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.

# ABTA Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowships

## 2027 Request for Applications

**American Brain Tumor Association**
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Chicago, IL 60631-3225
**For questions, email:** grants@abta.org
**Website:** http://www.abta.org/research/for-researchers/

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# Key Dates

## Application Portal Opens:

November 4, 2026

## Application Deadline:

January 19, 2027, by 3:00 pm CST. No late applications will be accepted.

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

## Applicant Notification:

On or around April 29, 2027

## Earliest Start Date:

May 26, 2027

## Latest Start Date:

July 12, 2027
The fellowship must begin during the summer following the current application cycle.

# Important Info

- **NEW:** The Grant Agreement for the Medical Student Summer Fellowships has been simplified. Grants offices should review the updated agreement and the updated Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, which are located in the application portal and on the ABTA For Researchers page
- **NEW:** Biosketches must be developed on the NIH Common Form, using SciENcv.
- **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.
- Resources for ABTA Applicants can be found on the For Researchers page.
- An application checklist is available in the application portal. See the Download Templates and Instructions tab of the application after you initiate your application 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".
- Mentor faculty must confirm, in the personal statement 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).

# 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 are 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 Applications (RFA), American Brain Tumor Association Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowship

## Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from medical students who intend to spend a summer conducting brain tumor research.

- ABTA Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowships provide $3,000 in support for a three-month summer term (see Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Fellowships are conducted in a laboratory within a mentorship setting.
- The goal of the program is to provide an introductory learning experience that will motivate and empower talented medical students by providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue a career in neuro-oncology research.

We seek research 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

*<u>Note</u>: 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 (PIs), Mentors and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowship. Eligibility requirements must be met at the time of application submission. If you have questions about your eligibility, contact grants@abta.org.

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

**Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI) Requirements:**

- Must be currently enrolled and in good standing at a medical school.
- Must conduct the proposed research and training at the Lead Mentor's institution.
- Must not have been a previous Fellow on an ABTA Medical Student Summer Fellowship.
- Is not required to be enrolled as a student at the Mentor's institution.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- May submit ONE Medical Student Summer Fellowship application per funding cycle.
- Can be enrolled in an MD/PhD program.

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

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent.
- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the institution where the applicant proposes to conduct the research project.
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research.
- Must make a specific time commitment (the level of effort cannot be zero-0%) to supervise the training and advancement of the Applicant/PI (Medical Student).
- Can be a Lead Mentor on only ONE Medical Student Summer Fellowship application submitted in the 2027 grant cycle.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

**Co-Mentor Requirements** (optional)**:**
*A single Co-Mentor is optional for all applicants.*

- 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.
- Is not required to currently 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 Medical Student Summer Fellowship applications.

**Lead Institution Requirements:**

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization in the United States or Canada.
- 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. Application Submission Information

The ABTA Jack and Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowships provide $3,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for a three-month term.

The 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 VI.

*Tip: Institutional signature is required for your Medical Student Summer Fellowship. Notify your grants office immediately 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.*

**Application Components:**

1) **Title Page:**
   - The title is limited to 81 characters, 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), the ABTA Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, 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, and you can register anytime using the following URL: 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 Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable). If collaborators or other key personnel will contribute to the project, their role should be mentioned in the Project Narrative and the Lead Mentor should describe the collaboration in their Letter of Support.
   - Key Personnel effort must be greater than 0%; 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.

   *Note: The PI **should not** be listed as Key Personnel in this section since their information is entered in section four.*

   *Note: The roles of Non-Key Personnel should be described in the Budget Justification section. Non-Key Personnel includes other students, postdoctoral fellows, research technicians, and/or others who will work on the project, but whose expertise is not essential to the execution of the project.*

   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) **Abstracts:** Applicants are required to provide both a lay and scientific abstract of the research project. Each abstract is limited to 1,500 characters, including spaces.
*Note*: *If more than the allowed characters are entered, the content will be truncated.*
   - **Lay Abstract:** Enter a publishable summary of the research project that includes the impact the project will have for patients and the brain tumor field; written for a **non-scientific audience**.
   - **Scientific Abstract:** Enter a scientific summary of the proposed research plan, including hypothesis and specific aims.
   - **Research Focus Area:** Select the primary area of research, applicable tumor type(s), and target population for the research proposed from the menus and click the "+" button to add them to your application.
   - **Common Scientific Outline (CSO) Code:** Select one or two CSO code(s) from the available list, as applicable, to describe the type of research you will conduct. Indicate the percentage weight for each code as it applies to your project. The total must add up to 100%.

8) **Budget Period Detail:** Budget amounts must be entered in the Budget Period Detail section of ProposalCentral. Your budget entries will automatically populate a table in the Budget Summary section.
*Note: Applicants may request $3,000 (direct costs only) for a three-month period.*

   **Expenses allowed and funded by an ABTA Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowship may include**:
   - Salary/Stipend and Fringe support for the Applicant/PI only.
   - Equipment and Supply costs.
   - Travel costs, incurred during the grant term, for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.

   **Expenses NOT allowed or funded by an ABTA Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowship include**:
   - Salary support for the Lead Mentor, Co-Mentor, other personnel, or Consultants.
   - Tuition costs.
   - Visa costs.
   - Indirect costs.
   - Professional membership dues.

   **Budget Justification:** In addition to providing an itemized budget, detailed justification of proposed expenditures must be included using the Budget Justification Template in the Download Templates or Attachments section of ProposalCentral. Exact amounts must be indicated in the Budget Justification and must match the amounts in the Budget Period Detail section. The completed Budget Justification should be uploaded as a PDF document in the Attachments section of the application.

9) **Budget Summary:** The budget summary tab will populate with the information you provide in the Budget Period Detail. No action is required for this section.

10) **Organizational Assurances:** The assurances/certifications in this section are made and verified by the institutional official signing the application. If the application is selected for funding, IRB and IACUC approval letters (as applicable) will be required and must be submitted to the ABTA prior to the start of the grant.

11) **Attachments:** The documents outlined below must be saved separately in Portable Document Format (PDF) before uploading to ProposalCentral. All documents below are required unless noted otherwise.
    - **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.
        - Research biosketches are required **only** for the Applicant/PI, Lead Mentor, and Co-Mentor (if applicable) named in the application. No additional biosketches are permitted.
        - 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).
            - For Applicants only, describe what draws you to brain tumor research, including any personal, academic, clinical, or research experiences that have shaped your interest, and how this opportunity will contribute to your future goals.

        - **Letters of Support:** Separate letters of support are required from the Lead Mentor, Lead Institution, and Co-Mentor (if applicable). No additional letters of support will be permitted. 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. The letters should focus on the areas listed below and must 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** should include the following:
            - Description of their commitment to the applicant's training, the plan for mentoring the applicant, and their experience mentoring other students, postdoctoral fellows, or junior faculty level researchers.
            - How the data generated by the research project will be shared publicly or how data generated in their lab is shared in general, whether through repositories, pre-prints, etc.
            - Resources available to the Applicant/PI.
            - Contributions of collaborators on the project, if applicable.
        - **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor** (if a Co-Mentor is on the application) should describe their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.
        - **Letter of Support from Research Institution**: Must be written by the department head, dean, chair, or other authorized representative, who is authorized by the department chair from the department where the proposed research will be conducted, to speak to the resources available within the department for the project. The letter must include a description of the available research space, protected time for research, and the availability of equipment and other resources necessary to successfully conduct the proposed research.

    - **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 guidelines.
  - 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):**
  - **Research Project Plan:** The Applicant/PI must succinctly describe the research project, including the background, hypothesis(es), specific aims, and scientific approach that will be taken to address each specific aim over the three-month grant term.
  - **Timeline:** Provide a projected timeline for progress over the three-month grant term. If the longer-term project exceeds the timeframe of the 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 for improving the diagnosis or treatment of brain tumor patients.
  - **Career Development Plan:** The Applicant/PI should describe their career goals and how this research experience will help them develop the skills and experience necessary to achieve career advancement. 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 interactions with the Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable) that will advance their training toward the goals of the project and overall career development.
  - **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 and must include the Digital Object Identifier, the object type (e.g. preprint, protocol, etc.), and the 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.

- **Data Sharing Plan (optional):** The ABTA is committed to transparency, reproducibility, and accessibility of research. Applicants may include a data sharing plan as part of their application using the template found in the Download Templates or Attachments section in ProposalCentral. Note: while the Data Sharing Plan will be visible to the peer review committee and reviewers may comment on it, it is intended for internal purposes only and will not be considered in the overall score.

12) **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.

## Section IV. Application Submission Instructions

1) **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.

*2)* **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 the Medical Student Summer Fellowship application signature page:**
- **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
- **Lead Mentor**
- **Signing Official (designated by the Lead Institution)**

3) **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 V. Application Review Process

All applications undergo a two-step review process. Applications first undergo administrative review for adherence to:
- Formatting requirements
- Completeness
- Responsiveness to the research focus, and
- Eligibility.

Note: Applications that do not meet the above requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not undergo scientific peer review.

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

## Section VI. Application Review Criteria

The Medical Student Summer Fellowship Applications will be reviewed based only on the information provided in the application, using the following criteria:

***Research Question and Significance:***

- Is the research project appropriate for the applicant, their experience, and the training they will receive?
- 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?

***Applicant:***

- Does the Applicant/PI present a projected timeline for progress and clear, feasible goals for developing the necessary research skills needed?
- Does the applicant describe how the research experience and the proposed training will help them to achieve their career goals?
- Will receiving the grant and working on the project have a meaningful impact on the applicant and their career plans?

***Training Environment:***

- Is the training environment adequately described and are the institutional support, equipment, and other resources available to the applicant to successfully conduct the research project?

***Mentor(s):***

- Does/do the mentor(s) possess the research expertise, training, and time to guide the applicant to implement the proposed summer research project?
- Does/do the mentor(s) adequately describe their plans for training and mentoring the applicant advance toward their stated career goals?

***Grantsmanship:***

- Is the project narrative specific to the role the PI will have in the mentor's lab?
- Is the application well-focused, clear, well organized, and accurate?
- Are the Lay Summary and Impact Statement written for a non-scientific audience?

## Section VII. 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 complete the fellowship over a 3-month period. No-cost extensions are not allowed for this mechanism.
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in a final progress and financial report at the end of the grant term.
- Publishing history and follow-on funding are reportable for a five-year period following the conclusion of the award.
- As part of the ABTA's commitment to transparency, reproducibility, and accessibility of science, applicants are encouraged to submit data sharing plans as part of their application. For more information about data sharing visit https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/sharing-policies.

- We recommend applicants add "grants@abta.org" to their email safe senders list to ensure future communications are received.

## Additional Award Opportunity for American Brain Tumor Association Jack & Fay Netchin Medical Student Summer Fellowship Grantees

**American Brain Tumor Association Lucien Rubinstein Award**
At the conclusion of the grant term, each fellowship recipient may apply for the Lucien Rubinstein Award. Full details will be provided at the end of the grant term. The application requires the approved final progress report that is submitted at the conclusion of the Medical Student Summer Fellowship and a letter of project completion from the Lead Mentor on the project. A panel of ABTA Scientific Reviewers assesses the final reports and Mentor letters, and based on the highest review scores, one "outstanding medical student" is selected to receive the annual ABTA Lucien Rubinstein Award.

The award is named in honor of Lucien Rubinstein, MD, a former professor of neuropathology at the University of Virginia and a world-renowned brain tumor researcher. Dr. Rubinstein was a medical advisor to the ABTA, early in our history. In the spirit of his legacy, the ABTA aims to seed the field with talented, early-career investigators who have the potential to change our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors.

In addition to recognition for their outstanding work on the ABTA website and social media, recipients receive an additional $1,000 unrestricted award and an invitation to attend and present a poster at the ABTA National Conference and ABTA Alumni Research Network Annual Meeting in the year following their award. These meetings are typically held in September of each year. Travel expenses to present at these meetings will be reimbursed by the ABTA following the conclusion of the meetings.

## Section VIII. 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*