



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

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: <http://www.abta.org/research/for-researchers/>

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Key Dates

Application Portal Opens:

November 8, 2023

Application Deadline:

January 18, 2024 by 12:00 p.m. noon 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 May 2, 2024

Earliest Start Date

June 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.
- Eligibility Clarification – Applicants can be enrolled in a MD/PhD program.
- 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 are 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 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 all brain tumor types, benign or malignant, primary or secondary (metastatic), and that will have an impact on pediatric, adult, or both 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/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.

Grants will be awarded to a Fellow (designated 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 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 a MD/PhD program.

Lead Mentor Requirements:

*Note: 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 2024 grant cycle.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

Co-Mentor Requirements (optional):

Note: 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 2024 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 [ABTA Funding Opportunities](#) web 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 following information is required to submit a complete application. The application follows a prescribed template which gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. Applications are reviewed on a competitive basis. It is the Applicant/PIs responsibility to ensure that the proposed plans are carefully developed and articulated. All applications for Medical Student Summer Fellowships must be completed online through the [proposalCENTRAL](#) website.

Recommended tip: Institutional signature is required for your Medical Student Summer Fellowship. 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) 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.

Application Components:

1) **Title Page:**

- The title is limited to 81 characters, 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 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 (RFA), the ABTA Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, 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.
- 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 anytime using the following URL: <https://orcid.org/>.
- 5) **Institution & Contacts:** The Institution (also referred to as Lead Institution) is the location 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. Please check 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 or not 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, 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 of Non-Key Personnel should be described in the budget justification section. Do not list them in the Key Personnel section.*

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) **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 in the text box provided, 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 in the text box provided, a scientific summary of the proposed research plan, including hypothesis and specific aims.
- **Research Focus Area:** Please 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:** Please select the most appropriate primary (required) and secondary (if applicable) CSO code(s) for the project from the available CSO code list. You may indicate the percentage weight for each code as it applies to your project. The primary CSO code weight and the secondary CSO code weight should add up to 100% total.

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, or other personnel (includes Consultant costs).
- Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow tuition costs.
- Visa costs.
- Indirect costs.
- Professional membership dues.

Budget Justification: In addition to providing an itemized budget, sufficient 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:** A budget summary tab will populate with the information you provide in the Budget Period Detail. No action is required for this step.

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:**
 - Research biosketches are required **only** for the Applicant/PI, Lead Mentor, and Co-Mentor (if applicable) named in the application.
 - 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 are required from the Lead Mentor, Lead Institution, and Co-Mentor (if applicable). The letters should focus on the areas listed below but 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. All letters of support **MUST** be signed and on institutional letterhead.
 - **Letter of Support from Lead Mentor:** A letter of support must be submitted by the Lead Mentor, which includes the following:
 - A description of their role in the research project to include detailing their commitment to the applicant's training, and their experience mentoring other students, postdoctoral fellows, or junior faculty level researchers.
 - Comments on 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.
 - **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor (if applicable):** A separate letter of support must be submitted by the Co-Mentor (if a Co-Mentor is on the application) describing their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.
 - **Letter of Support from Research Institution:** A letter of support must be submitted by the department head, dean, chair, or other authorized departmental representative from the department at the institution where the proposed research will be conducted. 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 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 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 (three-page limit):**
 - **Research Project Plan:** The Applicant/PI must propose a succinct project that clearly outlines the background, hypothesis(es), specific aims, and scientific approach that will be taken to address each specific aim.
 - **Impact Statement:** Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact the research project will have on the brain tumor field and the importance for the diagnosis or treatment of patients with brain tumors.
 - **Career Development Plan:** The Applicant/PI should describe their career goals and how this opportunity will help them develop the skills and experience necessary to achieve career advancement. The Applicant/PI should also describe their interaction with the Lead Mentor and Co-Mentor (if applicable).
 - **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. Please note that, while the data sharing plan will be visible to the peer review committee, 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.

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 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) **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 in 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 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. Applications that do not meet the requirements will be administratively withdrawn and will not undergo scientific review.

During the second step, all eligible Applications are reviewed by an external committee of scientific reviewers with appropriate expertise. The committee will 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 using the following criteria:

Research Question and Significance:

- 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?

Applicant:

- Is the Applicant/PI well suited to the project?
- Does the Applicant/PI present clear, feasible goals for developing the necessary research skills needed?

Training Environment:

- Is there an adequate description of the research institution in which the Applicant/PI training will be integrated?

- Are the institutional support, equipment, and other resources necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed research clearly available to the Applicant/PI?

Mentor(s):

- Does/do the proposed mentor(s) possess the research and training expertise and the time needed to develop and successfully implement the summer research proposed?

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?

Section VII. 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 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://osp.od.nih.gov/scientific-data-sharing/>.
- 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. Details will be provided at the end of the grant term; however, 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. In addition to recognition for their outstanding work, recipients receive an additional \$1,000 unrestricted 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. 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.

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)

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