**Fight for Sight (FFS)** was founded in 1946 by Mildred Weisenfeld, a young woman with retinitis pigmentosa, to encourage and fund research in ophthalmology, vision and related sciences. The goal of **Fight for Sight** is to encourage and facilitate research in detection, understanding, prevention, treatment and cures of visual disorders, especially those diseases leading to impaired sight or blindness.

Over 3,000 **Fight for Sight** awards totaling almost $21 million have been made to individuals working at more than 175 leading eye and medical centers and universities in the U.S. and Canada. Indeed, several generations of researchers and clinicians have received one or more **Fight for Sight** awards early in their careers. Our list of recipients includes many of the current and past leaders in academic ophthalmology and vision research.

**FFS** occupies a unique niche in the eye research foundation community – its primary mission is to support and encourage promising scientists early in their careers. To that end, **FFS** funds Summer Student Fellowships for undergraduate, graduate and medical students, Post-Doctoral Awards for recently graduated Ph.D.s, M.D.s, Dr.P.H.s, D.V.M.s, and O.D.s, and Grants-in-Aid for academic researchers within the first three years of their faculty appointments. **FFS** primarily supports new investigators, promoting the development of scientific skills and enabling the development of preliminary scientific findings and pilot studies necessary to successfully apply for more substantial federal and private funding such as that provided by the National Eye Institute and other divisions of the NIH. For many of our summer students and post-doctoral fellows, a **FFS**-funded research project may be their first exposure to ophthalmology and eye research, and our support often results in their choosing academic ophthalmology and/or eye and vision research as a career path. Indeed, for many young scientists, it can be the much-needed first step to a successful academic career devoted to seeking major advances in the prevention, detection, treatment and cures for blindness and visual disability.
Many recipients of Fight for Sight awards are now among the country's leaders in ophthalmology and vision research. Seed money provided by FFS has enabled many researchers to complete pilot projects, perform valuable research training, demonstrate the validity of their scientific ideas and successfully compete for more substantial grant assistance from federal, local and private sources.

The **FFS** Scientific Review Committee (SRC) is charged with evaluating each proposal with respect to scientific merit, clinical relevance, facilities and institutional support. Preference is generally given to disease-oriented grants in the areas of age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataract, uveitis, corneal disease, amblyopia, strabismus and genetic disorders, although many other areas of ophthalmology and vision science have received funding over the past 68 years.

The SRC is composed of prominent research scientists, academicians and clinical researchers representing many disciplines in ophthalmology, vision and eye research, many of whom were previous awardees and/or FFS mentors. We strive to create a diverse group of reviewers, representing many of the best academic and clinical institutions across the country, to enable us to make awards to a broad spectrum of the best and the brightest young students and scientists.

Our review system is modeled on the peer review methods utilized by the National Institutes of Health study sections which evaluate and rank each application on a variety of scientific criteria. Each spring, the SRC gets together for roundtable discussions among its members to review and assign final scores to each proposal, usually during the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). The SRC is one of **Fight for Sight’s** greatest assets and we are extremely grateful for their assistance, dedication and hard work.

Once each grant is reviewed, scored and ranked, SRC’s findings are forwarded to the **FFS** Scientific Director, SRC section heads, Scientific Advisory Board and the Board of Directors for review. The recommendations of the SRC provide the foundation on which final decisions regarding the number of awards allotted each fiscal year are made.

**Fight for Sight supporters have included Bob Hope, Sammy Davis, Jr., Stevie Wonder, Barbra Streisand, Nancy Kerrigan and many other notable celebrities.**
Summer Student Fellowships

Summer Student Fellowships are available to undergraduates, graduates and medical students from the United States interested in pursuing eye-related clinical or basic research. For most students, this is their first exposure to eye or vision research and the experience has resulted in many students choosing academic ophthalmology or eye research as a full-time career. Awards of $2,500 are given for 2-3 months of full-time research, usually during June-August. Awardees must carry out the funded project while still enrolled in a course of study at the sponsoring institution. Students receiving stipends from other sources are generally not eligible.

Post-Doctoral Awards

Post-Doctoral Awards support individuals with a doctorate (Ph.D., Dr.PH., M.D., O.D. or D.V.M.) who are interested in academic careers in basic or clinical research in ophthalmology, vision or related sciences. This funding is intended to offer those interested in an academic career the opportunity to spend a year engaged in vision and eye research under the supervision of a senior scientist/clinician mentor. Clinical post-doctoral researchers are required to spend sufficient time on the funded research project to carry out the proposed objectives while basic researchers are expected to work full-time. One-year grants of $22,500 are awarded for start dates between July 1 and September 1. Recipients may supplement their awards with institutional or other funds, however any anticipated supplemental support must be disclosed at the time of application. Total combined support must not exceed the annual stipend level set by the NIH for National Research Service Award recipients. Fringe benefits are not provided by FFS. Applications are considered from individuals who are within three years of their doctoral degrees or clinical residency training and have not received a previous FFS fellowship award.

If at the time of application a doctorate has not yet been obtained, a cover letter must be submitted by the conferring institution advising when such degree is expected to be awarded. FFS reserves the right to withdraw the award should unanticipated delays occur.

Grants-in-Aid Awards

Grants-in-Aid are intended to fund pilot projects and generate preliminary results for investigators who have limited or no other research funding. Grants-in-Aid are awarded to junior faculty members who are developing their independent scientific skills. A majority of Grants-in-Aid recipients go on to successfully compete for larger, multi-year awards from the NIH or other governmental and private sources utilizing data generated by FFS-funded projects.

Support may be used to defray costs of personnel (but not the applicant), equipment and consumable supplies needed for the specific research project. Travel costs are generally not supported. One-year awards of $22,500 are provided and may start between July 1 and September 1.
Renewals

Although funding is limited, additional support may, in rare circumstances, be provided where significant and clinically relevant research results have been obtained.

Special Awards

Within the context of our three granting mechanisms, we sometimes offer specialized and named awards. For example, in partnership with the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, we offer a joint FFS-NANOS Post-Doctoral Fellowship for residents pursuing additional academic training in neuro-ophthalmology. In addition, since 2006, we have awarded a Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Summer Student Fellowship to a deserving student. Most recently, we established a joint award with WomensEyeHealth.org to fund research into gender disparities in eye disease.

On occasion, a specific award is named in honor or memory of an individual in response to a donation or in a specific area of ophthalmological research. For example, we recently funded a Grant-In-Aid specifically for work in X-linked retinitis pigmentosa in response to a large donation from a concerned family. We are actively interested in and willing to work with individuals, corporations, other charities and research foundations to find areas of common interest and opportunities for partnership to advance our common goals of funding eye and vision research.

International Investigators and Research in Other Countries

Most Summer Student Fellowships, Post-Doctoral Awards, and Grants-in-Aid are to be conducted in the United States although, in rare circumstances, research in other countries is permitted when the research needs demand it. Students are expected to pay for their own travel expenses to the location where the research is conducted.
Application

The annual deadline for online receipt of grant applications is midnight, Eastern Time, November 15. Summer Student Fellowship applicants are generally notified before the annual conference of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) held in spring. Post-Doctoral Awards and Grants-in-Aid recipients are generally notified by May 15. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure all supporting documents and materials, required signatures and institutional approval are received by the application deadline. Only one application for each type of award will be accepted from a sponsor or individual laboratory. All submitted materials and applications become the property of Fight for Sight.

Acceptance and Conditions of Award

Within two weeks of notification of an award, the recipient must forward a letter of acceptance to Fight for Sight countersigned by the applicant’s department head and institutional administrative officer. FFS must be notified immediately if the investigator receives funds from another source in support of his/her research project. In this event, FFS reserves the right to withdraw funding.

Human Research

All applicants proposing research with human subjects must indicate that approval was obtained or is pending from the relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB). No awards will be made without prior, verified approval from the IRB.

Animal Research

Investigators utilizing animals must adhere to the most recently published ARVO guidelines for the design and conduct of experiments in ophthalmic and visual research. Verification of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval is required before any award is made.

Disbursements

Post-Doctoral Awards and Grants-in-Aid are made semi-annually, while Summer Student Fellowships are payable in one lump sum. Payments may be made in care of the administrative officer of the sponsoring department. No overhead, fringe benefits or indirect costs are provided with any Fight for Sight award.

Lay Summary

A 100-word summary of the proposed research, suitable for a non-technical lay audience, must be submitted prior to receipt of any award. In addition, at the completion of the research project, a year-end summary of research findings and clinical impact, again suitable for a non-technical audience, must be submitted.

Manuscripts and Acknowledgements

All manuscripts, papers, book chapters, reports, posters, presentations and awards resulting from FFS support must acknowledge, in writing, that the study was funded, in whole or in part, by Fight for Sight. If a specific named award is utilized, the investigator will be notified as to the appropriate acknowledgements. It is the responsibility of each investigator to notify FFS in a timely manner of any manuscripts, papers, book chapters, reports, posters, presentations and awards, with relevant citations, where appropriate.

Photographs and Media

All successful applicants are required to forward high quality digital photographs of themselves and, for Post-Doctoral Awards and Summer Student Fellowships, photographs of themselves with their sponsor or mentor, for possible use in Fight for Sight promotional materials and reports. All photographs and rights therein, become the property of FFS. Grant recipients will be expected to provide interviews to media about research work funded by Fight for Sight when requested.
Patents
When applying for a patent, all awardees are required to notify and consult with FFS and its legal counsel, and to be bound by FFS’s determination as to the eventual disposition of the patent, in those instances when such patent arises from FFS-funded research.

Final Report
A final technical report for the research project, including a detailed list of expenditures, must be submitted within 60 days of the conclusion of the award period. A refund of any unexpended funds is required.

Extensions and/or Budget Changes
Extension of time to complete a project may be permitted in rare extenuating circumstances when written permission is requested in advance. A letter detailing research findings to date, expenditures, additional time required and detailed reasons for the request should be submitted and countersigned by the relevant departmental or division head.

Relocation
Grants-in-Aid or Post-Doctoral Award recipients may apply to transfer their grant to a new institution if they or their mentors relocate during the funded period. FFS does not permit transfer of Summer Student Fellowships or Post-Doctoral Awards when the applicant moves to a new institution and must be matriculated at the university/institution during the precise time of the grant period. FFS may consider transfer of such an award when and only if the sponsor moves to a new institution. Approval of all transfers is dependent upon written request by the applicant countersigned by the sponsor, departmental chairperson and/or institutional representative of the new institution.

Termination
If circumstances prevent the completion of an award term, FFS must be notified immediately and a report on any work completed to date must be submitted. Any unused portion of research funding must be returned with a final report.