**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 over $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 7 decades.

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, prior to the annual Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology meeting, the SRC’s Anterior, Posterior and Vision and Motor sections convene conference calls to review and score each proposal. 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.P.H., 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.
Applications will only be considered from researchers who have received their first faculty or research appointment within the previous three years. Fringe benefits are not included, and institutional overhead charges are not covered.

**Special Awards**

Within the framework of our three types of grants, we also seek applicants for specialized and named awards. These awards recognize specific requests by donors and/or Fight for Sight partnerships with other eye research foundations and ophthalmological societies for research in specific areas or eye diseases.

2018 Awards include:

Two Grants-in-Aid funded in partnership with International Retinal Research Foundation.

A Summer Student Fellowship, Post-Doctoral Award and Grant-in-Aid funded in partnership with the Choroidermia Foundation.

A Post-Doctoral Award and Summer Student Fellowship funded in partnership with the Glaucoma Research Foundation.

A Post-Doctoral Award in partnership with the Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation.

A Post-Doctoral Award with Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) focused on vision restoration after traumatic nerve injury.

In partnership with NANOS, the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, we offer a joint Fight for Sight-NANOS Summer Student Fellowship for neurology or ophthalmology residents or fellows pursuing academic research in neuro-ophthalmology that includes a travel award to present research findings at the annual meeting of NANOS each spring.

We have teamed up with WomensEyeHealth.org, to create a Summer Student Fellowship for the study of gender-based disparities in vision health, treatment, and/or eye disease prevention.

We also offer a Summer Student Fellowship focusing on ocular immunology in partnership with the Streilein Foundation for Ocular Immunology.

We have partnered with The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration to co-fund a Summer Student Fellowship related to corneal preservation with preference given to applicants from the Northeast U.S.

We offer Summer Student Fellowships focusing on specific diseases: one fellowship with Aniridia Foundation International and two with the American Macular Degeneration Foundation.
Two additional more general Summer Student Fellowships are offered annually through a partnership with the Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Fund.

A Summer Student fellowship is offered in partnership with Lirot, the Israeli eye and vision research organization, restricted to students studying in Israel.

Fight for Sight awards the Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Summer Student Fellowship to honor the memory of Professor Basil V. Worgul, who was internationally recognized for his work in radiation cataract.

On occasion, a specific award is named in honor or memory of an individual donor. For example, Fight for Sight 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 other research foundations to find areas of common interest and opportunities for partnership to advance our common goals of funding eye and vision research. A particular grant may not be offered in a given year; If you have questions, always inquire with Fight for Sight.

Renewals

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

International Investigators and Research in Other Countries

With the exception of the current Summer Student Fellowship with Lirot, existing Summer Student Fellowships, Post-Doctoral Awards, and Grants-in-Aid are conducted in the United States. Fight for Sight is looking to expand the scope of its international research partnerships. Please visit our website to learn of new international initiatives.
Application

Applications must be completed and submitted by the following deadlines:
- Applications for the FFS/NANOS award are due **September 15th**
- Applications for the Post-Doctoral and Grants-in-Aid award are due **November 15th**
- Applications for the FFS-Lirot award are due **December 31st**
- Applications for the Summer Student award are due **February 15th**

All applications must be completed and submitted online by midnight Eastern Time. You may begin your online application on our Grant Applications page. All material submitted becomes the property of Fight for Sight. Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

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 **FFS** 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.