



Frequently Asked Questions for CNS Metastases Grants

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I. General Application and Process Questions

What are CNS Metastasis Research Grants?

CNS Metastasis Research Grants are one-year, \$50,000 grants for high-risk/high-impact projects deemed to have the potential to change current diagnostic or treatment paradigms for metastatic brain tumor care.

How do I apply for a CNS Metastasis Research Grant?

Applications are screened by a Letter of Intent (LOI). Selected LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full application. The grant application portal opens in **Early October**. CNS Metastasis Research Grant LOIs are due in **Late-November**. Please visit the CNS Metastasis Research Grant webpage at <https://www.abta.org/cnsmetastasisresearchgrant/> for the most up-to-date information.

Invitations to submit a full application will be extended by e-mail in **January** and will include application instructions. If you receive an invitation and will not be submitting a full application, please notify us at grants@abta.org.

Can I have an extension on the deadline?

As stated in the RFA, applicants are strongly encouraged to complete applications with sufficient time to allow for technical difficulties, time zone differences, sickness, travel, etc. It is MBTC's policy not to accept late applications. If you miss the deadline, we encourage you to look for future grant opportunities from the American Brain Tumor Association (<https://www.abta.org/research/for-researchers/>) and through any of the MBTC partner organizations, the list of partner organizations can be found at <https://www.abta.org/metastatic-brain-tumor-collaborative/>.

How do I apply for CNS Metastasis Research Grant if I did not submit a Letter of Intent?

A LOI is required as part of the application process for MBTC CNS Metastasis Research Grants. Full applications are only accepted by invitation following a successful LOI.

May I apply for the CNS Metastasis grant and an ABTA grant?

Applicants may submit applications for CNS Metastasis grants and other ABTA grants, provided they are eligible. While applicants may be a PI on only one ABTA grant at a time, they may concurrently hold an ABTA grant and the CNS Metastasis grant, for different projects.

Do I need to have a faculty position to apply for CNS Metastasis Research Grant?

Applicants MUST hold a faculty position at the time of application. Please refer to the current RFA for full eligibility criteria. The Letter of Support from the Institution, submitted by the department head as part of the full application, should confirm the Applicant's position.

My institution is not an academic institution and does not have traditional faculty positions or titles, am I eligible to apply for a CNS Metastasis Research Grant?

Researchers who hold a position that is equivalent to a faculty position such as the head of a laboratory or group are eligible to apply, provided that they and their institution meet all the other eligibility criteria listed in the RFA. The Letter of Support from the institution, submitted by the department head as part of the full application, should confirm that the position held is equivalent to a faculty position.

My application was administratively withdrawn. Why has this happened?

The MBTC thoroughly reviews each application for completeness and eligibility prior to peer review. This process is performed following the submission of the LOI and Full Application. There are a variety of reasons for why applications at any stage are administratively withdrawn from consideration and all applicants whose application is administratively withdrawn will receive an email detailing the reason for withdrawing the application. Common reasons for withdrawal are:

- The project is not applicable to CNS metastases from at least two distinct organ sites.
- Applicant is not eligible for the grant mechanism.
- Missing Letters of Support or signatures.
- Missing Biosketches or biosketches that exceed the five-page limit.
- Page limits, text font, page size, and/or page margins do not adhere to the format described in the RFA/application instructions.

When uploading my documents to the application portal, I received a red notification of file corruption or password protection. How do I fix this?

When an error is received, please remove the uploaded documents and reopen this on your computer using your preferred document program. If the file is password protected or encrypted, remove the password requirement or encryption and save as a new document. If the document is not password protected or encrypted, select Print to PDF (not Adobe PDF), save as a new document. Upload the new document to the portal. If these efforts do not fix the issue, you may submit your application. The documents are usually accessible to reviewers; however, the document will not be included in the single PDF file of your application, which is the preferred method most reviewers when reviewing applications. Reviewers will have to download that document separately when they review your application. Note: PDF documents must not be password protected or encrypted in any way.

Can indirect costs be charged to a CNS Metastasis Research Grant?

Yes, up to 10% of the grant budget may be used for indirect costs. Please reference the RFA or the Policies and Procedures for MBTC Research Grants, available on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grant webpage](#), for more details on allowable expenses.

Do I need the Grants and Contracts Office to approve/sign my application?

Yes, an institutional signing official (usually a member of the grants/sponsored research office at your institution) must sign your application. See the Signatures section of the RFA or Full Application Instructions for more details.

Please Note: Many institutions require a minimum of two weeks' notice to sign your application, applicants are highly encouraged to notify their grants office, of their intent to apply for a CNS Metastasis Grant, well in advance of the application deadline.

Can you tell me when the funding decisions will be released?

Applicants will be notified by email in **June** for MBTC CNS Metastasis Research Grants. Public announcements of the awarded grants typically follow within 2-3 months of this notification.

I am not a U.S. citizen. Am I eligible for a CNS Metastasis Research Grant?

Yes, applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens or residents to apply.

Will there be any exceptions to the eligibility requirements for an ABTA research grant?

Refer to the current RFA for specific eligibility information for each grant mechanism. Exceptions may be granted for a documented leave of absence from research, such as parental leave or other documented, well-justified leave from research of generally less than twelve months. To get an exception, applicants must send a request to grants@abta.org prior to the application deadline and include their biosketch along with a description of the leave and how it will be documented within the application.

How do I know if my institution is a non-governmental institution?

At this time, we are not able to support investigators at governmental institutions. If the only government funding your institution receives is through competitive grants or a similar funding and it is a non-profit institution, then it is eligible. If your institution receives direct, non-competitive support from the government, then it is not eligible.

Can I appeal the funding decision?

Each application is rigorously reviewed by a committee of scientific experts, and it is our policy not to re-review proposals.

Does the MBTC require Open Science practices?

The MBTC requires journal articles resulting from MBTC funding be freely available in PubMed Central within 12 months of publication. Data sharing is required for “omics” data within 12 months of the end of the grant term. Costs related to data sharing may be included in the budget for your CNS Metastasis Research Grant. All applicants are required to submit a Data Management and Sharing Plan as part of their application. For more information, please see our Open Science Policy (Appendix B of the MBTC Policies and Procedures for Research Grants). A template for the Data Management and Sharing Plan will be available in the Full Application portal and on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grant webpage](#).

How do I become a reviewer?

Thank you for your interest in being a scientific reviewer. We are always open to adding new reviewers to our panels. If you are interested in serving as a reviewer, please contact the ABTA

Research Programs by email at grants@abta.org. Please include an updated biosketch and link to your institutional profile or lab webpage.

Does the MBTC have a policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technologies to develop my grant application?

Yes, the policy can be found on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grants webpage](#) and in Appendix C of the MBTC Policies and Procedures for Research Grants.

II. Including a Patient Advocate in your research

Why are Patient Advocates required for CNS Metastasis Research Grants?

The Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative has a strong commitment to including the patient voice in research. Patient Advocates provide the patient perspective in the design and implementation of research projects funded through these grants, ensuring that the MBTC funds research that has the greatest potential to have a positive impact on patients.

Who can serve as a Patient Advocate on my project?

Patient Advocates can be anyone who has a strong personal connection to CNS metastases. They can be patients who have been diagnosed with CNS Metastasis or a caregiver, family member or friend of someone who has been diagnosed. Alternatively, they may be someone who has a strong personal connection to a cancer that has a tendency to metastasize to the brain or someone with a strong personal connection to primary brain tumors. They should be able to represent the collective CNS metastasis patient perspective.

Patient Advocates should have a basic understanding of oncology research or a willingness to learn. They should not have a clinical or research role on your project. They should focus on providing a broad patient perspective, not clinical or research-related input.

How do I find a Patient Advocate to serve on my project?

Ask other researchers and clinicians at your institution or collaborators if they have worked with patient advocates and if they have recommendations.

Most of the organizations in the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative work with patient advocates regularly and may be able to connect you to someone who can serve on your project. A full list of organizations in the MBTC can be found at <https://www.abta.org/metastatic-brain-tumor-collaborative/>. You can also reach out to grants@abta.org. ABTA staff can also connect you with the partner organizations who may have an advocate with relevant experience to serve on your project.

How can I involve a Patient Advocate in my project?

- Be sure to include a patient advocate in your project early on. They will be most helpful when they are given time to learn about the project.
- Communicate with the patient advocate regularly during the project to keep them informed of the progress. Communications may be via email, video calls, or in person.
- Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the advocates (see below for ideas).
- Seek Input from the advocates on your project, as they have valuable perspectives.

What roles can patient advocates play in my project?

Patient Advocates vary in the variety of skills, experiences and knowledge they bring to the team. Depending on the nature of your project and the background of the advocate(s), there may be other ways that they can assist other than those mentioned here.

During Application Submission you may want the Patient Advocate to:

- Provide feedback on the impact of your project on patients by identifying the translation potential of your research (i.e., how meaningful or important is the outcome to patients).
- Work with you to develop and review the scientific and patient impact sections to help communicate the importance of your project to patients and their families.
- Work with you to develop and review the lay summary and impact statement of the application to ensure terminology is understandable to a general, non-scientific audience and to convey the importance and overall impact of your project on CNS Metastasis research and patient care.
- Work with them to define their role in the project.

During and after the Research Project:

- Provide feedback on the findings and any potential changes to the project plan.
- Participate in the project team update/planning meetings, seminars and other events important to your project's success. They will add the patient perspective to the discussions, and their involvement in these meetings will allow them to learn more about the project and identify other ways they can contribute.
- Speak in the community about your ongoing research and its importance to patients. To maximize impact and enhance understanding, the researcher and advocate present as a team. This can include the required presentations at the end of the grant.
- Work with you to create educational materials, events, webinars and teleconferences for local, regional, and national groups and organizations to inform them of the research you are conducting and its importance to CNS metastasis patients.

How often should I and the other researchers on the project meet with the patient advocate?

The frequency of the meetings should be driven by the research plan and how often the team meets to discuss the progress. Patient advocates should be active participants, not infrequent or secondary participants. They cannot be expected to learn and understand the outcomes of the project in a single meeting at the end of the project; therefore, regular updates and meetings periodically throughout the project are encouraged. Your full application should include a description of how often you will send updates to and meet with the advocate and the types of meetings that will occur.

How should patient advocates be compensated?

Compensation will vary depending on the involvement of the patient advocate in your project. At a minimum, the patient advocate should be compensated for the out-of-pocket expenses incurred to attend meetings and conferences (mileage, parking, etc.). If the patient advocate will have specific deliverables for your project, honoraria or consulting fees are encouraged. Compensation should be agreed upon during the development of the application and included in the grant budget.

What documents will the Patient Advocate need to provide for my application?

For the Letter of Intent, the MBTC requires that the Patient Advocate only be named on the Key Personnel page of the application. If invited to submit the full application, you will need to include a biosketch and a letter of support from the Patient advocate, describing their commitment and role in the project.