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 Fellowship

2015-2016 Request for Applications

American Brain Tumor Association
8550 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 550
Chicago, IL 60631-3225
For questions, email: grants@abta.org
Website: www.abta.org
Key Dates

Application Portal Opens:
November 30, 2015

Application Deadline:
January 13, 2016 by 1:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. No late applications will be accepted.

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow time to make any corrections and collect necessary documentation prior to the due date.

Applicant Notification:
On or around May 2, 2016

Earliest Start Date:
July 1, 2016

Grant Term End Date:
June 30, 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, the ABTA's research alumni are leading some of the nation's most prestigious brain tumor centers and are 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 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 has a demonstrated history of brain tumor research and mentorship. 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;
- Etiology;
- Genetics;
- Molecular/genetic epidemiology;
- Diagnosis;
- Risk assessment;
- Biomarkers of risk, disease burden, and/or treatment response;
- Novel Therapeutics

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/PIs, Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria to apply for a Basic Research Fellowship. Eligibility requirements must be met at the time of application submission (January 13, 2016).

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.

The following eligibility guidelines apply to this grant mechanism:

**Applicant/PI (Fellow)**

- 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 (i.e. degree cannot have been conferred before January 13, 2012), as determined by date of degree confirmation and verified in the Lead Mentor’s Letter of Support. Please note: if the candidate has multiple postdoctoral degrees, the last conferred postdoctoral degree will be used to determine eligibility
- MDs must be no more than 4 years post-residency training (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
- 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
- Must commit at least 75% effort to the research project during each year of the grant period, verified in the Lead Mentor’s Letter of Support

**Institution**

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization
- 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

Lead Mentor Requirements

• Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Applicant/PI's institution
• Must currently conduct brain tumor research
• Is not required to include % effort but must clearly describe their mentoring role in the Letter of Support
• Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident

Co-Mentor Requirements (if applicable)

• 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
• Is not required to include % effort but must clearly describe their mentoring role in the Letter of Support
• Is not required to be a U.S. Citizen or resident

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.

Applicants should take note of the following budgetary guidelines:

• Salary/stipend support is allowed only for the Applicant/PI; salary support for the Lead Mentor or Co-Mentor is not allowed
• Supplies and equipment are allowed, but 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. Funds from the grant may be allocated for expenses related to this trip.
• Visa costs are not allowed
• Indirect costs are not allowed
• Professional membership dues are not allowed

Section IV. Application Submission Information

Basic Research Fellowship applications must be completed online through the ABTA grant portal, www.abtagrants.org.
Application Components:

- **Lay Summary:** A 250 word, publishable summary of the research project and impact for a non-scientific audience. A text box will be provided in the portal to input the summary.

- **Project Narrative (not to exceed 10 pages, including figures and tables):**
  - *Research Project Plan:* The Applicant/PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines the background, hypothesis(es), specific aims, and scientific approach that will be taken to address each specific aim. An impact statement should also be included that describes the importance of the research to brain tumor patients and caregivers.
  - *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. This plan can include items such as coursework, journal clubs, seminars, collaborative interactions, and attendance at scientific meetings. The Applicant/PI should also describe their interaction with the mentor(s).
  - *Research Timeline:* Provide a projected timeline for progress over the 2-year grant term, including research goals and milestones.
  - *Cited Publications:* List of publications cited in the Project Narrative. Citations are not included in the Project Narrative page limit and there is no limit to the number of publications that can be cited.

- **Biosketches:** Research biosketches are required for the Applicant/PI and Mentor(s). Biosketches must be no longer that 4 pages each and in NIH format. The biosketch should include all current, pending and completed research funding within the past three years.

- **Letter of Support from Lead Mentor:** A signed Letter of Support must be submitted by the Lead Mentor, on institutional letterhead. The letter should address the following:
  - Explain the Mentor(s)’s commitment to mentoring the Applicant/PI and plan to support the career development of the Applicant/PI.
  - Describe the research, mentorship, leadership and other relevant experience the Mentor possesses to effectively mentor the Applicant/PI.
  - The Mentor’s experience mentoring junior faculty level researchers, including evidence of successful mentoring outcomes as demonstrated by examples of previously mentored postdoctoral trainees and/or young investigators and their current titles/positions.
  - The letter should also include verification that the Fellow is no more than 4 years post-completion of their doctoral degree.

- **Letter of Support from the Co-Mentor:** 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 by the department Chair, on institutional letterhead, and include additional institutional support the applicant is receiving to successfully conduct the proposed research.

• **Budget Period Detail**: Budget amounts for each year must be entered in the ABTA Budget Period Detail Template (available for download on the ABTA website: [www.abta.org/grants](http://www.abta.org/grants)). Applicants may request up to $50,000 per year (direct costs only) for two years.

• **Budget Justification**: Sufficient justification of proposed expenditures must be included using the ABTA Budget Justification Template (available for download on the ABTA website: [www.abta.org/grants](http://www.abta.org/grants)). Exact amounts should be indicated in the Budget Justification for each year of the grant and should match the amounts in the Budget Period Detail Template. Note: The budget period detail and the budget justification should be combined into one document and uploaded to the portal.

• **Assignment of a Grant Officer from the Applicant/PI Institution**: All applications must be approved/certified by a grant officer prior to submission. Unapproved applications cannot be submitted. Note, the applicant can choose to give the grant officer the authority to edit or to submit the application, once complete. These authorizations can be managed once a grant officer has been entered in the system by editing permissions in the named grant officer section.

**Application Submission Instructions:**

Once you click on the link to the [ABTA Grant Application Portal](http://www.abta.org/grants):

1. Select “I Am An Applicant”
2. Login as a previous user or register as a new user.
3. Carefully read the instructions for completing your application online.
4. Once all of the information has been entered, a ‘Submit’ button will appear on the “Summary and Certification” tab.
5. Provide electronic signature and click “Submit”

**Document Format:**

Please follow the formatting requirements below. Applications not adhering to these format requirements will be administratively withdrawn prior to review.

- 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
- The complete project narrative may not exceed 10 pages in length
Guidelines for Images:

- Reduce the file size of documents with images by “inserting” the image (as opposed to “cutting” and “pasting”).
- Insert only PNG, GIF or JPG graphic files as images in your Word document. Other graphical file formats are either very large or difficult to manipulate in the document.
- Do not insert Quick Time or TIFF objects into your document.
- Anchor the images you embed in your document. Once you have anchored the “inserted” image, you can format text to wrap around the image.
- Do not edit your images in Word. Use a graphics program.
- Do not embed your images in tables, text boxes, and other form elements.
- Do not add annotations over the images in Word. Add annotations to the images in a graphics program.

Section V. Application Review Process

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

During the second step, all eligible Applications are reviewed by an external committee of scientific reviewers with appropriate expertise. This committee will assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application. Only applications deemed most meritorious and aligned with ABTA’s research mission will proceed to discussion and final scoring by the peer review committee, facilitated by the Chairperson. After discussion, the final grant slate will be recommended to the board of directors for funding.

Section VI. Review Criteria

The Applications 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:** Does the proposed hypothesis(es) comprehensively address the overarching research question(s)? Do the proposed specific aims fully answer the study hypothesis(es)? Are the outcomes of the proposed plan adequately described? 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 Plan:** Does the Applicant/PI present a clear and feasible plan for developing the necessary research, scientific, management, and leadership skills
needed to progress towards independence? Will the mentor(s) be effectively utilized to
guide the Applicant/PI toward research excellence and independence?

- **Resources and Timeline:** Are the institutional support, equipment, and other resources
  necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed research clearly available to the
  Applicant/PI? If not, has the applicant demonstrated that they can obtain the materials
  needed? Does the Research Timeline provide a reasonable expectation of progress
  throughout the project?

**Section VII. General Requirements**

Please refer to the Policies and Procedures for ABTA Research Grants and Fellowships
[http://www.abta.org/resources/abta-policies-and-procedures.PDF](http://www.abta.org/resources/abta-policies-and-procedures.PDF) for all requirements and take
note of the following:

- Grants are payable to the institution only.

- Grant recipients are required to present their research outcomes during ABTA’s annual
  Patient and Family Conference held each year in the summer or fall.

- Publishing history and follow-on funding are reportable for a five year period following
  the conclusion of the award.

**Section VIII. Contacts**

For Programmatic questions (questions related to eligibility, program requirements, etc.) or
technical questions related to the Application Portal (including questions related to system
access, navigation, document uploads, etc.):

**ABTA Research Programs**

grants@abta.org

773-577-8750