

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 Overview

The NAF Research Seed Money Grant is a merit-based, nonrenewable award that provides support for new and innovative studies that advance understanding of the cause, pathogenesis, or treatment of hereditary, sporadic, and acquired ataxias. These grants serve as seed funding to assist established investigators during the early or pilot phases of research, or as supplemental funding for ongoing innovative projects demonstrating a critical need. It is expected that funded projects will generate preliminary data to support applications for larger grants from other funding sources.

Funding Details

- **Funding Period:** April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$50,000
- **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	Notification
Letter of Intent	June 16, 2025	August 15, 2025	early October 2025
Full Grant Application (by invitation only)	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. Completed postdoctoral training more than five years before start of funding term.
2. Hold a full-time appointment as a faculty member, clinician, or senior scientist at an academic institution, non-profit organization, or for-profit company.
3. Individuals from both U.S. and international institutions are eligible to apply. U.S. citizenship is not required.
4. Applicants who were the lead Principal Investigator (PI) on a funded NAF grant within the past two fiscal years are **ineligible**.
5. Applicants must be in good standing with any previous NAF awards, as defined by the [NAF Research Grants Policy](#).
6. 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.

Research Seed Grant Funding Priorities

NAF is committed to supporting research that advances scientific discovery and improves outcomes for all individuals living with ataxia, regardless of disease subtype. During this funding cycle, equal priority will be given to the following research focus areas:

- For proposals targeting **more common and better-characterized forms of ataxia (e.g., SCA types 1,2,3,6, FA)**, funded projects are expected to have strong translational potential. These projects should aim to:
 - Advance clinical trial readiness,
 - Support or accelerate the development of treatments,
 - Significantly alter our understanding of disease mechanisms or pathogenesis,
 - Or meaningfully impact clinical care and patient outcomes (speech, physical therapy, and other supportive therapies studies encouraged).
- For proposals focused on **rare, less characterized, unknown or newly identified forms of ataxia**, NAF encourages research that builds critical foundational knowledge. These projects may focus on any of the bullets above but may also aim to:
 - Address fundamental mechanistic questions,
 - Develop or validate novel disease models, without necessarily demonstrating immediate translational application.

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.