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

2027 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/for-researchers

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Key Dates

Application Portal Opens:
November 4, 2026

Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:
December 10, 2026, by 12:00 pm CST. No late LOIs will be accepted.

Applicants are responsible for completing, reviewing, and submitting their applications by the deadline. Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow for technical difficulties, varying time zones, human error, loss of power/internet, sickness, travel, etc.

Note: Letters of Intent are mandatory for ABTA Basic Research Fellowships.

Letter of Intent Decision:
On or around February 23, 2027

Full Application Due:
On or around March 30, 2027

Applicant Notification:
On or around July 29, 2027

Earliest Project Start Date:
September 1, 2027

Important Info

- Resources for Applicants can be found on the For Researchers page.
- **NEW:** Biosketches must be developed on the NIH Common Form, using SciENcv.
- **NEW:** Electronic signatures are required from the PI, Lead Mentor, and the Institution Signing Official, who must log into ProposalCentral to sign. See page 11 for more details.
- An application checklist is available in the application portal. See the Download Templates and Instructions tab of the application after you initiate your LOI in ProposalCentral.
- Applicants must be located at their mentor's institution at the time of LOI submission.
- Mentor faculty must confirm, in the personal statement section of their biosketch, that their institution considers their position equivalent to a faculty position if they do not follow traditional academic rank titles (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor).
- The LOI must include a Career Development Plan. Reviewers will be asked to comment on the plan so that applicants can receive feedback following the LOI review.
- Application attachments must be standard letter paper size, which is **8.5" x 11"**. A4 paper size is not acceptable as the formatting changes once converted to a PDF. To verify page size in Microsoft Word, click on the Layout tab → in the Page Setup section, click the arrow below Size → select Letter 8.5"x11"
- Project Narrative for the Full Application (if invited to submit) will be limited to 8 pages.

ABTA's Research Program

The American Brain Tumor Association (ABTA) is the nation's oldest non-profit organization dedicated to brain tumor education, support, and research. For more than 50 years, the ABTA has supported early-career investigators, contributing to the brain tumor field and the scientific community, to advance the scientific understanding and medical treatment of brain tumors. Today, ABTA research alumni are leading some of the nation's most prestigious brain tumor centers and mentoring 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 supports 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.

Request for Application (RFA), American Brain Tumor Association Basic Research Fellowship

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from postdoctoral fellows embarking on careers dedicated to brain tumor research.

- ABTA Basic Research Fellowships provide up to $100,000 in support over a two-year period (see Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Grants support basic and translational research projects that have significant potential to advance our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis, and treatment of brain tumors.
- Grants are appropriate for both basic and clinical fellows conducting laboratory, computational, or field-based research projects.
- Applicants should be on-track to pursue a career in brain tumor research.
- Applicants must be mentored by a faculty member at their institution who has a demonstrated history of brain tumor research and mentorship in the field.
- The goal of the program is to encourage talented, early-career scientists to enter, or remain in, the field of brain tumor research. The ABTA aims to ensure a continuum of dedicated, well-trained brain tumor researchers that will emerge as the next generation of leaders in the field.

We seek proposals addressing all types of brain tumors, benign or malignant, primary or secondary (metastatic), and that will have an impact on pediatric, adolescent and young adult (AYA), adult, or all patient populations. Appropriate research projects include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Biomarkers of Risk, Disease Burden, and/or Treatment Response
- Brain Tumor Biology
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics
- Imaging
- Molecular/Genetic Epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics
- Risk assessment

Note: Applications proposing projects that that are out of the scope of the Basic Research Fellowships will also be administratively withdrawn, including:

- Applications that do not directly relate to brain tumor research.
- Studies focusing on quality of life or survivorship issues.
- Research that is defined as clinical research or research for which an investigator directly interacts with human subjects/patients.

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/Principal Investigators (PIs), Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship. If you have questions about your eligibility, contact grants@abta.org.

Grants will be awarded to a postdoctoral fellow (designated as the Principal Investigator or PI on the application) and a single Lead Mentor. Applicants may choose to have a single Co-Mentor (optional). Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are not allowed for this mechanism.

Applicant/ Principal Investigator (PI) Requirements:

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO or equivalent, **at the time of Letter of Intent (LOI) submission**.
- **At the time of Full Application submission**, PhDs must be no more than five years post-completion of his/her doctoral degree as determined by date of degree confirmation (i.e. cannot have completed their doctoral degree prior to March 1, 2022). This must be verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support. A documented leave of absence may be excluded from the five-year window of eligibility, such as for parental leave or other well justified leave from research, of generally less than 12 months duration.
    - Applicants whose experience exceeds the maximum of five years but who believe they are eligible must email ABTA at grants@abta.org, at least one week prior to the LOI deadline, with their biosketch and a description of how the leave of absence will be documented within the application before submitting their application to verify their eligibility.

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 five years post-residency training at the time of Full Application submission. The same exceptions noted above apply to MDs.

Note: Time spent in medical specialty or subspecialty training is not considered part of medical residency and will be counted against the five-year window.

- Must not hold a faculty appointment.
- Must be working at the Lead Mentor's institution **at the time of LOI submission**.
- 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 Letter of Intent per funding cycle.
- Must commit at least 75% effort to the research project, which must be verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support.

Lead Mentor Requirements:
*A Lead Mentor is **required for all applicants.***

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Lead Institution.
    - Mentor faculty must confirm that their institution considers their position equivalent to a faculty position if they do not follow traditional academic rank titles (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor).
- Must be at the same institution as the Applicant/PI at the time of LOI submission.
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research.
- Can be a Lead Mentor on only ONE 2027 Basic Research Fellowship application.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

Co-Mentor Requirements:
A Co-Mentor is optional for all applicants, limit of one.

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment with an accredited institution but is not required to be at the same institution as the Applicant/PI.
    - Mentor faculty must confirm that their institution considers their position equivalent to a faculty position if they do not follow traditional academic rank titles (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor).
- Is not required to conduct brain tumor research but should add complimentary expertise to support the proposed project.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- Can be a co-mentor on multiple 2027 Basic Research Fellowship applications.

Lead Institution Requirements:

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization anywhere in the world.
- Must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NINDS, 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 the *ABTA's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships*, located at the top of the For Researchers page.

Section III. Award Information and Grant Term

The American Brain Tumor Association's Basic Research Fellowship provides up to $50,000 per year for a total of $100,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for two years.

Budgets are NOT required at the time of LOI submission. However, applicants should review and understand the budget guidelines described in Section 6 of ABTA's *Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships* and briefly outlined below. If an invitation is made to submit a Full Application, a detailed budget will be required that adheres to these guidelines and restrictions.

Expenses allowed and funded by a Basic Research Fellowship may include:

- Salary/stipend support and fringe benefits for the Applicant/PI only.
- Equipment and Supply costs.
    - *No single equipment item may exceed $5,000.*
- Travel costs for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.
    - *Basic Research Fellowship recipients are required to present the results of their research project as a brief recorded presentation and as a poster, in person, at*

the ABTA National Conference held in the fall near the conclusion of their grant term. Grant funds may be allocated for expenses related to this trip.

- Data Management and Sharing Plan costs, which may include article processing charges, data storage fees, and staff time (for the PI only) for curating and documenting data.

Expenses NOT allowed or funded by a Basic Research Fellowship:

- Indirect costs (refer to the ABTA's Policies & Procedures document).
- Salary/fringe support for Mentors or other personnel.
- Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow tuition costs.
- Visa costs.
- Professional membership dues.

Section IV. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Information

The LOI process for the Basic Research Fellowship is designed to identify the projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the grant mechanism guidelines prior to requiring applicants to submit a full application.

The LOI application sections, in ProposalCentral and outlined below, each contain required fields, which must be completed before submitting your application. Applications receive merit-based review of the information provided in each application against the criteria in Section VII below. An invitation to submit a Full Application will be sent to select applicants following review and acceptance of the LOI.

Tip: Institutional signature is required for your Basic Research Fellowship LOI. Notify your grants office immediately of your intent to apply, to ensure that they will be able to provide the required signature prior to the application deadline.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant/PI to:

- Ensure that the proposed plans are carefully developed and articulated.
- Verify the accuracy of the content within their application, especially if using an **Artificial Intelligence tool.** Refer to the *ABTA's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence for Grant Applications and Peer Review*, located on the For Researchers page for more information.
- Confirm that all required and final documents, letters, and biosketches conform to the requirements outlined below and are uploaded to the application before submission.
- Initiate only one application in ProposalCentral. You can save your progress multiple times before submitting the final application. To edit your application:
    - *Go to https://proposalcentral.com/ and log in on the "APPLICANT OR AWARDEE" tab.*
    - *Click on the "Proposals" tab to see the list of your initiated proposals.*
    - *Click on "Edit" next to the proposal you would like to edit or view.*

LOI Application Components:

1) **Title Page:**
    - The title is limited to 81 characters in length (including spaces).

- The project title must be entered in "**Title Case**" meaning that the first letter of each word is capitalized, except for certain small words, such as articles and short prepositions (i.e. *Targeting Drivers of Treatment Resistance in Stem-Like Cells in Gliomas*). Do not use abbreviations or all capital letters.
- A project title must be entered and saved before accessing additional sections.
- Indicate how you heard about the grant opportunity in this section and if you are interested in receiving more information about the ABTA and opportunities to get involved.

2) **Download Templates & Instructions:** This Request for Applications, ABTA Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, application checklist, and available templates can be downloaded from this section.

3) **Enable Other Users to Access the Proposal (optional):** If personnel other than the Applicant/PI will upload documents or make edits to the application, add their email address(es) here and select the appropriate level of access (View, Edit, or Administrator) for each person you give permission to access your application.

   Note: The person who initiates the application automatically has Administrator access. If you give another personnel Administrator access to your application, only they will be able to submit the application. Therefore, we recommend Edit access for mentors, grant officers, etc.

4) **Applicant/PI:** Fields on this page automatically populate from your ProposalCentral profile. If any of the required information is missing, you must update your profile in the Professional Profile tab, including your ORCID identifier. An ORCID identifier is required for the Applicant/PI. ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is an alphanumeric code to uniquely identify scientific and other academic authors. Registration is free at https://orcid.org/.

5) **Institution & Contacts:** The Institution (also referred to as Lead Institution) is the institution where the Applicant/PI will carry out the research project. Institution information will automatically populate from the Institution Profile of the Applicant's/PI's primary institution. Applicants should verify that the information is accurate. For more information on how to correct or change the Lead Institution, refer to the info block (click on the "?") in this section of the grant portal.

   - All applications must include a Grants Officer from the Lead Institution. Select a registered Grants Officer from the dropdown list or enter the email address for your designated Grants Officer and click the Add button. If you add a new Grants Officer, be sure all required fields in the pop-up window are completed and click Save before closing the window.

6) **Key Personnel:** Key Personnel include mentors and up to 2 external (not at the same institution as the PI) Collaborators who are integral to the research plan. ABTA defines Key Personnel as an individual who contributes to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way.
   - If you include Key Personnel, you must list their effort as greater than 0% effort; however, salary support is only permitted for the Applicant/PI.
   - Add each Key Personnel by entering the individual's email address.

- Select the appropriate Role for that person from the available drop-down menu.
- Collaborators who are at the same institution as the PI and mentor should be described in the Lead Mentor letter of support.

Note: *The PI and any collaborators who are located at the same institution as the PI* ***should not*** *be listed in the Key Personnel section. Non-Key Personnel, such as students, postdoctoral fellows, research technicians, and/or others, who will work on the project, but whose expertise or resources are not essential to the execution of the project, should be described in the Full Application only.*

Lead Mentors, Co-Mentors, and other Key Personnel are encouraged to add their ORCID ID to their own Professional Profile in ProposalCentral. Their ORCID ID will then be added to the application in the Key Personnel section.

7) **Research Focus:** Select the primary area of research, applicable tumor type(s), and target population for the research proposed from the menus and click the "+" buttons to add them to your application.

8) **Attachments:** The required documents outlined below must be saved separately in Portable Document Format (pdf) before uploading to ProposalCentral.

IMPORTANT: Applicants MUST check that all PDF documents conform to the formatting requirements below, to ensure that the formatting was not altered during the conversion of the documents from word processor to pdf.

- **Biosketches:** Information in the biosketch(es) is used to verify eligibility for the applicant and mentor(s). Applicants should ensure that all relevant information related to the above eligibility criteria is included in all biosketches.
  - Biosketches are required **only** for the Applicant/PI, Lead Mentor, and Co-Mentor (if applicable).
  - Biosketches should **not** be included for other Key Personnel, Non-Key Personnel, or Collaborators for the LOI. Biosketches for Key Personnel will be required at the Full Application stage.
  - Biosketches must be developed on the NIH Common Form, using SciENcv.
  - The personal statement section must include, if applicable, confirmation that an institution considers a position equivalent to a faculty position if they do not follow traditional academic rank titles (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor).

- **Letters of Support:** Letters of Support for the LOI stage are required **only** from the Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable). All Letters of Support MUST be on institutional letterhead and signed using a hand-written (in ink or electronic) or verified (such as Adobe signature) signature. Letters of Support from the Institution and Key Collaborators will be required at the time of Full Application submission. Letters should include information outlined below and should not contain data/figures/tables/graphs, preliminary data, methods, background nor significant details that are expected to be found in the applicant's Project Narrative.
  - **Letter of Support from Lead Mentor:** The letter of support from the Lead Mentor should include the following:

- Details of their plan for mentoring the Applicant/PI as well as their experience mentoring other postdoctoral or junior faculty level researchers.
- Verification that the Applicant/PI completed their doctoral degree in or after March 2022.
- Confirmation that the Applicant/PI is already located at the lead institution and is able to commit at least 75% effort to the research project over the two-year grant term.

➢ **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor (required if a Co-Mentor is included in the application):** A separate letter of support from the Co-Mentor should describe their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.

- **Project Narrative (not to exceed three pages, including figures and tables. Page limit does not include Cited Publications):** The project narrative must follow ALL format and content requirements outlined below, or the application will be administratively withdrawn and not peer reviewed. The ABTA follows the NIH standard format for font type, size, and spacing.

  ➢ **Document Formatting Requirements:**
  - Must be written in English.
  - Must be uploaded to ProposalCentral in PDF Format.
  - Font size: 11 point or larger. Figure legends may be 9 point or larger.
  - Font type: Arial or other fonts that meet the NIH criteria.
  - Spacing: No more than six lines of type within a vertical inch.
  - Page Size: Letter 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches. A4 page size is not accepted.
  - Margins: at least 0.5 inch in all directions.
  - Print Area: 7.5 inches x 10.0 inches.
  - You may reference an article in the narrative but hyperlinks or URLs are allowed only in the Cited Publications section.

  ➢ **Project Narrative Content (three-page limit):**
  - **Pages 1-2:**
    - **Project Description (limited to 2 pages)**: The Applicant/PI must succinctly describe the research project, including 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. If the longer-term project exceeds the budget or timeframe of the Fellowship, include critical next steps that will be pursued for the success of the research.
  - **Page 3:**
    - **Career Development Plan**: Description of the Applicant/PI's career goals and how they intend to develop the skills and experience necessary to progress towards independence during the grant term. The plan can include coursework, journal clubs, seminars, collaborative interactions, attendance at scientific meetings, and other resources that the Applicant/PI will utilize. The Applicant/PI should also describe their interaction with the mentor(s) for guidance to achieve their research and career goals.

- **Impact Statement**: Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact the research project will have on the brain tumor field and clearly explain how this research will ultimately impact brain tumor patients and caregivers, if successful.

- **Cited Publications (not included in the three-page limit)**: An unlimited number of 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.

Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

1) **Applicant Demographics:** The ABTA collects demographic information for analysis of its grant programs and outreach efforts. This section is required. Reviewers do not have access to your demographic information.

2) **Validate:** Validate is an essential step for the system to check for the required components of the application. An application cannot be submitted until all required data and attachments are included and the validation step is complete.

   Note: Since some attachments are not required for all applicants, the validate step will not flag a missing non-required attachment (i.e. Co-Mentor Letter of Support). Applicants are encouraged to refer to the applicant checklist to verify that the correct documents are included in the application.

3) **Signatures:** Each signatory must log into ProposalCentral, using their own credentials, to apply their signature to the application. On this page you can also download a copy of your entire application using the Print Application button.

   Required Signatures for Basic Research Fellowship LOI Signature Pages:
   - **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
   - **Lead Mentor**
   - **Signing Official (designated by Lead Institution)**

4) **Application Submission Instructions**: When your application is complete, click on the "Submit" button. By clicking "Submit", you are confirming that all the information included is accurate and all documents uploaded correctly, including a fully executed signature page. You will receive an email confirming the submission of your application. You may view your submitted application in the Proposals tab; select Submitted in the dropdown menu for Proposal Status.

Section VI. LOI Review Process

All LOIs undergo a two-step review process. LOIs first undergo an administrative review process for adherence to:

- Formatting requirements
- Completeness
- Responsiveness to the research focus, and
- Eligibility.

Note: LOIs that do not meet these requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not undergo scientific review.

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

Section VII. LOI Review Criteria

The Basic Research Fellowship LOI will be reviewed using the following criteria:

Research Question, Significance and Impact:

- Does the project address an important problem or critical barrier in brain tumor research, and if its aims are achieved, will it demonstrate an impact on improving the lives of brain tumor patients?

Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:

- Is the proposed project reasonable and feasible and appropriate to meet the stated goals of the project within the proposed timeframe?
- Are potential problems and alternative strategies adequately addressed?

Investigators:

- Are the Applicant/PI and Mentor(s) well suited and have appropriate research experience and training to successfully conduct the research project?

Career Development Potential

- Do the Applicant/PI and Mentor present a clear and feasible plan for developing the necessary research, scientific, management, and leadership skills to achieve career advancement toward the Applicant/PI's career goals?

Section VIII. General Requirements

Please refer to the *Policies and Procedures for ABTA Research Grants and Fellowships* located on the For Researchers page for all grant requirements, including:

- Grants are payable to the Lead Institution only.
- Grantees are required to report annually on the progress and outcomes of the research through progress and financial reports.
- Grantees are required to prepare a brief recorded presentation, and present as a poster in person, at the ABTA's National Conference held in the fall near the end of the grant term.
- Publishing history and additional funding are reportable for a five-year period following the conclusion of the grant.
- Although not included as part of the LOI, it is important to note that as part of the ABTA's commitment to transparency, reproducibility, and accessibility of science, applicants will

be **required** to submit data sharing plans as part of their Full Application, if invited. For more information about data sharing visit https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/sharing-policies.

- Letters of Support from the Dean or Chair of your department will be **required** as part of your Full Application. Further information will be provided in the Full Application instructions.
- We recommend applicants add "grants@abta.org" to their email contacts or safe senders list to ensure future communications are received, including an invitation to continue to the Full Application stage.

Section IX. Contacts

For technical questions related to the Application Portal (including questions related to system access, navigation, and 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)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Many common questions about eligibility, program requirements, etc. are answered in the *FAQs for ABTA Research Grants and Fellowships*, which can be found on the For Researchers page. *If you still have questions, please contact the Research Programs Department by email or phone and a member of the Research Programs staff will respond within 1-2 business days.*

ABTA Research Programs Department
Email: grants@abta.org
Phone: 773-577-8742