



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.

# Discovery Grants

## 2021 Request for Applications

**American Brain Tumor Association**  
8550 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 550  
Chicago, IL 60631-3225  
**For questions, email:** [grants@abta.org](mailto:grants@abta.org)  
**Website:** [www.abta.org/for-researchers](http://www.abta.org/for-researchers)

## Contents

Key Dates.....	3
ABTA’s Research Program .....	4
Request for Application (RFA), ABTA Discovery Grant.....	4
Section I. Funding Opportunity Description.....	4
Section II. Eligibility Information .....	5
Section III. Award Information and Grant Term.....	6
Section IV. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Information .....	6
Section V. LOI Submission Instructions .....	9
Section VI. LOI Review Process .....	10
Section VII. LOI Review Criteria.....	10
Section VIII. General Requirements.....	11
Section IX. Contacts .....	11

## Key Dates

### **Application Portal Opens:**

November 4, 2020

### **Letter of Intent (LOI) Due:**

December 9, 2020, by 12:00 p.m. (noon) Central Standard Time. 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 the ABTA's Discovery Grants.*

### **Letter of Intent Decision:**

On or around February 17, 2021

### **Full Application Due:**

On or around March 24, 2021

### **Applicant Notification:**

On or around July 28, 2021

### **Earliest Grant Start Date:**

On or around August 20, 2021

## 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 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), ABTA Discovery Grant

### Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

The American Brain Tumor Association seeks applications from faculty who propose high-risk/high-impact projects with the potential to change current diagnostic or treatment paradigms for adult and pediatric brain tumor care.

- ABTA Discovery Grants provide up to \$50,000 in support over a one-year period (see Section III for more information on the grant award and term).
- Grants are intended to encourage the development of new approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors 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.
- The funding mechanism specifically encourages novel research by allowing researchers to conduct the early scientific studies needed to secure additional/future funding for their projects.
- 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

*Please note: Applications proposing projects that do not directly relate to brain tumor research will be administratively withdrawn from consideration.*

## Section II. Eligibility Information

Applicants/Principal Investigators, Mentors, and Institutions must conform to the eligibility criteria below to apply for an ABTA Discovery Grant.

Grants will be awarded to a single Principal Investigator (PI). 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 (LOI) submission.**
- **At the start of the grant term**, applicants must hold a full-time faculty position and cannot have held a full-time faculty appointment before August 20, 2011.

*Please 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 Full Application 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 only submit ONE Discovery Grant Letter of Intent per funding cycle.
- May not be a PI on another ABTA grant at **the start of the grant term.**

**Lead Mentor Requirements** (required for Applicants/PIs that are within the first five years of their first faculty appointment; optional for Applicants/PIs beyond five years of a faculty appointment):

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the same institution as the Applicant/PI.
- Must currently conduct brain tumor research.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or resident.

**Co-Mentor Requirements** (one Co-Mentor is optional for applicants):

- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment at a non-profit institution or organization anywhere in the world, 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.

**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 Discovery Grant provides up to \$50,000 in direct costs (salary support and research expenses) for one year.

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 Discovery Grant may include:**

- Salary/stipend support, which may include fringe benefits.
- 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: Discovery Grant recipients are required to present the results of their research project on a poster at the ABTA's P National Conference held in the fall following 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 Discovery Grant:**

- No indirect costs are allowed (refer to the ABTA's Policies & Procedures).
- Salary/fringe support for Mentors.
- 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 Discovery 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 the Applicant/PI'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 Discovery Grants must be completed online through the [proposalCENTRAL](#) website.

*Recommended tip: Institutional signature is required for your Discovery Grant 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. 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:** The Request for Applications (RFA), [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 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 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 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 not required for each Key Personnel you list.
    - 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 any Non-Key Personnel should be described in the budget justification section only. Do not list them in the Key Personnel section.*

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:** Please select the primary area of research, principal tumor type, any additional 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](#) (Arial, 11 point or larger), 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 Mentor(s), if applicable, and Lead Institution. They 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. Letters of support from other collaborators will be required at the time of Full Application submission.
    - **Letter of Support from Lead Mentor (required if a Lead Mentor is included on the application):** A signed letter of support must be submitted by the Lead Mentor, on institutional letterhead, which describes their commitment to mentoring the Applicant/PI as well as their experience mentoring other postdoctoral or junior faculty level researchers.
    - **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, on institutional letterhead, describing their role and commitment to advancing the career of the applicant.
    - **Letter of Support from the 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 be on institutional letterhead and include the following information:
      - Confirm the date and specific title of Applicant/PI’s current faculty appointment.
      - Number of years the Applicant/PI has held a faculty appointment at the current institution.
      - Description of the available research space, protected time for research, and the availability of equipment and other resources necessary for the successful conduct of 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 uploaded to proposalCENTRAL in PDF format.
  - Font size: 12 point or larger. Figure legends may be 9 point or larger.
  - Font type: Times New Roman.
  - 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 Discovery Grant, include critical next steps that will be pursued for the success of the research.
  - **Impact Statement:** Using language for a non-scientific audience, describe the impact the research project will have on the brain tumor field, and clearly explain how this new approach would change paradigms in the diagnosis or treatment of patients with brain tumors, 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 advised to check all uploaded documents for completeness by clicking on each document listed.***

## Section V. LOI Submission Instructions

- 9) **Applicant Demographics:** The ABTA collects demographic information for analysis of its grant programs and outreach efforts. This section is optional and reviewers will not have access to your responses should you decide to provide demographic information.
- 10) **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.*
- 11) **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.

*Please 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 Discovery Grant LOI Signature Pages:**

- **Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)**
- **Lead Mentor (if applicable)**
- **Signing Official (designated by Lead Institution)**

12) **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 Discovery Grant 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 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?

#### ***Investigator(s):***

- Are the Applicant/PI, Mentor(s) (if applicable), collaborators and other researchers well suited to the project?
- Do they have appropriate research experience and training?

**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 note the following additional grant requirements:

- Grants are payable to the Lead Institution only.
- Grantees are required to report on their research outcomes in a final progress 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 a requirement for the LOI phase, 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.
- We recommend applicants add "grants@abta.org" to their email 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 our team will respond within 24-48 hours.*

**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's "For Researchers" webpage.

**ABTA Research Programs Department**

Email: grants@abta.org

Phone: 773-577-8742