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.

Discovery Grants

2027 Request for Applications

American Brain Tumor Association
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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 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 the ABTA Discovery Grants.

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 Grant 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. Applicants must document month and year of faculty appointment in the personal statement section of their biosketch
- Applicants must currently be in a faculty position at the time of LOI submission (December 9, 2026).
- **NEW:** Electronic signatures are required from the PI, Mentor (if applicable), and the Institution Signing Official, who must log into ProposalCentral to sign. See page 11 for more details.
- Applications must be no more than eight years from the start of the first faculty position at the start of the grant term (September 1, 2027).
- Co-mentors are not allowed for ABTA Discovery Grants. If the project requires expertise that would fit a co-mentor role, applicants are encouraged to include them on the application as a collaborator.
- The PI or 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).
- 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.
- 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 6 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 scientific community to advance the 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 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 Discovery Grant

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from faculty who propose high-risk/high-impact projects with the potential to change current diagnostic or treatment paradigms for adult and pediatric brain tumor care.

- ABTA Discovery 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 encourage the development of new approaches to diagnosis and treatment, leading to advancements in the understanding and treatment of brain tumors and increasing the potential for improving, extending, and ultimately, saving the lives of those living with a brain tumor diagnosis.
- The funding mechanism specifically encourages novel research, allowing researchers to conduct the early scientific studies needed to secure additional/future funding for their projects.
- Investigators from sciences outside traditional biological fields are encouraged to apply.

We seek projects focused on <u>all</u> brain tumor types, 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
- Clinical Research
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics

- Imaging
- Molecular/Genetic Epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics
- Risk Assessment

Note: Applications proposing projects that do not directly relate to brain tumor research will be administratively withdrawn from consideration.

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/Principal Investigators, Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Discovery Grant. If you have questions about your eligibility, contact grants@abta.org.

Grants will be awarded to a single Principal Investigator (PI) and a Mentor (if applicable). Co-Mentors and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are not allowed for this mechanism.

Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI) Requirements:

- **At the time of LOI submission applicants MUST**
  - Have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent.
  - Hold a full-time faculty position **and** cannot have held a full-time faculty appointment before September 1, 2019.
    - 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, 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.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- May only submit ONE Discovery Grant Letter of Intent per funding cycle.
- May not be a PI on another ABTA grant at **the start of the grant term**.

Lead Mentor Requirements:
A Lead Mentor is required for Applicants/PIs that are within the first five years of their first faculty appointment (i.e., started their first faculty position after December 31, 2021); optional for Applicants/PIs beyond five years of a faculty appointment.

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the same institution as the Applicant/PI.
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- Cannot be a mentor on more than one 2027 Discovery Grant Application.

Lead Institution Requirements:

- 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 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 Discovery Grant provides up to $50,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for one year.

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 *ABTA'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 an ABTA Discovery Grant may include:

- Salary/stipend support, which may include fringe benefits.
- Equipment and supply costs.
  - *No single equipment item may exceed $5,000.*
- Travel costs for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.
  - *Discovery Grant 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's National Conference held in the fall following 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 curating and documenting data.

Expenses NOT allowed or funded by an ABTA Discovery Grant:

- Indirect costs (refer to the ABTA's Policies & Procedures).
- Salary/fringe support for the Mentor.
- 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 ABTA's Discovery 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 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 Discovery 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.

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 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 (RFA), ABTA Policies and Procedures for Research Grants, applicant 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 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 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 Lead Mentor and up to 2 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, regardless of whether they receive salaries or compensation under the grant.
   - If you include Key Personnel, you must list their effort as greater than 0% effort; however, salary support is not required for each Key Personnel you list.
   - Add each Key Personnel by entering the individual's email address.
   - Select the appropriate Role for that person from the available drop-down menu.

   *Note: The Applicant/PI **should not** be listed in the Key Personnel section. The roles of Non-Key Personnel will be described in the Budget Justification during Full Application. Non-Key Personnel include 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.*

   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 December 6, 2026. You must provide justification for all collaborators listed in your application (i.e., specific resources or time, directly related to the aims of 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, tumor type(s), 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.

   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. Applicants should ensure that all relevant information related to the above eligibility criteria is included in all biosketches.
     - Biosketches must be developed on the NIH Common Form, using SciENcv.

- **Applicant Biosketch:** MUST include, in the Personal Statement, the start date (month and year) of first faculty appointment, to verify eligibility for the Discovery Grant. If Applicant's current title is a non-traditional faculty title (e.g., Member, Staff, Instructor), the applicant must include confirmation of their faculty rank.
- **Mentor Biosketch** (required if a mentor is named on the application): If the Mentor's title is a non-traditional faculty title (e.g., Member, Staff, Instructor), the applicant must include confirmation of their faculty rank.

  Do not include biosketches for other Key Personnel or Non-Key Personnel for the LOI. Biosketches for Collaborators will be required at the Full Application stage.

- **Letters of Support:** A letter of support for the LOI stage is required only from the Lead 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 Key Collaborators and the Institution will be required at the time of Full Application submission.
  - **Letter of Support from Lead Mentor (required if a Lead Mentor is included in the application):** The letter of support should describe the Lead Mentor's commitment to mentoring the Applicant/PI as well as their experience mentoring other postdoctoral or junior faculty level researchers. The letter 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.

- **Project Narrative (not to exceed two 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 standard format.
    - 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 (two-page limit):**
    - **Project Description:** 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 Discovery Grant, include critical next steps that will be pursued for the success of the research.

- **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 new approach would change paradigms in the diagnosis or treatment of patients with brain tumors, if successful.
- **Cited Publications (not included in the two-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 the 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.

   Note: Since some attachments are not required for all applicants, the validate step will not flag a missing non-required attachment (i.e. 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 Discovery Grant LOI Signature Pages:
   - **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
   - **Lead Mentor (if a Lead Mentor has been named on the application)**
   - **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 Discovery Grant 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?

Investigator(s):

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

Innovation:

- Does the proposed project introduce novel concepts, approaches, or methodologies to brain tumor research, or refine, improve, or apply existing frameworks in ways that challenge current research or clinical practice paradigms?

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 on their research outcomes in a final progress and financial report at the end of the grant term.
- 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 a requirement for 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 the 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.), 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)

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