



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.

Basic Research Fellowships

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. 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 ABTA Basic Research Fellowships.

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 Project Start Date:

September 1, 2023

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. For more than 45 years, the ABTA has supported early-career investigators, contributing to modern brain tumor research and the scientific community to advance the scientific understanding and medical treatment of brain tumors. Today, ABTA 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 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 Basic Research Fellowship

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from postdoctoral fellows embarking on careers dedicated to brain tumor research.

- ABTA Basic Research Fellowships provide up to \$100,000 in support over a two-year period (see Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Grants support basic research projects that have significant potential to advance our understanding of the causes, effects, diagnosis, and treatment of brain tumors.
- The funding mechanism is appropriate for both basic and clinical fellows conducting laboratory or field-based research projects.
- Applicants should be on-track to pursue a career in brain tumor research with a mentor who is currently conducting brain tumor research. The mentor should have a demonstrated history of brain tumor research and mentorship in the field.

The goal of the program is to encourage talented, early-career scientists to enter, or remain in, the field of brain tumor research. The ABTA aims to ensure a continuum of dedicated, well-trained brain tumor researchers that will emerge as the next generation of leaders in the field.

We seek proposals addressing all types of brain tumors, 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
- Diagnosis
- Drug Delivery
- Etiology
- Genetics
- Imaging
- Molecular/Genetic Epidemiology
- Novel Therapeutics
- Risk assessment

Note: Applications proposing projects that are out of the scope of the Basic Research Fellowships will also be administratively withdrawn, including:

- Applications that do not directly relate to brain tumor research.
- Studies focusing on quality of life or survivorship issues.
- Research that is defined as clinical research or research for which an investigator directly interacts with human subjects/patients.

Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/Principal Investigators (PIs), Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship.

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

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

Applicant/ Principal Investigator (PI) Requirements:

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO or equivalent, **at the time of Letter of Intent (LOI) submission.**
- **At the time of Full Application submission,** PhDs must be no more than five years post-completion of his/her doctoral degree as determined by date of degree confirmation (i.e. cannot have completed their doctoral degree prior to March 30, 2019). This must be verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support. A documented leave of absence may be excluded from the five-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 five years but who believe they are eligible must contact ABTA at grants@abta.org before submitting their application to verify their eligibility.

Note: If the candidate has multiple doctoral degrees, the last conferred doctoral degree will be used to determine eligibility.

- MDs must be no more than five years post-residency training at the time of full application submission. The same exceptions noted above apply to MDs.

Note: Time spent in medical specialty or subspecialty training is not considered part of medical residency and will be counted against the five-year window.

- Must not hold a faculty appointment.
- Must be working at the Lead Mentor's institution **at the time of Full Application submission.** If the applicant is not at the Lead Mentor's institution at the time of LOI submission, the Lead Mentor **MUST** confirm the applicant's start date in the letter of support.
- Must conduct the proposed research and training at the Lead Mentor's institution, which may be located anywhere in the world.
- Must not currently be or have previously been a fellow on an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.
- May only submit ONE Basic Research Fellowship application per funding cycle.

- Must commit at least 75% effort to the research project, which must be verified in the Lead Mentor's Letter of Support.

Lead Mentor Requirements:

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

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Lead Institution.
- Must be at the same institution as the Applicant/PI no later than the Full Application submission date.
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research.
- Can be a Lead Mentor on only ONE 2024 Basic Research Fellowship application.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

Co-Mentor Requirements:

A Co-Mentor is optional for all applicants, limit of one.

- 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 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 2024 Basic Research Fellowship applications.

Lead Institution Requirements:

- Must be a non-profit institution or organization anywhere in the world.
- Must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NINDS, etc.).
NCI-approved fellows may apply. For inquiries related to this, please contact grants@abta.org.
- 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 [ABTA Funding Opportunities](#) webpage. *Not applicable to NCI.*

Section III. Award Information and Grant Term

The American Brain Tumor Association's Basic Research Fellowship provides up to \$50,000 per year for a total of \$100,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for two years.

Budgets are NOT required at the time of LOI submission. However, applicants should review and understand the budget guidelines described in Section 6 of the ABTA's Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, 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 Basic Research Fellowship may include:

- Salary/stipend support and fringe benefits for the Applicant/PI only.
- Equipment and Supply costs.
 - *No single equipment item may exceed \$5,000.*
- Travel costs for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.

- *Basic Research Fellowship recipients are required to present the results of their research project on a poster at the ABTA National Conference held in the fall near 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 the PI only) for curating and documenting data.

Expenses NOT allowed or funded by an ABTA Basic Research Fellowship:

- Indirect costs (refer to the ABTA’s Policies & Procedures).
- Salary/fringe support for Mentors or other personnel.
- 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 Basic Research Fellowship 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 Applicant/PI and Lead Mentor’s responsibility to ensure that the proposed plans are carefully developed and articulated. An invitation to submit a Full Application will be sent to select applicants following review of the LOI. All LOIs for Basic Research Fellowships must be completed online through the [proposalCENTRAL](#) website.

Recommended tip: Institutional signature is required for your Basic Research Fellowship LOI. After you complete the Title Page, Applicant/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 but 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 in this section 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 the Proposal (optional):** If personnel other than the Applicant/PI will upload documents or make 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/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) 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/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.
 - 6) **Key Personnel:** Key Personnel include mentors, major contributors, and 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, 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 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. Examples of Non-Key Personnel include Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows other than the Applicant/PI, Research Technicians, and/or Collaborators who will work on the project, but whose expertise or resources are not essential to the execution of the project. The role(s) of Non-Key Personnel should be described in the budget justification only. Do not list them in the Key Personnel section.*

Lead Mentors, Co-Mentors, 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, applicable tumor type(s), and target population for the research proposed from the menus and click the “+” buttons 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/PI, Lead Mentor, and Co-Mentor (if applicable) named in the application.
 - Biosketches should **not** be included for other Key Personnel, Non-Key Personnel, or Collaborators for the LOI. 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:** Letters of Support for the LOI are required **only** from the Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable). Letters should include 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 Institution and 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 Lead Mentor:** The letter of support from the Lead Mentor and should include the following:
 - Detail of their commitment to mentoring the Applicant/PI as well as their experience mentoring other postdoctoral or junior faculty level researchers.
 - Verification that the Applicant/PI is no more than five years post-completion of their doctoral degree.
 - Confirmation that the Applicant/PI is able to commit at least 75% effort to the research project over the two-year grant term.
 - **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor (required if a Co-Mentor is included on the application):** A separate letter of support from the Co-Mentor should describe their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.
 - **Project Narrative (not to exceed three pages, including figures and tables. Page limit does not include Cited Publications):** The LOI narrative must adhere to ALL of the 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 criteria.
 - 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 (three-page limit):**
- **Project Description:** The Applicant/PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines 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 Fellowship, 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 research will ultimately impact brain tumor patients and caregivers, if successful.
 - **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 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 using 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 Basic Research Fellowship LOI Signature Pages:

- **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
- **Lead Mentor**
- **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 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 Basic Research Fellowship 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, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved?

Scientific Approach, Merit and Feasibility:

- 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?

Investigators:

- Are the Applicant/PI and Mentor(s) well suited to successfully conduct the research project?
- Do they have appropriate research experience and training?

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.
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in an annual progress and financial report and also in a final progress report and financial report at the end of the grant term.
- Grantees are required to present a poster during 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 included as part of 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 your department will be **required** as part of your 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.):

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 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 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