

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.

Description

NAF Post-doctoral Fellowship Awards provides one-year support for early-career researchers conducting innovative studies that can expand our understanding of the cause, pathogenesis, or treatment of hereditary, sporadic, and acquired ataxias. This fellowship is intended to foster the development of promising scientists by supporting mentored research experiences that build toward independent research careers. Funded projects are expected to generate high-quality preliminary data, strengthen research skills, and position fellows for future grant applications and academic advancement.

Funding Period and Amount

- **Funding Period:** April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$35,000
- **Use of Funds:** Funds may be used for direct research expenses only.
 - *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](#).

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Have completed a PhD, equivalent research degree program (e.g., PharmD, PsyD, ScD), formally combined MD/PhD program, or other combined professional/clinical and research doctoral degree (e.g., DDS/PhD).
2. Hold a full-time post-doctoral appointment at an academic institution, non-profit organization, or for-profit company.
3. Have completed at least one year of post-doctoral training, but not more than four years of post-doctoral training at the time of application.
4. Applications are open to U.S. and international researchers; non-U.S. citizens are eligible.
5. Applicants who were the lead Principal Investigator (PI) on a funded NAF grant within the past two fiscal years are **ineligible**.
6. Applicants who previously were awarded a NAF Post-doctoral Fellowship award are **ineligible**.
7. Applicants must be in good standing with any previous NAF awards, as defined by the [NAF Research Grants Policy](#).
8. 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.

Post-doctoral Fellowship Funding Priorities

The National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) is dedicated to fostering the next generation of scientists committed to advancing research that improves outcomes for individuals affected by ataxia. This fellowship supports promising early-career researchers as they deepen their expertise, generate preliminary data, and begin to establish independent research careers in the ataxia field. During this funding cycle, applications will be evaluated on the following areas:

1. Scientific Merit and Innovation

NAF supports projects that are innovative and have the potential to contribute meaningfully to our understanding of ataxia, regardless of disease subtype. This includes studies focused on:

- a. Fundamental mechanisms of disease,
- b. Model development and validation,
- c. Emerging therapeutic targets or strategies,
- d. And early-stage data collection that could serve as a foundation for future independent grant applications.

2. Demonstrated Commitment to Ataxia Research

Fellows must show a clear and sustained interest in ataxia research, whether through prior publications, training experiences, or mentorship. Proposals should reflect a genuine intention to build a long-term career focused on understanding and treating ataxia.

3. Training and Career Development

Proposals should emphasize how the fellowship will enhance the applicant's scientific training and professional development. Projects that offer strong mentorship, access to relevant research resources, and opportunities to build essential skills (e.g., grant writing, leadership, collaboration) are strongly encouraged.

The fellowship is intended to be a bridge to independence, helping recipients develop the skills, knowledge, and preliminary data necessary to become competitive for long-term research funding and establish themselves as leaders in the ataxia research community.

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.