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

2020 Request for Applications

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

Application Portal Opens:
October 30, 2019

Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:
December 4, 2019 by 12:00 p.m. CST. No late LOIs will be accepted.

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow for technical difficulties, time zone differences, sickness, travel, etc.

*Please note: Letters of Intent are mandatory for ABTA Basic Research Fellowships.*

Letter of Intent Decision:
On or around February 12, 2020

Full Application Due:
On or around March 18, 2020

Applicant Notification:
On or around July 29, 2020

Earliest Project Start Date:
August 20, 2020
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.

Full Text: Request for Application (RFA), ABTA 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 also 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). 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
Research that is 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 Lead Mentor. Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are not allowed for this mechanism.

Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI) Requirements:

- Must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DrPH, DO or equivalent, **at the time of Letter of Intent submission**.
- PhDs must be no more than four years post-completion of his/her doctoral degree **at the time of Full Application submission**, as determined by date of degree confirmation. This must be verified in the Lead Mentor’s Letter of Support.
  
  *Please 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 four years post-residency training at the time of full application submission.
  
  *Please note: Time spent in medical specialty or subspecialty training is not considered part of medical residency and will be counted against the four-year window.*
- Must not currently 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 verified in the Lead Mentor’s Letter of Support.

Lead Mentor Requirements:

*Please note: 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 2020 Basic Research Fellowship grant application.
• Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

Co-Mentor Requirements:
*Please note: A Co-Mentor is optional for all applicants*
• Must hold a 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.

Lead Institution Requirements:
• Must be a non-profit institution or organization anywhere in the world.
• Must not be a governmental institution (i.e. NIH, NCI, etc.).
• Must serve as the administrator of the grant funds and will hold responsibility for the management of the budget and submission of all required documents and reports.
• Must agree to adhere to the ABTA’s Policies and Procedures for Research Grants and Fellowships, located at the top of the ABTA Funding Opportunities webpage.

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.
  *Please note: No single equipment item may exceed $5,000.*
• Travel costs for purposes specifically related to the proposed research project.
  *Please note: 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 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 proposal 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.

Tips:

- Throughout the portal you will see ? icons in several of the blue instructional boxes. Click on them for additional details and helpful information to complete sections of the LOI.

- 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.

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.

2) Download Templates & Instructions: The 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: If personnel other than the Applicant/PI will be uploading documents or making edits to the application, please add their email address here and select the appropriate level of access (View, Edit, or Administrator) for each person you would like to give permission to access your application.

4) Applicant/PI: This page will 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 at any time using the following URL: https://orcid.org/.

5) Institution & Contacts: The Institution (also referred to as Lead Institution and is where the Applicant/PI will carry out the research project) information will automatically pre-load from the Institution Profile of the Applicant’s/PI’s primary institution. Please check that
the information pre-loaded correctly for each field. 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, measureable 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.

**Please 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 can easily be replaced without affecting the functionality of the grant or significantly impacting the execution of the project. The role(s) 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) **Research Focus:** Please 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.
  - Biosketches must be no longer than five pages each, in NIH standard format, and should include all current, pending, and completed research funding within the past three years.

- **Letters of Support:** Letters of support for the LOI are required only from the Lead Mentor, Lead Institution, and Co-Mentor (if applicable). Letters of support from 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:** A signed letter of support must be submitted by 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 four years post-completion of their doctoral degree.
• Confirmation that the Applicant/PI is able to commit at least 75% effort to the research project.

➢ **Letter of Support from Co-Mentor (required if a Co-Mentor is included on the application):** A signed, separate letter of support must be submitted by the Co-Mentor, describing their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.

➢ **Letter of Support from the Lead Institution:** A separate letter of support must be submitted and signed by the department head, dean or chair 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 research.

• **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.

➢ **Document Format:** Please follow the formatting requirements below.
  - Must be written in English.
  - Must be saved to proposalCENTRAL in PDF Format.
  - Font size: 12 point or larger. Figure legends may be 9 point or larger.
  - Font type: Times New Roman. Biosketches using the NIH template can use Arial.
  - Spacing: No more than six lines of type within a vertical inch.
  - Page Size: No larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches.
  - 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.
  - **Career Development Plan:** The Applicant/PI should describe their career goals and how they intend to develop the skills and experience necessary to achieve career advancement during the grant term.
  - **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):** No more than 10 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](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-050.html).
Applicants are advised to check all uploaded documents for accuracy and completeness by clicking on each document listed and viewing it in the grant portal.

Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

9) **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.

*Please note: proposalCENTRAL is partnering with Enago to offer copy editing and translation services. Enago services are optional for all applicants and are not endorsed by the ABTA.*

10) **Signature Pages**: Print the signature pages using the “Print Signature Pages” button. Obtain the required signatures, save the signature pages as one PDF file and upload it to your application in the “Attachments” section.

**Required Signatures for Basic Research Fellowship LOI Signature Pages:**
- Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)
- Lead Mentor
- Signing Official (designated by Lead Institution)

11) **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?
- Is the necessary infrastructure in place to support the project?
- Are potential problems and alternative strategies adequately addressed?

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

**Career Development Potential:**
- Does the Applicant/PI present a clear and feasible plan for developing the necessary research, scientific, management, and leadership skills to achieve career advancement during the grant term?

**Section VIII. General Requirements**

Please note the following additional grant requirements:
- 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 Annual 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 award.
- 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 application at 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.):*
**ABTA Research Programs Department**
Email: grants@abta.org
Phone: 773-577-8742