



ANNUAL GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This document outlines general content and formatting instructions for NAF grant applications. All applications are submitted through ProposalCentral.com. Grant applications should only be submitted to NAF if you have received an invitation to submit a full grant following competitive review of your submitted Letter of Intent. Refer to the specific grant mechanism instructions linked on NAF's website for more detailed information about grant scope, eligibility, deadlines, and funding information. Review all sections of your grant application for completeness and accuracy before submitting.

Full Grant Application Content and Formatting Guidelines:

1. **Scientific Abstract** (250 words max): Provide a scientific abstract of the project in technical terms that would be appropriate for experts in the field.
 - i. **Recommended Formatting Notes:**
 - The abstract should:
 - Briefly describe the problem being addressed and its relevance to ataxia.
 - State the main goal(s) or hypothesis of the project.
 - Summarize the key methods, experimental design, or approach you will use.
 - Highlight the anticipated results and how they will be evaluated.
 - Explain potential impacts of the work
 - Write in a single paragraph (no headings or bullet points).
 - Avoid unexplained jargon or abbreviations. If acronyms are used, spell them out at first mention.
 - If your grant is selected for funding, the Scientific Abstract will be made public. Do not include any proprietary or confidential information.
2. **Lay Summary** (200 words max): In a single paragraph, provide a lay summary of your project written in plain, non-scientific language that can be easily understood by a general audience.
 - i. **Recommended Formatting Notes:**
 - This summary should explain the purpose of the research, why it is important for people affected by ataxia, and the potential impact it may have on research, care, or treatment.
 - Write it as if you are describing your project to a non-scientist friend or family member, avoiding technical jargon and acronyms when possible.

- If your grant is selected for funding, this summary will be shared with NAF community members, including patients and their families. Do not include any proprietary or confidential information.

3. Keywords:

- i. **Disease Focus Areas:** Identify from the provided list the disease focus area(s) addressed in your project. Select at least one Keyword from this list that best matches your proposal. You may select more than one if needed.
- ii. **Research Key Words:** Identify research area(s) addressed in your project. Select at least one Keyword from this list that best matches your proposal. You may select more than one if needed.

4. **Specific Aims** (*1-page max*) Specific Aims submitted in the final grant should have few to no changes relative to the version that was submitted at the Letter of Intent stage. Minor edits can be made, but the overall content and goals should not significantly change. We strongly recommend ensuring the formatting matches that described in the Specific Aims Guidelines described in the [Letter of Intent Instructions](#).
5. **Biosketch** (*5-page max*) Please refer to the Biosketch Guidelines described in the [Letter of Intent Instructions](#).
6. **Research Plan** (*6-page max*) See detailed instructions in next section of this document.
7. **Budget Period Detail:** Input the estimated cost for each expense category using the table provided within the Budget section of your application on Proposal Central.
 - i. General Guidance:
 - Costs must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the proposed project.
 - Institutional facilities and administrative costs (indirects) are not allowed.
 - ii. Expense Categories:
 - **Personnel costs:** Please refer to the specific grant mechanism instructions for personnel and salary guidelines and restrictions.
 - **Non-personnel costs:**
 - Consultant Costs
 - Equipment
 - Supplies
 - Travel to Scientific Meetings
 - Other Expenses
8. **Budget Justification** (*3000 characters max*) The Budget Justification should explain and support the requested costs in your application. This section must be clear enough for reviewers to understand why each cost is necessary for the proposed research. Avoid vague justifications such as “to support research activities.” Be specific. Reviewers should be able to match each cost in your budget table to a clear explanation in the justification.
9. **Literature Cited:** Applicants must cite all references consistently. NAF accepts both Numbered (Vancouver) style or Author–Year (Harvard) style for in-line citations, but the chosen format must

be used throughout the application. References do not count toward the page limit. Examples of Number (Vancouver) Style are shown below:

❖ **Number (Vancouver) Style:** Citations are numbered in the order they appear in the text. Use superscript or brackets for in-text references.

- **In-text examples:**

- **Superscript:** ATXN3 aggregation has been observed in SCA3 models.^{1,2}
- **Bracketed:** ATXN3 aggregation has been observed in SCA3 models [1,2].

- **Reference list format:**

- Lastname AB, Lastname CD. Title of article. *Journal Name*. Year;Volume(Issue):Pages.
- Lastname EF, Lastname GH. Title of article. *Journal Name*. Year;Volume(Issue):Pages.

10. Mentor's Letter of Support (max 1 page): only required for "National Ataxia Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship" and "Pre-doctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Ataxia Research" grant mechanisms. Please request this letter well ahead of the posted application deadline and plan to upload as an attachment as part of your application.

11. Personal Statement: only required for "Pre-doctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Ataxia Research" applications. Please submit a brief essay (max 300 words) describing your unique perspective as part of the ataxia research community and goals for your career trajectory. Information entered in this field must be text only: scientific notations, special characters, special fonts, and other rich-text formatting (e.g., bold, italics, underline) cannot be saved or displayed.

RESEARCH PLAN: FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Research Plan is the heart of your research proposal, serving as a road map that outlines how the Specific Aims will be achieved through a clear, credible, and testable plan. This section must detail how you will deliver rigorously obtained results, justify analytic choices and power, anticipate risks, and set clear milestones within a realistic timeline.

Your overall proposal should align with the National Ataxia Foundation's mission to accelerate the development of treatments and a cure for ataxia. Projects that demonstrate a clear path to clinical impact, whether through mechanistic insight, therapeutic discovery, or biomarker development, are especially encouraged.

Guidelines:

- **6 page maximum** (strictly enforced), including figures
 - Use **clear, concise language**, avoiding excessive jargon
 - Single spaced, 10 or 11-point font (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Times New Roman)
 - Use **bolded headings** to separate sections
 - Recommend including a **summary figure** outlining overall research strategy
 - Should be uploaded as a pdf to ProposalCentral
 - Literature cited is not included in the 6-page limit, and should be uploaded separately
 - The Research Plan should be broken into the following sections, using clear bolded headings to separate sections.
 1. **Background**
 2. **Significance**
 3. **Approach**
 - The combined length for **Background** and **Significance** should be 1–2 pages maximum.
 - **Background** and **Significance** may be combined into a single narrative if preferred.
 - The majority of the Research Plan should be devoted to the Approach section.
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Research Plan Instructions:

1. **Background** (*recommended length, 0.5-1 page*) The background should address the following points using clear, professional language:
 - a. **Context:** Provide a concise overview of the current state of knowledge relevant to your proposal.
 - b. **Key Prior Work:** Highlight pivotal studies, including your own if applicable, that establish the foundation for this project.
 - c. **Knowledge Gaps:** Identify what remains unknown and why those gaps matter for ataxia research.
 - d. **Preliminary Data (if applicable):** Summarize any relevant pilot findings or proof-of-concept work that supports feasibility. You may include figures to demonstrate preliminary data.
2. **Significance** (*recommended length, 0.5-1 page*) The significance section should address the following points:
 - a. **Importance of the Problem:** Clearly state the clinical or scientific problem your project addresses and why it matters to the ataxia field.

- b. **Patient Impact:** Describe how solving this problem could ultimately benefit patients (e.g., advance trial readiness, enable new therapies, improve care).
- c. **Advancing the Field:** Explain how your project will fill critical gaps in knowledge, methods, or infrastructure.
- d. **Alignment with NAF Goals:** Show how the proposed work supports NAF's mission to accelerate treatments and improve the lives of people with ataxia.

3. **Approach** (*recommended length, 4-5 pages*) Use the Approach section to expand on your aims, providing detailed methods, rationale, and feasibility.

❖ Recommended Formatting Guidelines:

- Organize your Approach by Specific Aim (e.g., *Aim 1, Aim 2, Aim 3*).
- Use subheadings to separate Aims to improve clarity. Further subheadings can also be used within Aims (e.g. Rationale, Methods, Expected Outcomes), but not required.
- Figures, tables, and timelines are encouraged where they aid understanding.
- Reviewers look for feasibility, rigor, and clear alignment between aims and methods. Keep the aims focused and achievable within the scope of the award.

❖ Content: You may choose to use separate bolded subheadings or combine sections, but the following points should be addressed for each specific aim:

1. **Rationale and Hypothesis:** Briefly explain the reasoning behind the aim. State the hypothesis or central question to be tested.
2. **Experimental Design / Methods:** Describe the overall approach, models, assays, and analyses to be used. Justify the choice of methods and explain why they are appropriate. Highlight innovative aspects of your approach.
3. **Expected Outcomes:** Summarize what results you anticipate. Indicate how outcomes will be measured and interpreted.
4. **Potential Problems and Alternative Strategies:** Identify risks or challenges that could arise. Outline contingency plans or alternative methods.
5. **Milestones and Deliverables:** Define concrete outputs (e.g., validated biomarkers, datasets, publications). Include timelines or measurable milestones.