The USC/CHLA Summer Oncology Research Fellowship (SORF) Program

See SORF information on our websites: SORF @ Children's Hospital Los Angeles and SORF @ Keck School of Medicine

Contact: SORF@chla.usc.edu

Program Description

The NIH-supported Summer Oncology Research Fellowship (**SORF**) Program is for U.S. medical students who aspire to a biomedical career that involves cancer research. SORF takes place at two main sites: **Children's Hospital Los Angeles** (CHLA) and the **Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center** of **Keck School of Medicine of USC**. It is a full time, on-site, 8-12 week program during summer vacation (May-August), usually between years 1-2 of medical school.

SORF immerses medical students in cutting-edge research within a team science framework. Students are matched 1:1 with mentors according to their preferences, interests and research experience.

Research projects are in oncology and oncology-related fields, including pediatric, adolescent and adult HemOnc, clinical, translational and laboratory research, bioinformatics, machine learning, biomedical engineering, computational biology, precision medicine, preventive medicine, population-based research, survivorship and more.

SORFites also participate in a dynamic interactive curriculum of topics in hematology-oncology, career development, research communication, research skills and responsible conduct of research. They visit centers of emerging sciences, participate in social and networking activities, and interact with faculty, trainees and cancer survivors. Students further enhance their skills through a journal club, scientific reports, presenting a poster, and oral presentations to report on their research.

Students are encouraged to continue their SORF-based research project remotely after the summer, to present their work at scientific conferences, and to contribute their data to peer-reviewed manuscripts. Many SORFites go on to successful academic medical careers that include research in cancer and cancer-related disciplines, attesting to the efficacy of the program. Last, SORF encourages continued networking and long-term involvement.





Application to SORF is online. The executive committee reviews all applications and invites the top ones to SORF. Accepted students indicate their preferred project/mentor choices from a list provided and are matched 1:1 with a mentor. Student and mentor are then connected, student reads background literature, conceptualizes and submits a research proposal, and is ready for their research upon arrival. Applicants with solid past research experience and research aspirations in oncology and related fields are given special attention. We encourage applications from all interested students.

In summer 2027 the program will again be fully ***in-person*** and **on-site** at CHLA and at Keck/USC in Los Angeles, California.

Students will receive subsistence of $600/week. During the program. Partial assistance with housing and one roundtrip travel to/from Los Angeles are provided to qualifying students. SORFites may continue to receive support for research beyond the summer, to complete their projects, prepare them for presentation at scientific conferences and for publication. There is possibility to return for a second summer of research.

To Apply

Summer 2027 applications are accepted from Oct 26, 2026

Early application deadline: Nov 30, 2026, 11:59PM PST
- acceptance is in late December 2026; early students have priority in choice of projects

Regular application deadline: Jan 4, 2027, 11:59PM PST
- acceptance is in Feb 2027

Apply online at: SORF 2027 Application

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