

## Instructions for Young Investigator Award Application

### Introduction

The National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) was organized in 1957 in the state of Minnesota as a voluntary non-profit health organization. In its continuing efforts to find the cause, treatments, and cure for the ataxias, the National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) provides limited, short-term financial support of ataxia research.

NAF's Research Grant Program funds only the best research proposals that are most likely to result in research breakthroughs that can be applied to diagnosis, better patient care, or treatments for people with ataxia.

The National Ataxia Foundation uses **proposalCENTRAL** to facilitate the grant application and review process. This document includes NAF policies and guidelines relevant to its research program, however the instructions to submit a letter of intent and the full application is on the **proposalCENTRAL** website.

### Description

The Young Investigator Award was created to encourage early stage clinical and scientific investigators to pursue a career in the field of ataxia research. It is our hope that ataxia research will be invigorated by the work of young, talented individuals supported by this award. Applications for any form of ataxia, including the SCAs, are accepted for this award.

The average funds granted will be up to \$50,000. This award will be made to the sponsoring institution and can be used as salary support or for direct research expenses. Awards are for direct costs only and cannot be used for indirect costs or institutional overhead.

### Guidelines

1. Indirect costs are prohibited from being applied to NAF grant awards.
2. Funds can be used as salary support or for direct research expenses.
3. Candidates must have attained an MD or PhD degree, and have an appointment as a junior faculty member, senior post-doc, or clinical fellow. Individuals at the Associate Professor level are not eligible. Clinicians must have finished their residency no more than five (5) years prior to applying.
4. The sponsoring institution must agree in writing to the following provision: the young investigator (MD or PhD) must be free to allocate approximately half time (50%) for ataxia related research.
5. Non-U.S. citizens are eligible to apply for a Young Investigator award. Young Investigator grant applications are accepted from U.S. and international institutions.

6. The National Ataxia Foundation will retain the right to unilaterally cancel any awards for non-compliance or non-performance.
7. Awards are not transferable.
8. No-cost extensions (NCE) will be considered for extenuating circumstances and require approval from NAF's Research Director. Please submit requests for an NCE to [beth@ataxia.org](mailto:beth@ataxia.org).

## proposalCENTRAL

To utilize the proposalCENTRAL online portal to submit letters of intent and applications, a user account needs to be created. Use this weblink <https://proposalcentral.com> to create an account. Creating an account can be done any time prior to submitting a Letter of Intent.

## Letter of Intent

Using the proposalCENTRAL online portal, please submit a full title and a one-page abstract of your research proposal, on or before **September 28, 2021**. You will receive an email when your Letter of Intent is approved, then you will be able to access the proposalCENTRAL portal to submit your application.

The primary purpose of the LOI abstract is to better understand the types of research projects that will be submitted to select and secure reviewers who are leaders in the ataxia field and have the particular focus and research acumen to review the final proposals.

## Submission of Application

Using the proposalCENTRAL online portal, please submit the full Young Investigator grant application on or before **October 26, 2021**. The term of the proposed project should be from March 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023. The full application will require basic information and the following attachments:

- Lay Summary
- Scientific Abstract
- Budget Details
- Background and Significance (1 page maximum)
- Biosketch
- Literature Cited
- Preliminary Studies (1 page maximum)
- Publication List
- Research Plan (3 page maximum)
- Signed Signature Pages
- Summary of Specific Aims (1 page maximum)
- Institutional banking instructions for domestic or international partners
- A letter from the mentor should outline a program of studies for the applicant and delineate the candidate's future. This letter of support should include details regarding resources available to the candidate and indicate the mentor's involvement and commitment to the applicant's research. Applicants may have more than one mentor, if appropriate.

## Review Dates

Review by Medical Research Advisory Board takes place late December through early January.

Written notification of awards will be sent in late February 2022. *Please do not call or email NAF about the status of your grant applicant.*

## Review

All applications are reviewed and evaluated by a review committee, appointed by NAF's Research Director. Members of NAF's Medical and Research Advisory Board participate in the review. The review committee will score and prioritize all grants received by the deadline and make funding recommendations. The NAF Board of Directors will consider the recommendations and make the final approval and funding determinations.

Funding of awards is based on availability of funds, the priority score assigned to each application, innovation, and the relevance to the ataxias. Applications with high scores in relevance to ataxia and scientific merit will receive higher priority.

## Disbursement of Funds

Awards are for one year only. Checks or electronic transfers will be issued in February and sent directly to the institution of the funded researcher named in the application. Electronic payment is preferred. Non-funded applicants will also be notified in February.

## Change in Status of Awarded

Awards are to remain solely with the designated awardee and may not be transferred to any other personnel. If a recipient decides not to continue work in ataxia research, the award will be terminated. In the event that NAF terminated an award, the award amount will be pro-rated for the number of months it was in effect, and the pro-rated unused funds shall be returned to NAF. If an investigator changes institutions, the award may be transferred, contingent upon the successor institution's commitment to support the research for the full remaining term of the award.

## Publications

When a paper or poster is published or presented before a scientific organization by an awardee, based on the work supported by an NAF grant, an electronic copy of the paper or a description of the presentation should be sent to the National Ataxia Foundation. All papers, posters and press releases shall carry a credit line to the National Ataxia Foundation. In addition, a copy of any press release regarding the study funded by NAF should also be e-mailed to NAF at [beth@ataxia.org](mailto:beth@ataxia.org).

## Reports

A final scientific report and lay summary is to be submitted to the National Ataxia Foundation within four (4) months of completion of the research project. The scientific report is reviewed by NAF's Medical Research Advisory Board but is not made public.

The National Ataxia Foundation takes seriously its responsibility to report to its members on the use of their research contributions, the layperson final summary will be shared with the organization's members and posted on NAF's website. The summary must be written in such a manner as to be understood by the average layperson and should not contain privileged or unpublished information.

A full financial report detailing how grant award funds were utilized is due 4 months after end of project.

## Definitions

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs (sometimes known as Facilities and Administrative costs) are defined as costs incurred when conducting or supporting research and service, but which cannot be readily identified as benefiting research projects. Examples of indirect costs include, but are not limited to:

- Plant operation and maintenance: utilities, janitorial services, routine maintenance, and repairs, etc.
- Depreciation or use allowance: for buildings and equipment
- General administration and general expense: accounting, payroll, administrative offices, etc.
- Sponsored project administration: personnel and other costs of offices whose responsibility is the administration of sponsored projects
- Departmental administration expenses: administrative costs at the college and departmental levels

## **NAF Communication Outlets**

The title of each study funded by NAF, the name of the principal investigator, institution, city, and state will be published on our web page, in our newsletter, annual report, social media pages, and wherever NAF feels appropriate.

Each grant application must include a lay summary that will be used to show donors how their contributions to research has enhanced our understanding of ataxia. Lay summaries will be published in NAF communication channels and should not contain confidential information. The other parts of the grant application are considered confidential and will only be released to members of NAF's Medical Research Advisory Board members, the review committee, NAF staff and NAF Board of Directors.