



METASTATIC
Brain Tumor
COLLABORATIVE

CNS Metastasis Research Grants

2027 Request for Applications

American Brain Tumor Association

For questions, email: grants@abta.org

Website: <https://www.abta.org/cnsmetastasisresearchgrant/>

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Key Dates

Application Portal Opens:

October 1, 2026

Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:

November 3, 2026, by 12:00 p.m., noon 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 CNS Metastasis Research Grants.*

Letter of Intent Decision:

On or around January 26, 2027

Full Application Due:

On or around March 2, 2027

Applicant Notification:

On or around June 22, 2027

Earliest Start Date:

August 1, 2027

Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative

Metastatic brain tumors are the most common type of brain tumors in adults. Current estimates suggest approximately 200,000 adults are diagnosed annually in the U.S. Unfortunately, the average prognosis following diagnosis is only a few months. Many types of cancer spread to the brain, with lung, breast, kidney, colon, and melanoma cancers being the most common cancers that metastasize to the central nervous system.

Discovering that there are no patient advocacy organizations dedicated to metastatic brain tumor education and support, the American Brain Tumor Association created the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative (MBTC). Composed of advocacy organizations representing cancers that metastasize to the brain, the MBTC aims to support and empower patients diagnosed with a metastatic brain tumor and to collaboratively advance research that addresses the needs of this patient population. Learn more about the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative at <https://www.abta.org/metastatic-brain-tumor-collaborative/>.

An independent, multi-level, external review process ensures that these grants are awarded for the most meritorious CNS metastasis research projects. Our prestigious grant reviewers are leaders in the CNS metastasis community. Through the funding of CNS metastasis research, the MBTC supports projects that will change our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of metastatic CNS 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 CNS metastasis patients and their caregivers.

Request for Application (RFA), CNS Metastasis Research Grant

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative seeks applications from faculty who propose high-risk/high-impact projects with the potential to change current diagnostic or treatment paradigms for CNS metastasis patient care.

- CNS Metastasis Research Grants provide up to \$50,000 in support over a one-year period (See Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Grants are intended to promote the development of new approaches to diagnosis and treatment, leading to advancements in the understanding and treatment of CNS metastases and increasing the potential for improving, extending, and ultimately, saving the lives of those living with a diagnosis of CNS metastasis.
- Grants specifically encourage innovative research by allowing researchers to conduct the early scientific studies needed to secure additional/future funding for their projects.
- Early-career faculty and Investigators from sciences outside traditional biological fields are encouraged to apply.

We seek projects focused on all metastatic CNS tumor types including leptomeningeal disease, originating from any primary organ site, and that will have an impact on adult, pediatric, or both populations of patients. **Projects MUST include Brain and CNS Metastases arising from cancers originating from at least TWO distinct primary organ sites (i.e. Breast Cancer AND Lung Cancer).**

Note: Applications proposing projects that are not focused on Brain and CNS Metastases arising from cancer originating from at least TWO distinct primary organ sites will be administratively withdrawn from consideration.

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

- Biomarkers of Risk, Disease Burden, and/or Treatment Response
- Metastatic CNS Tumor Biology
- Clinical Research
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics
- Imaging
- Metastatic Process
- Molecular/Genetic Epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics
- Prevention
- Risk Assessment
- Early Detection and Surveillance
- Epidemiology
- Tumor Microenvironment and Immune System Involvement
- Tumor Cell Dormancy/Mechanisms of Resistance

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/PIs and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for a CNS Metastasis Research Grant. All eligibility requirements must be met at the time of LOI submission.

Grants will be awarded to a single Principal Investigator (PI). 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/ Principal Investigator

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent
- The PI must hold a full-time faculty position and cannot have held a full-time faculty appointment before September 1, 2020. A documented leave of absence may be excluded from the eight-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 eight years but who believe they are eligible must email ABTA at grants@abta.org 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.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- May submit only ONE CNS Metastasis Research Grant LOI per funding cycle.

Lead Institution

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization located in the US.
- 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 the Brain Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, located at the top of the [CNS Metastasis Research Grants webpage](#).

Patient Advocate

- Must be an ally who can represent the patient perspective.
- Does not have to be a brain metastasis patient.

- Must be meaningfully engaged in the research throughout the grant term.
- Must not have a conflict of interest (i.e., a financial or personal relationship) that may bias their patient perspective. Patient Advocates may be employed by their institution so long as there is no conflict of interest.

Note: If you need assistance in connecting with a patient advocate for your project, please reach out to grants@abta.org. For LOI submission, the patient advocate must only be named on the project. A letter of support from the patient advocate will be required for the full application submission, if invited. For more information about how patient advocates can contribute to your research, please refer to the FAQs, available in the grant application in ProposalCentral and on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grants webpage](#).

Section III. Award Information and Grant Term

Grants are awarded for \$50,000 (salary support and research expenses) for one year. *Note: Indirect costs support is not provided as additional funding. The total grant budget, including indirect costs, must not exceed \$50,000.*

Budgets are NOT required at the time of LOI submission. However, applicants should review and understand the budget guidelines as described in Section 6 of the MBTC's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, 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 CNS Metastasis Research Grant may include:

- Equipment and supply costs. *No single equipment item may exceed \$5,000.*
- Travel costs are allowed for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project. *Travel expenses must not exceed \$2,000.*
 - *The PI of CNS Metastasis Research Grants are required to present the results of the research project at either the annual ABTA National Conference held in the fall following the conclusion of the grant term or at one of the MBTC partner advocacy organization patient/research meetings. Grant funds may be allocated for expenses related to this travel.*
- Up to 10% of the grant budget may be used for indirect costs.
- Data Management and Sharing Plan costs, which may include article processing charges, data storage fees, and staff time for curating and documenting data.

Expenses NOT allowed or funded by CNS Metastasis Research Grant:

- 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 CNS Metastasis Research Grant 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 follows a prescribed template which gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. LOIs are reviewed on a competitive basis. It is the 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 CNS Metastasis Research Grants must be completed online through the [ProposalCentral](#) website.

Note: ***Institutional signature is required** for your CNS Metastasis Research Grant 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. Signature pages may be downloaded from ProposalCentral, see Section 10 Signature Pages, within your application.*

LOI Application Components:

1) Title Page:

- The title is limited to 81 characters in length (including spaces).
- Do not use abbreviations or all capital letters. Please enter your project title in “title case.” Title case means that the first letter of each word is capitalized, except for certain small words, such as articles and short prepositions (i.e. *Early Detection of Brain Metastases*).
- A project title must be entered and saved before accessing additional sections.
- Please indicate how you heard about the grant opportunity.

2) Download Templates & Instructions: The Request for Applications (RFA), Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, and available templates can be downloaded from this section.

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

4) Applicant/PI: This page will automatically populate with information 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) 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 load from the Institution Profile of the Applicant's/PI's primary institution. Applicants should verify that the information is accurate and a grant officer is included on the application. For more information on how to correct or change the Lead Institution, refer to the Info block (click on the “?”) in this section of your application in ProposalCentral.

6) Key Personnel: Key Personnel include a Patient Advocate and up to two collaborators who are integral to the research plan. Key Personnel include individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, regardless of whether they receive salaries or compensation under the grant.

- Key Personnel must list greater than 0% effort; however, salary support is not required for Key Personnel.
- Add each Key Personnel by entering the individual's email address.

- Select the appropriate Role for that person from the available drop-down menu. Also enter in the proposed level of effort on this project.
- A Patient Advocate is a required Key Personnel for CNS Metastasis Research Grants.

***Note:** The PI should not be listed as Key Personnel in this section since their information is entered in section four. Examples of Non-Key Personnel include Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Technicians, etc., who will work on the project, but whose expertise is not essential to the execution of the project. The role(s) of any Non-Key Personnel should be described in the budget justification section in the Full Application, if invited. Do not list them in the Key Personnel section.*

If a collaborator is only providing a resource, such as a model or a drug, they do not need to be listed in the Key Personnel section, you will be able to provide a resource letter, if invited to submit the full application.

If more than two collaborators are required for you to be able to successfully complete your project, you may email grants@abta.org for approval, no later than October 27, 2026, and provide justification for all collaborators listed in your application (i.e. specific expertise, time, training, etc, directly related to the project). Collaborators who will provide “support, as needed,” or other non-specific contributions will not be considered.

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, primary cancer organ sites, and target population for the research proposed from the menus and click the “+” button 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.
 - **Biosketches:**
 - A biosketch is required **only** for the Applicant/PI for the LOI submission. Additional biosketches will **not** be accepted for the LOI. *Note: Biosketches for Collaborators will be required at the Full Application stage (biosketches are not required for patient advocates).*
 - The biosketch must be developed on the NIH Common Form, using [SciENcv](#).
 - **Project Narrative (not to exceed 1 page, including figures and tables. Page limit does not include Cited Publications):** The LOI narrative must adhere to ALL the following format requirements and content sections as described below. Applications not adhering to the requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not be peer reviewed. The MBTC 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.

- Margins: at least 0.5 inch in all directions.
 - Print Area: 7.5 inches x 10.0 inches.
 - You may reference an article/media in the narrative but hyperlinks or URLs are allowed only in the Cited Publications section.
- **Project Narrative Content (two pages, not including cited publications):**
- **Page 1: Project Description (limited to 1 page):** The PI must succinctly propose a research project that clearly outlines the hypothesis(es), specific aims, and brief description of the scientific approach. If this concept has ever been tested, explain why this approach is novel and should be pursued further. If the longer-term project exceeds the budget or timeframe of the CNS Metastasis Research Grant, include critical next steps that will be pursued for the success of the research.
 - **Page 2:**
 - **Impact Statement (limited to 1,500 characters):** Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact of the work on the CNS Metastasis field and clearly explain how the success of this project would change paradigms in the diagnosis or treatment of patients with CNS metastases.
 - **Team Description (limited to 1,500 characters):** Briefly describe the role(s) of the Key Personnel named on the project, including the Patient Advocate, and the plan for communication. *Note, you will be able to provide a more comprehensive description at the full application stage.*
 - **Cited Publications (not included in the 2-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](#).

Applicants are fully responsible for the accuracy of the content in their proposal, including components that were produced by an Artificial Intelligence tool. Please refer to the MBTC's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence for Grant applications and Peer Review, located on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grants page](#), for more information.

Applicants are advised to double-check that all required documents are complete and uploaded to the application before submission.

Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

- 1) **Applicant Demographics:** The MBTC collects demographic information for analysis of its grant program and outreach efforts. This section is required. Reviewers do not have access to demographic information section of the application.
- 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.

- 3) **Signature Pages:** Click on the “Print Signature Pages” button and obtain the required signatures on page 1 of the document. Save the signature page as a PDF and upload it to your application in the “Attachments” section.

Note: An electronic or e-signature is acceptable for any of the required signatures. Electronic or e-signatures appearing on the Signature Pages are the same as handwritten signatures for the purposes of validity, enforceability, and admissibility. They have the same force and effect as an original signature.

Required Signatures for CNS Metastasis Research Grant LOI signature page:

- **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
- **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 administrative review 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 proceed to scientific review.

During the second step, all eligible LOIs are reviewed by an external committee of scientific reviewers with appropriate expertise. The committee will assess the strengths and weaknesses of each LOI. Only applicants with LOIs deemed most meritorious and aligned with the goals of the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative 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 CNS Metastasis Research Grant 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 CNS metastasis research?
- If the aims of the project are achieved, will the proposed project inform and have a demonstrated impact on improving the lives of CNS metastasis patients?
- Does the project include CNS Metastases arising from cancers originating from at least two distinct primary organ sites?

Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:

- Is the project applicable to CNS metastases arising from at least two different primary cancers?
- 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 and budget of the grant?

Investigator:

- Is the Applicant/ PI well suited to successfully conduct the research project?
- Does the PI have the appropriate track record of accomplishments and leadership to successfully implement the proposed research and overcome obstacles that might arise?

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 CNS metastasis research?
- Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies proposed?

Section VIII. General Requirements

Please refer to the MBTC's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants located on the [CNS Metastasis Research Grants page](#) for all grant requirements, including:

- Grants are payable to the Lead Institution only.
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in a final progress report and financial report at the end of the grant term.
- The PI is required to present at the ABTA National Conference or another patient-focused conference hosted by a member of the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative, AND a lay-friendly webinar with one of member organizations near the end of the grant term. The ABTA will coordinate presentation options for grantees with partner organizations, as needed, prior to 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 a requirement for the LOI phase, it is important to note that as part of the Metastatic Brain Tumor Collaborative's commitment to transparency, reproducibility, and accessibility of science, applicants will be **required** to submit data sharing plans as part of their application at the Full Application Stage. For more information about data sharing visit <https://osp.od.nih.gov/scientific-data-sharing/>.
- Letters of Support from the Dean or Chair of the department for the PI will be **required** as part of the application at the Full Application stage. 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.), please contact:

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.), please reference the FAQs using the link below BEFORE contacting the ABTA Grants Office. If you still have questions or do not see an answer to a question you have, please contact the Research

Programs Department by email or phone. A member of our team will respond within 1-2 business days.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Many common questions that applicants have about eligibility, program requirements, etc. are answered in the **FAQs for MBTC Research Grants**, which can be found on the [CNS Metastasis Grant Opportunity](#) page.

ABTA Research Programs Department

Email: grants@abta.org

Phone: 773-577-8742