



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 Research Collaboration Grants

2024 Request for Applications

American Brain Tumor Association

8550 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 550
Chicago, IL 60631-3225

For questions, email: grants@abta.org

Website: www.abta.org/for-researchers

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Key Dates

Application Portal Opens:

November 8, 2023

Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:

December 13, 2023, 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 the ABTA's Research Collaboration Grants.

Letter of Intent Decision:

On or around February 22, 2024

Full Application Due:

On or around March 27, 2024

Applicant Notification:

On or around July 30, 2024

Earliest Start Date:

September 1, 2024

What's New This Year

- All font types allowed by NIH are now allowed for the Project Narrative for ABTA grants.
- Allowable page size clarification - A4 Page size not accepted.
- Project Narrative for the Full Application (if invited to submit) will be limited to 8 pages.
- The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is allowed for ABTA grant applications. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of their applications and are encouraged to thoroughly review any content created by an AI tool.

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. Since its founding in 1973, the ABTA has supported early-career investigators, contributing to the modern brain tumor research and scientific community to advance the field's 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 serving as mentors to 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 is supporting 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 Research Collaboration Grant

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from a collaborative team of two faculty at different institutions, who propose multi-disciplinary, high-risk/high-impact projects with the potential to change current diagnostic or treatment paradigms for adult and pediatric brain tumor care.

- ABTA Research Collaboration Grants provide up to \$200,000 in support over a two-year period (See Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Grants are intended to promote team science in a way that will streamline and accelerate 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.
- Grants specifically encourage innovative research by allowing research teams to conduct the early scientific studies needed to secure additional/future funding for their collaborative projects.
- The research projects supported by this mechanism must be conducted by a team of two co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) from distinct institutions.
- The research project should be multi-disciplinary in that it incorporates multiple components such as basic, translational, clinical, and epidemiological research.
- Investigators from sciences outside traditional biological fields are encouraged to apply.

We seek projects focused on all brain tumor types, benign or malignant, primary, or secondary (metastatic), and that will have an impact on pediatric, adult, or both 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/Lead PIs, Co-PIs and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Research Collaboration Grant.

Grants will be awarded to a Lead Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) from distinct institutions. 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.

If you have questions about your eligibility, contact grants@abta.org.

Applicant/Lead Principal Investigator

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent **at the time of Letter of Intent (LOI) submission.**
- **At the start of the grant term**, Lead PI must hold a full-time faculty position and cannot have held a full-time faculty appointment before September 1, 2014. An exception to the ten-year window may be granted for documented parental leave or other well justified leave from research, of generally less than 12 months duration. Applicants whose experience exceeds the maximum of ten years but who believe they are eligible (e.g., maternity/family leave) must contact ABTA at grants@abta.org before submitting their application to verify their eligibility.

*Note: if the applicant does not currently have a full-time faculty position, the applicant must include a formal offer letter **at the time of LOI submission**, which confirms a start date prior to the start of the grant term.*

- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- May submit only ONE ABTA Research Collaboration Grant LOI in which they are serving as Lead PI; however, individuals may serve as a Co-PI or contribute to more than one LOI.
- May concurrently apply for an ABTA Discovery Grant during the same grant cycle, but only one grant (either ABTA Research Collaboration Grant or Discovery Grant) will be awarded.
- May not be a PI on another ABTA grant at **the start of the grant term.**

Co-Principal Investigator

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO, or equivalent **at the time of Letter of Intent (LOI) submission.**

- **At the start of the grant term**, must hold a full-time faculty appointment at a different institution than the Lead PI.

*Note: if the Co-PI does not currently have a full-time faculty position, the applicant must include a formal offer letter for the Co-PI **at the time of LOI submission**, which confirms a start date prior to the start of the grant term.*

- The Co-PI must make a specific time commitment to the project (the level of effort cannot be zero-0%).
- Is not required to be a U.S. Citizen or resident.

Lead PI and Co-PI Institutions

- Lead Institution must be a non-profit institution or organization located in the US or Canada.
- Co-PI institution must be a non-profit institution anywhere in the world.
- Both the Lead PI and Co-PI Institutions must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NCI, etc.)
- Lead Institution serves 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 [ABTA Funding Opportunities webpage](#).

Section III. Award Information and Grant Term

Grants are awarded for \$200,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for two years. No indirect costs are allowed.

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 Research Collaboration 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.
 - *The Lead PI of Research Collaboration Grants are required to present the results of the research project at the annual ABTA National Conference held in the fall following the conclusion of the 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 Research Collaboration Grant:

- Indirect costs (refer to the ABTA's Policies & Procedures).
- 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 Research Collaboration Grant is designed to identify the projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the grant mechanism guidelines without 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 both the Lead PI and Co-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 ABTA Research Collaboration Grants must be completed online through the [proposalCENTRAL](#) website.

Recommended tip: Institutional signature is required for your Research Collaboration Grant LOI. After you complete the Title Page, Applicant/Lead PI, and the Institution & Contacts sections in the portal (Sections 1,4, and 5, respectively), download the template for the signature pages (refer to Section V – LOI Submission Instructions of the RFA) to begin gathering the required signatures.

Accessing initiated/avoiding duplicate proposals:

Avoid initiating multiple proposals by editing/viewing the same proposal. You can save your progress multiples times before submitting the final proposal. To access an initiated proposal:

1. Go to <https://proposalcentral.com/> and log in on the “APPLICANT OR AWARDEE” tab.
2. Click on the “Proposals” tab to see the list of your initiated proposals.
3. Click on “Edit” next to the proposal you would like to edit or view.
4. NOTE: Please delete duplicate initiated proposals to avoid any confusion when submitting or receiving emails from the ABTA.

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. *Targeting Drivers of Treatment Resistance in Stem-Like Cells in Gliomas*).
- A project title must be entered and saved before accessing additional sections.
- Please indicate how you heard about the grant opportunity and if you are interested in receiving more information about the ABTA and other opportunities to get involved.

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

3) Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal: If personnel other than the Applicant/Lead PI upload documents or make other edits to the application, please 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.

- 4) **Applicant/Lead 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/Lead 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 at any time using the following URL: <https://orcid.org/>.
- 5) **Institution & Contacts:** The Institution (also referred to as Lead Institution) is the institution where the Applicant/Lead PI will carry out the research project. Institution information will automatically populate from the Institution Profile of the Applicant's/Lead 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.
- 6) **Key Personnel:** Key Personnel include the Co-PI, major contributors, collaborators, and co-investigators, 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, 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 Key Personnel by entering the email address of the person you wish to add.
 - Select the appropriate Role for that person from the available drop-down menu. Also enter in the proposed level of effort on this project.

*Note: The Applicant/Lead 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, and/or Collaborators 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 only. Do not list them in the Key Personnel section.*

The Co-PI and other Key Personnel are encouraged to add their ORCID ID to their own Professional Profile in proposalCENTRAL. Their ORCID ID will then be added to the application in the Key Personnel section.

- 7) **Research Focus:** Select the primary area of research, 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.
- **Biosketches:**
 - Research biosketches are required **only** for the Applicant/Lead PI and Co-PI named in the application at the time of LOI submission.
 - Biosketches should **not** be included for other Key Personnel, Non-Key Personnel, Collaborators, Research Technicians, etc. Biosketches for Key Personnel will be required at the Full Application stage.

- Biosketches must be no longer than five pages each, in [NIH standard format](#) (such as Arial, 11 point or larger). As applicable, biosketches may include, in Section A, details from ongoing and completed research projects from the past three years.
- **Letters of Support:** A Letter of Support for the LOI is required **only** from the Co-PI. The letter should include the information outlined below and should not contain data/figures/tables/graphs, preliminary data, methods, background nor significant details that are expected to be found in the applicant's Project Narrative. Letters of Support from the Lead Institution, Co-PI Institution, and other collaborators will be required at the time of full application submission. All letters of support **MUST** be signed and on institutional letterhead.
 - **Letter of Support from Co-PI:** The letter should describe their commitment to this research and their experience and expertise that will contribute to the overarching goals of the project.
- **Project Narrative (not to exceed 3 pages, 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 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: No larger than 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.
 - **Project Narrative Content (3-page limit):**
 - **Project Team Description:** Briefly summarize the proposed frequency and form of communication among the Lead PI and Co-PI, including how long they have been collaborating. Describe the larger team, if applicable, including roles and responsibilities and the approximate percentage of time that each investigator will contribute to the proposed project. Key collaborator roles should also be included in this description.
 - **Project Description:** The Lead PI and Co-PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines the hypothesis(es), specific aims, including resources necessary to support the success of the research project, and scientific approach/methodology 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 Research Collaboration 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 of the work on the brain tumor field and clearly explain how the

success of this project would change paradigms in the diagnosis or treatment of patients with brain tumors, if successful.

- **Cited Publications (not included in the 3-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>

Applicants are fully responsible for the content of their proposal, including parts that were produced by an Artificial Intelligence tool. Please refer to the ABTA's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence for Grant Applications and Peer Review, located on the ABTA Funding Opportunities page, for more information.

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

Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

- 1) **Applicant Demographics:** The ABTA collects demographic information for analysis of its grant programs and outreach efforts. This section is required. Reviewers do not have access to your demographic information.
- 2) **Validate:** Validate is an essential step for the system to check for the required components of the application. An application cannot be submitted until all required data and attachments are included and the validation step is complete.
- 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 Research Collaboration Grant LOI signature page:

- **Applicant/Lead 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 an administrative review process 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 undergo 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 ABTA's research mission 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 Research Collaboration 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 brain tumor research?
- If the aims of the project are achieved, will the proposed project inform and have a demonstrated impact on improving the lives of brain tumor patients?

Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:

- Is the proposed project multi-disciplinary, incorporating multiple components such as basic, translational, clinical and epidemiological research?
- 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?
- Are potential problems and alternative strategies adequately addressed?

Investigator(s) and Project Team:

- Are the Applicant/Lead PI and Co-PI well suited to successfully conduct the research project?
- Do they have the appropriate experience and training?
- Is the composition of the team ideal to carry out the proposed project?
- Do the PIs have the appropriate track record of accomplishments and leadership to successfully implement the proposed research and overcome obstacles that might arise?
- Is there evidence that the team can successfully work together?

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

Section VIII. General Requirements

Please refer to the ***Policies and Procedures for ABTA Research Grants and Fellowships*** located on the [ABTA Funding Opportunities page](#) for all grant requirements, including:

- Grants are payable to the Lead Institution only. Should the grant be awarded, the Lead Institution is responsible for disbursement of funds to the Co-PI Institution and for ensuring the Co-PI Institution is compliant with the ABTA Policies and Procedures.
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in an annual progress and financial report at the anniversary of the grant start date and then a final progress report and financial report at the end of the grant term.
- The Lead PI is required to present a poster during ABTA's National Conference held in the fall at 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://osp.od.nih.gov/scientific-data-sharing/>.
- Letters of Support from the Dean or Chair of the department for the Lead PI and Co-PI will be **required** as part of the full application at the Full Application stage. Further information will be provided in the full application instructions.
- If an applicant is concurrently applying for an ABTA Discovery Grant during the same grant cycle, please note that only one grant (either Research Collaboration or Discovery) will be awarded.
- 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 for a question you have, please contact the Research Programs Department by email or phone. A member of the Research Programs staff 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 ABTA Research Grants and Fellowships***, which can be found on the [ABTA Funding Opportunities](#) page.

ABTA Research Programs Department

Email: grants@abta.org

Phone: 773-577-8742