



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.

Basic Research Fellowships

2017-2018 Request for Applications

American Brain Tumor Association
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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.

LOI 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 45 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 American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from postdoctoral fellows embarking on careers dedicated to brain tumor research. Basic Research Fellowships provide up to \$100,000 in support over a two-year period. Applicants should be on-track to pursue a career in brain tumor research with a mentor who is currently conducting brain tumor research. The mentor should have a demonstrated history of brain tumor research and also mentorship in the field. The intent of this program is to encourage talented, early-career scientists to enter, or remain in, the field of brain tumor research. As such, the ABTA hopes to help ensure a continuum of dedicated, well-trained brain tumor researchers that will emerge as the next generation of leaders in the field.

ABTA Basic Research Fellowships provide support for basic research projects that have significant potential to advance our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors. Studies focusing on quality of life or survivorship issues are not appropriate for this research focus area. This funding mechanism is appropriate for both basic and clinical fellows conducting laboratory or field-based research projects. The research proposed should not be defined as clinical research, or research for which an investigator directly interacts with human subjects/patients.

We seek proposals addressing all types of brain tumors, benign or malignant, primary or secondary (metastatic). Applications proposing projects that do not directly relate to brain tumor research will be administratively withdrawn from consideration.

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

- Brain Tumor Biology
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics
- Imaging
- Molecular/genetic epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics

- Risk assessment
- Biomarkers of risk, disease burden, and/or treatment response

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/PIs, Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship. Eligibility requirements must be met at the time of LOI application submission.

Grants will be awarded to a postdoctoral fellow (designated as the Principal Investigator, or PI, on the application), and a Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable). Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are not allowed for this mechanism.

Applicant/PI

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO or equivalent
- PhDs must be no more than 4 years post-completion of his/her doctoral degree at the time of full application submission, as determined by date of degree confirmation. This must be verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support. *Please note: if the candidate has multiple doctoral degrees, the last conferred doctoral degree will be used to determine eligibility.*
- MDs must be no more than 4 years post-residency training at the time of full application submission (Note: time spent in medical specialty or subspecialty training is not considered part of medical residency and will be counted against the 4 year window)
- Must not currently hold any faculty appointment
- Must conduct the proposed research and training at the Lead Mentor's institution which may be located anywhere in the world
- Must not currently be or have previously been a fellow on an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident
- May only submit ONE Basic Research Fellowship grant application per funding cycle
- Must commit at least 75% effort to the research project verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support

Mentor Requirements

Lead Mentor (Required):

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Lead Institution
- Must be at the same institution as the Applicant/PI
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research
- Can be a Lead Mentor on only ONE Basic Research Fellowship Grant application submitted in this cycle
- Is not required to be a U.S. Citizen or resident

Co-Mentor (if applicable):

- An Applicant/PI may elect to include a Co-Mentor in their application, though it is not required for submission of the application.
- Must hold a faculty appointment with an accredited institution, but is not required to be at same institution as the PI
- Is not required to currently conduct brain tumor research, but should add complimentary expertise to support the project

- Is not required to be a U.S. Citizen or resident

Lead Institution

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization anywhere in the world
- Must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NCI, etc.)
- Must serve 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

The American Brain Tumor Association Basic Research Fellowships provide up to \$50,000/year for a total of \$100,000 in direct costs over two years. No indirect costs are allowed.

The fellowship funds may be used only for salary support and direct research expenses. Budgets are not required at the time of LOI submission. However, applicants should take note of the following guidelines:

- Salary/stipend support is allowed only for the Applicant/PI; salary support for the Lead Mentor, Co-Mentor, or other personnel is not allowed
- 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 Basic Research Fellowships 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

Basic Research Fellowship 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 Applicant/PI and Lead Mentor'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 Basic Research Fellowships must be completed online through the proposalCENTRAL website: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>.

Application 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 mentors, major contributors, and collaborators, 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, Lead Mentor, and Co-Mentor (if applicable) 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 Lead Mentor:** A signed Letter of Support must be submitted by the Lead Mentor, on institutional letterhead. Must describe their commitment to mentoring the Applicant/PI as well as experience mentoring other postdoctoral or junior faculty level researchers. In addition, the mentor should verify that the applicant is no more than 4 years post-completion of their doctoral degree and able to commit at least 75% effort to the research project.
 - **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor (if applicable):** A signed, separate letter of support must be submitted by the Co-Mentor (if a Co-Mentor is on the application), on institutional letterhead, describing their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.
 - **Letter of Support from the Institution:** A letter of support must be submitted on institutional letterhead by the department Head, Dean or Chair confirming the applicant's available research space and availability of equipment and other resources necessary for the successful conduct of the research.
 - **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 Description:** The Applicant/PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines the hypothesis(es), specific aims, and scientific approach 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.
 - **Career Development Plan:** The Applicant/PI should describe their career goals and how they intend to develop the skills and experience necessary to achieve career advancement during the grant term
 - **Impact Statement:** Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact of the work on the brain tumor field and clearly explain how this research will ultimately impact brain tumor patients and caregivers, 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 Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable) 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 on 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 LOI will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- **Research Question and Significance:** 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, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice be improved?
- **Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:** 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:** Are the Applicant/PI and Mentor(s) well suited to the project? Do they have appropriate research experience and training?
- **Career Development Potential:** Does the Applicant/PI present a clear and feasible plan for developing the necessary research, scientific, management and leadership skills to achieve career advancement during the grant term?

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 and also in 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 award.

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

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

Phone: 773-577-8742