



American  
Brain Tumor  
Association®

*Providing and pursuing answers®*

The mission of the American Brain Tumor Association is to advance the understanding and treatment of brain tumors with the goals of improving, extending and, ultimately, saving the lives of those impacted by a brain tumor diagnosis.

# ABTA Research Collaboration Grants

2017-2018 Request for Applications

**American Brain Tumor Association**

8550 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 550  
Chicago, IL 60631-3225

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## Key Dates

### **Application Portal Opens:**

August 16, 2017

### **Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:**

September 27, 2017 by 12:00 p.m., noon CST. No late LOIs will be accepted.

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow for technical difficulties, time zone differences, sickness, travel, etc.

*Note: Letters of Intent are mandatory for this grant mechanism.*

### **Letter of Intent Decision:**

On or around December 1, 2017

### **Full Application Due:**

On or around January 10, 2018

### **Applicant Notification:**

On or around May 1, 2018

### **Earliest Start Date:**

June 1, 2018

## ABTA's Research Program

The American Brain Tumor Association (ABTA) was the first non-profit organization dedicated to brain tumor research. For more than 40 years, the ABTA's support of early-career investigators has contributed to populating the modern brain tumor research and scientific community and to advancing the field's scientific understanding and medical treatment of brain tumors. Today, ABTA's research alumni are leading some of the nation's most prestigious brain tumor centers and serving as mentors to a new generation of scientists and clinicians.

An independent, multi-level, external review process ensures that ABTA grants are awarded for the most meritorious brain tumor research projects. Our prestigious Scientific Advisory Council and grant reviewers are leaders in the brain tumor community. Through the funding of brain tumor research, the ABTA is supporting projects that will change our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors. We fund innovative discovery science that is developing new drugs, new imaging techniques, and advanced methods of diagnosis as well as research that will improve the quality of life of brain tumor patients and their caregivers.

## Full Text of the Announcement

### Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The ABTA Research Collaboration Grants are intended to promote team science in a way that will streamline and accelerate progress and effect the desired change in clinical outcome for brain tumors. The research projects supported under this mechanism must be conducted by a team of two co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) from distinct institutions. The research project should be multi-disciplinary in that it incorporates multiple components such as basic, translational, clinical, and epidemiological research.

By providing funding through its ABTA Research Collaboration Grants, the ABTA seeks to support multi-disciplinary high-risk/high-impact projects and promote collaboration to accelerate progress. These grants specifically encourage innovative research by allowing research teams to conduct the early scientific studies needed to secure additional/future funding for their collaborative projects. Additionally, investigators from sciences outside traditional biological fields are encouraged to apply. The development of new diagnostic and therapeutic approaches advances the understanding and treatment of brain tumors, and increases the potential for improving, extending and ultimately saving the lives of those living with a brain tumor diagnosis.

We seek projects focused on all brain tumor types, benign or malignant, primary or secondary (metastatic).

Appropriate research projects include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Biomarkers of risk, disease burden, and/or treatment response
- Brain Tumor Biology
- Clinical research
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics
- Imaging
- Molecular/genetic epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics
- Risk assessment

## Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/Lead PIs, Co-PIs and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Research Collaboration Grant. Eligibility requirements must be met at the time of LOI submission.

Grants will be awarded to a Lead Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) from distinct institutions. Additional Co-Investigators and collaborators will be considered but their contribution must be well justified and add a critical perspective or role to the project.

### **Applicant/Lead Principal Investigator**

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent
- At the start of the grant term, applicants must hold a full-time faculty appointment (if applicant does not currently have a full-time faculty position, must have a formal offer letter at the time of full application submission showing a start date prior to the start of the grant term)
- At the start of the grant term, must have held a full-time faculty position or the equivalent for no more than 10 years (i.e. cannot have had a full-time faculty appointment before June 2, 2008)
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident
- Only one ABTA Research Collaboration Grant LOI can be submitted per Lead PI; however, individuals may serve as a Co-PI or contribute to more than one LOI
- May concurrently apply for an ABTA Discovery Grant during the same grant cycle, but only one grant (either ABTA Research Collaboration Grant or Discovery Grant) will be awarded.
- May not be a PI on another ABTA grant at the start of the grant term

### **Co-Principal Investigator**

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent
- At the start of the grant term, must hold a full-time faculty appointment at a distinct institution than the Lead PI (if Co-PI does not currently have a full-time faculty position, must have a formal offer letter at the time of full application submission showing a start date prior to the start of the grant term).
- The Co-PI must make a specific time commitment to the project (the level of effort cannot be zero-0%).
- Is not required to be a U.S. Citizen or resident

### **Lead PI and Co-PI Institutions**

- Lead Institution must be a non-profit institution or organization located in the US or Canada
- Co-PI institution must be a non-profit institution anywhere in the world
- Both the Lead PI and Co-PI Institutions must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NCI, etc.)
- Lead Institution serves as the administrator of the Grant funds and will hold responsibility for the management of the budget and submission of all required documents and reports
- Must agree to adhere to ABTA's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, located at the top of the ABTA Funding Opportunities webpage: <http://www.abta.org/brain-tumor-research/research-grants/>

### Section III. Award Information and Grant Term

Grants are awarded for \$200,000 in direct costs for two years. No indirect costs are allowed.

Budgets are not required at the time of LOI submission. However, applicants should take note of the following guidelines:

- Supplies and equipment are allowed. No single item may exceed \$5,000.
- Travel costs are allowed for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.
  - **Please note:** Recipients of Research Collaboration Grants are required to present the results of the research project at the annual ABTA Patient and Family Conference held in the summer or fall following the conclusion of the grant term. Funds from the grant must be allocated for expenses related to this trip.
- Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow tuition costs are not allowed.
- Visa costs are not allowed
- Indirect costs are not allowed
- Professional membership dues are not allowed.

### Section IV. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Information

ABTA Research Collaboration Grant projects will be pre-screened by Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI process is designed to identify the projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the grant mechanism guidelines without requiring applicants to submit a full application. An LOI follows a prescribed template which gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. LOIs are reviewed on a competitive basis. It is both the Lead PI and Co-PI's responsibility to ensure that the proposed plans are carefully developed and articulated. An invitation to submit a full proposal will be sent to select applicants following review of the LOI. All LOIs for ABTA Research Collaboration Grants must be completed online through the proposalCENTRAL website: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>.

#### LOI Components:

- 1) **Title Page:** Enter the title of the research project directly into the proposalCENTRAL system. The title is limited to 81 characters in length (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations or all capital letters. A project title must be entered and saved before additional sections may be accessed. Also, please indicate how you heard about this opportunity in this section.
- 2) **Download Templates & Instructions:** The Request for Applications, ABTA Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, and available templates can be downloaded from this section.
- 3) **Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal:** This is completely optional.
- 4) **Applicant/PI:** Please enter Applicant/Principal Investigator contact information directly into the proposalCENTRAL system.
- 5) **Institution & Contacts:** Enter primary institution information directly into the proposalCENTRAL system
- 6) **Key Personnel:** Key Personnel include Co-PI, major contributors, collaborators, and co-investigators, who are integral to the research plan. Add key personnel by entering the email address of the person you wish to add. Select the appropriate Role for that person from the available drop down menu. Also enter in the proposed level of effort on this project. The PI does not need to be listed as a Key Person in this section.

- 7) **Abstracts:** Applicants are required to provide both a lay and scientific abstract of the research project. Abstracts are limited to 1,500 characters, including spaces. Note: If more than the allowed characters are entered, the content will be truncated upon saving the application.
- **Lay Summary:** A publishable summary of the research project and impact for a non-scientific audience. A text box is provided in the portal to input the summary
  - **Scientific Abstract:** A scientific summary of the proposed research plan, including hypothesis and specific aims. A text box is provided.
  - **Research Focus Area:** Please select the primary area of research, tumor type(s), and target population for the research proposed from the dropdown menus.
- 8) **Proposal Attachments: Completed templates and required documents must be saved in PDF format before uploading to proposalCENTRAL.**
- **Biosketches:** Research biosketches are required for the Applicant/PI and Co-PI named in the application. Biosketches must be no longer than 5 pages each and in NIH standard format. The biosketch should include all current, pending and completed research funding within the past three years.
  - **Letters of Support:**
    - **Letter of Support from Co-PI:** The Co-PI must submit a signed letter of support on institutional letterhead, detailing their commitment to this research and their experience and expertise that will contribute to the overarching goals of the project.
    - **Letter of Support from the Lead Institution:** A letter of support must be submitted and signed by the Department Head, Dean or Chair from the Lead Institution on institutional letterhead, confirming support of the research including, the available research space, protected time for research, and the availability of equipment and other resources necessary for the successful conduct of the research.
    - **Letter of Support from the Co-PI Institution:** A separate letter of support must be submitted and signed by the Department Head, Dean or Chair from the Co-PI institution, on institutional letterhead, confirming support of the Co-PI, the research project, and the resources that will be contributed to the success of the proposed work.
  - **Project Narrative (not to exceed 3 pages, including figures and tables):** The LOI narrative must adhere to the following formatting requirements. Applications not adhering to all format requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not be peer reviewed.
    - **Document Format:** Please follow the formatting requirements below.
      - Must be written in English
      - Must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf)
      - Font size: 12 point or larger. Figure legends may be 9 point or larger
      - Font type: Times New Roman. Biosketches using the NIH template can use Arial
      - Spacing: No more than six lines of type within a vertical inch
      - Page Size: No larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches
      - Margins: at least 0.5 inch in all directions
      - Print Area: 7.5 inches x 10.0 inches

- **Project Narrative Content (3 page limit):**
    - **Project Team Description:** Briefly summarize the proposed frequency and form of communication among the Lead PI and Co-PI, including how long they have been collaborating. Describe the roles and responsibilities and the approximate percentage of time that each investigator will contribute to the proposed project. Key collaborators should also be included in this description.
    - **Project Description:** The PI and Co-PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines the hypothesis(es), specific aims, including resources necessary to support the success of the research project, and scientific approach/methodology that will be taken to address each specific aim. If this concept has ever been tested, please explain why this approach is novel and should be pursued further. If the longer term project exceeds the budget or timeframe of the ABTA Research Collaboration grant, include critical next steps that will be pursued for the success of the research.
    - **Impact Statement:** Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact of the work on the brain tumor field and clearly explain how the success of this project would change paradigms in the diagnosis or treatment of patients with brain tumors, if successful.
    - **Cited Publications:** No more than 10 references to relevant publications may be listed. Interim research products such as preprints can be included in references cited, and must include the Digital Object Identifier, the object type (e.g. preprint, protocol, etc.), and document version/most recent modified date. Please refer to the NIH guidelines on Interim Research Products for more information: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-050.html>.
- 9) **ORCID Identifier:** ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is an alphanumeric code to uniquely identify scientific and other academic authors. Registration is free and you can register at any time using the following URL: <http://orcid.org/>. The ORCID identifier should be added directly to your proposalCENTRAL profile and will then be pulled into the application from your profile. You are encouraged to add an ORCID ID for your Co-PI in the Key Personnel section of the application.

## Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

- 10) **Validate:** Please check all uploaded documents for completeness by clicking the “view” button next to each document listed. Validate the application in proposalCENTRAL. This is an essential step. An application that has not been validated cannot be submitted. “Validate” checks for required data and attachments. You will not be able to submit if all the required data and attachments have not been provided.
- 11) **Signature Pages:** Print the signature pages after successfully validating your application using the “Print Signature Pages” button. Once printed, obtain the appropriate institution signatures, save the signature pages as a PDF file and upload it to your application in the “Proposal Attachments” section.
- 12) **Application Submission Instructions:** After passing the validate check and uploading the signed signature pages, click on the “Submit” button. By clicking “Submit”, you are confirming that all the information is accurate and all documents uploaded correctly,

including a fully-executed signature page. After submitting, an email will be sent to you to confirm submission of your application. Once you have submitted, you may view it using the “Submitted” link under the Manage Proposals tab.

## Section VI. LOI Review Process

All LOIs undergo a two-step review process. LOIs first undergo an administrative review process where each LOI is reviewed for adherence to formatting requirements, completeness, responsiveness to the research focus and basic eligibility. LOIs that do not meet these requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not undergo scientific review.

During the second step, all eligible LOIs are reviewed by an external committee of scientific reviewers with appropriate expertise. This committee will assess the strengths and weaknesses of each LOI. Only applicants with LOIs deemed most meritorious and aligned with ABTA’s research mission will be invited to submit a full application and will then be granted access to the full application site.

## Section VII. LOI Review Criteria

The ABTA Research Collaboration LOI will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- **Research Question, Significance and Impact:** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field of brain tumor research? If the aims of the project are achieved, will the proposed project inform and have a demonstrated impact on improving the lives of brain tumor patients?
- **Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:** Is the proposed project multi-disciplinary, incorporating multiple components such as basic, translational, clinical and epidemiological research? Is the proposed project reasonable and feasible and appropriate to meet the stated goals of the project? Are the aims achievable and can they be completed within the proposed timeframe? Is the necessary infrastructure in place to support the project? Are potential problems and alternative strategies adequately addressed?
- **Investigator(s):** Are the Applicant/Lead PI, Co-PI, collaborators and other researchers well suited to the project? Do they have the appropriate experience and training?
- **Project Team:** Is this the best team to carry out the proposed project? Do the PIs have the appropriate track record of accomplishments and leadership to successfully implement the proposed research and overcome obstacles that might arise? Is there evidence that the team can successfully work together?
- **Innovation:** Does the proposed project challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies? Are they novel to the field of brain tumor research? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies proposed?

## Section VIII. General Requirements

Please take note of the following grant requirements:

- Grants are payable to the Lead Institution only
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in an annual progress and financial report at the anniversary of the grant start date and then a final progress report and financial report at the end of the grant term. Grantees are also required to present

during ABTA's annual Patient and Family Conference held in the summer or fall after the end of the grant term.

- Publishing history and additional funding are reportable for a five year period following the conclusion of the grant.
- If an applicant is concurrently applying for an ABTA Discovery Grant during the same grant cycle, please note that only one grant (either ABTA Research Collaboration or Discovery) will be awarded.

## Section IX. Contacts

*For technical questions related to the Application Portal (including questions related to system access, navigation, document uploads, etc.):*

### **Altum/proposalCENTRAL**

Email: [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com)

Phone: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada) or 703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International)

*For programmatic questions (questions related to eligibility, program requirements, etc.):*

### **ABTA Research Programs Department**

Email: [grants@abta.org](mailto:grants@abta.org)

Phone: 773-577-8742