

Introduction

The National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) is a patient-centered nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the development of treatments for ataxia and improving the lives of those affected by it. NAF is a global leader in driving ataxia research, fostering national and international collaboration to advance scientific discovery. As part of its commitment to identifying causes, treatments, and potential cures for ataxia, NAF offers limited, short-term financial support through its Annual Research Grant Program.

Grant Description

The *Pioneer SCA3 Translational Research Award* is granted annually to independent researchers for outstanding proposals that aim to make meaningful advancements in the treatment and care of individuals with Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 3 (SCA3). While proposals may include components related to other forms of ataxia, the primary focus must be on preclinical, translational or clinical research directly relevant to SCA3. Priority will be placed on proposals that aim to:

- Accelerate the development of disease-modifying therapies,
- Support clinical trial readiness and biomarker discovery,
- Bridge the gap between scientific discovery and therapeutic application, and
- Significantly advance or alter our mechanistic understanding of SCA3 pathogenesis.

Funding Details

- **Funding Period:** April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$100,000
- **Use of Funds:** Funds may be used for direct research expenses only.
 - *Personnel Costs:* No more than 50% of the award may be allocated to personnel expenses.
 - *Indirect Costs/Cost Sharing:* Not allowed.
- **No-Cost Extensions (NCE):** Considered only under extenuating circumstances and subject to NAF approval. See [NAF Annual Grant Program Policies](#) for more details.

Important Dates: All documents due by 11:59 pm Eastern time zone on the dates listed.

Grant Submissions	Open Date	Deadline	Decision Notification
Letter of Intent	June 16, 2025	August 15, 2025	early October 2025
Grant Application	Upon LOI approval	December 5, 2025	February 2026

Grant Policies

A detailed description of all NAF Annual Grant Program Policies can be found [here](#).

Eligibility & Guidelines

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Have completed postdoctoral training and hold a full-time appointment as a faculty member, clinical fellow, or senior scientist at an academic institution, non-profit organization, or for-profit company.
2. Applications are open to U.S. and international researchers; non-U.S. citizens are eligible.
3. Applicants who were the lead Principal Investigator (PI) on a funded NAF grant within the past two fiscal years are **ineligible**.
4. Applicants must be in good standing with any previous NAF awards, as defined by the [NAF Research Grants Policy](#).
5. Only **one application** may be submitted per applicant (as lead PI) per year; applicants should carefully select the program that best matches their career stage and research proposal.

Pioneer SCA3 Translational Research Award Funding Priorities

Proposals should demonstrate a clear path toward improving patient outcomes and advancing the field toward clinical solutions for SCA3. Interdisciplinary and collaborative projects, as well as those leveraging cutting-edge technologies or resources, are encouraged.

Priority will be given to proposals that address one or more of the following research areas:

1. **Therapeutic Development:**
 - RNA-targeted and gene editing therapies (e.g., siRNA, CRISPRi, ASOs)
 - Small molecule therapeutics
 - Drug repurposing efforts
2. **Biomarkers and Outcome Measures:**
 - Imaging biomarkers (e.g., MRI, PET)
 - Digital and wearable assessments of gait, balance, and coordination
 - Fluid biomarkers (CSF, plasma)
3. **Natural History and Clinical Trial Readiness:**
 - Epidemiological studies
 - Disease progression modeling
4. **Mechanistic Research:**
 - Neuronal and non-neuronal degenerative pathways specific to SCA3
 - Effects and toxicity of CAG repeat expansions
 - Protein aggregation and molecular chaperone function
 - Peripheral pathology
5. **Care Optimization and Symptom Management:**
 - Physical, occupational, and speech therapy interventions
 - Swallowing and vision therapies
 - Genetic counseling and family planning research

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: Create a ProposalCentral Account. NAF uses ProposalCentral for all grant submissions. New users must create an account at [ProposalCentral](#).

STEP 2: Submit Letter of Intent (LOI). Submit via ProposalCentral by **August 15, 2025 at 11:59 PM ET**. All LOIs will undergo competitive review based on alignment with NAF's mission, scientific merit and relevance to ataxia. Only the top 30–50% of LOIs will be invited to submit a full application. Notification of LOI outcomes will be sent by mid-October 2025.

LOI Components: More detailed directions can be found in the [Letter of Intent Instructions](#).

- 1. Statement of Need:** (*4 sentences or less*) Clearly describe the specific gap in the ataxia research or clinical care landscape that your project addresses.
- 2. Impact Statement:** (*4 sentences or less*) Describe the potential impact that your proposal may have on advancing our understanding of ataxia improving diagnosis or enhancing care and quality of life for individuals with ataxia.
- 3. Specific Aims:** (*1-page max*)
- 4. Biosketch:** (*5-page max*)

STEP 3: If invited, applicants must submit a complete application via ProposalCentral by December 5, 2025 at 11:59 PM ET. Full details and formatting requirements are outlined in *Grant Application Instructions*.

Full Grant Application Requirements:

- 1. Scientific Abstract** (*300-word limit*)
- 2. Lay Summary** (*200-word limit*)
- 3. Specific Aims** (*1-page max*)
- 4. Biosketch** (*5-page max*)
- 5. Research Plan** (*6-page max, including the following sub-sections*):
 - a. Background and Significance
 - b. Preliminary Studies
 - c. Research Strategy
- 6. Budget Details and Budget Justification**
- 7. References**

STEP 4: Funding Decisions. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by February 2026. Please refrain from contacting NAF regarding the status of your application.

For any questions about the LOI or Grant Application Process, please contact Aimee Alcott at Aimee@ataxia.org.