- Maintenance services and service contracts
- Library services, including periodical subscriptions
- Salaries of principal and co-investigators
- Personnel travel expenses
- Society dues and memberships
- Workers' compensation, liability, and other applicable insurance
- Employee health, disability, and hospitalization insurance

Grant funds may not be used for remodeling or construction costs, or to cover institutional overhead/indirect (facilities and administrative) expenses. Funding should be dedicated to materials directly related to successful project completion.

### **Correspondence**

---

Questions or requests should be directed to:

**Pablo Palafox-Castillo, M.S.**

Research and Data Analyst, AANA

pablo@aana.org