

## **Bridge Funding for Disrupted Neurodegenerative Research Grant Program (BFDN) Powering the Next Generation of Research**

### **Program Objective:**

U.S. federal government-sponsored research funding has experienced a series of changes that challenges ongoing research initiatives and the future of the U.S. biomedical research enterprise. Maintaining continuity of funding for these projects enables further scientific progress and is critical to millions of Americans affected by Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other neurodegenerative disorders and age-related causes of dementia — and millions more who may be affected by these diseases in the future, as rates for neurological disease are increasing around the world and expected to double as age is the biggest risk factor.

Recent advances in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disorders research show tremendous promise, and ensuring funding for priority research grants is vital for investigators to effectively and efficiently perform life-saving research and carry-out public health programs toward better health outcomes for the United States — and the world.

As the world's largest nonprofit funders with a shared commitment and purpose to deliver better treatments and a cure for (respectively) Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and related disorders, **the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research are launching the Bridge Funding for Disrupted Neurodegenerative Research (BFDN) grant program.** The Alzheimer's Association has partnered with the Robertson Foundation to support this unique funding program.

This program specifically aims to 1) ensure support for early career researchers (based on NIH definition), who have not yet had the opportunity to fully establish their labs and position their projects for ongoing funding, and 2) provide bridge or interim funding for salary and other direct costs for research projects focused on Alzheimer's disease, Frontotemporal Dementia, Parkinson's disease, Dementia with Lewy Bodies, atypical Parkinson's and/or other related disorders that have been impacted by a series of changes at NIH.

### **Funding and award period:**

Principal investigators may apply for bridge funding spanning 3 to 12 months for U.S. and international projects impacted by changes in the NIH. Specific streams of funding include:

- **Delayed Review:** Projects stalled due to NIH review process delays.
- **Termination:** Laboratories whose NIH grants have been terminated due to changes in funding priorities and/or area of interest and are seeking other permanent funding.
- **Priority Misalignment:** Projects that no longer fit NIH focus areas requiring redirection to align with reframing to reflect adjusted priorities and areas of interest.
- **Gaps:** Previously funded projects awaiting reapproval under new criteria.
- **Personnel Continuity:** Salary support for key personnel due to changes in project timelines.

**Key Dates:**

LOI and application submissions will be accepted on a rolling basis and must be received by 5 p.m. ET on their respective deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted - *no exceptions*.

<b>Letter of Intent Launch</b>	<b>Friday, August 29, 2025</b>
<b>Letter of Intent Deadline*</b>	LOIs should be submitted by the 15th of that month (or the following Monday, if the 15th falls on a weekend) to be considered on a rolling basis.
<b>Letter of Intent Notifications</b>	LOIs will be reviewed by the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation science staff, respectively.
<b>Application Deadline</b>	Applications will be invited with a set deadline (within 4 weeks of receiving the invitation) and instructions for application submission.
<b>Award Notifications</b>	Within 3 months of LOI submission.

**\*Due to the anticipated high volume of submissions, specific feedback will not be provided at the LOI stage.**

**Eligibility and Ineligibility Considerations:**

To avoid disqualification, investigators are encouraged to carefully consider these eligibility and ineligibility requirements before applying. The Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation reserves the right to deem an investigator ineligible to submit for a particular program, based on the guidelines below. This section describes general inclusion and exclusion criteria.

- **Eligibility (Applicant):**
  - Applicants must be an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) based on the NIH definition:
  - An ESI is a Program Director/Principal Investigator who has completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever is later, within the past 10 years and who has not previously competed successfully as a PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award. More details are available at: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/early-stage-investigator>. The intention of this program is to provide bridge funding for ESI who had either their K or R or other ESI specific investigator-led award disrupted in recent months.
  - Applicants must be able to demonstrate research disruption based on recent US federal funding challenges and provide the NIH review and/or summary statement as part of the application.
  - Applicants must demonstrate financial need for their continued research program to move forward.

- Adjustments to this eligibility period may be considered for documented career interruptions such as family leave, military service, or major illness or injury. The approval of any exemptions must be obtained prior to submitting a LOI.
- Only one primary PI per application. Multiple PI projects are not eligible. However, collaborators may be included as key personnel on the project.
- Applicants who have had their full time status reduced, but remain faculty at the institution, due to funding challenges are considered eligible.
- Eligibility (Organization/ Institution):
  - In general, public, private, research laboratories, medical centers, hospitals and universities are eligible to apply. However, scientists in state and federal government-appropriated labs can participate as collaborating scientists with research teams at eligible applicant institutions.
    - For the Letter of Intent (LOI), you will be required to upload proof of your organization's not-for-profit status. An IRS Letter of Determination is no longer accepted and you must submit either of the following:
      - a W-9 that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official for US entities
      - a W-8 or W-8-BEN that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official.
      - each must include the EIN, TIN or VAT number.
  - For non-profit organizations (non-academic), additional documentation may be required to confirm your organization has segregation of duties between transaction execution and transaction recording.
- Ineligibility (Applicant):
  - Applicants that do not meet the NIH definition of ESI are ineligible (NIH definition: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/early-stage-investigators>)
  - Applicants who have not experienced research disruption due to federal policies in the US are not eligible.
  - Individuals currently enrolled as a student in an undergraduate, Master or Doctoral Program are not eligible, regardless of prior degree status.
  - Those with T32 or other institutions led training programs that had disruptions in funding are not eligible.
  - Temporary or part time or acting faculty are not eligible. Note, for faculty who have had their time reduced due to funding challenges, they are still eligible.
  - Applicants may not submit more than one proposal, even if the proposals cover distinctly different topics (i.e. only one application is allowed regardless of distinct areas of focus). Members of the same team may submit different aspects of a project to different programs, provided that they are complementary and not the same project.
  - Investigators delinquent in reporting. The Alzheimer's Association will not accept new grant applications from investigators currently awarded an Association grant who are delinquent in submitting required reports and other deliverables on active grants. Investigators that have previous Alzheimer's Association awards closed as 'Incomplete' are not eligible to apply without exception. This policy will be strictly adhered to with no exceptions.

- Overlapping funding of more than one Alzheimer's Association grant is not allowed. Investigators with Association awards in programs not listed above may still apply to a program listed in this call, but the project must be distinct from their current award.
- Applications that represent the same aspects of a project should not be submitted to different programs of the Alzheimer's Association. There are some exceptions so please contact [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org) if you have questions.
- Current MSAG and IRGP Council members of the Alzheimer's Association cannot serve as principal investigators in any award. They may serve as key personnel or collaborators, provided there is no financial benefit and/or salary allocated to them.
- Ineligibility (Organization/ Institution):
  - State and federal government-appropriated laboratories in the U.S. and abroad and for-profit organizations are prohibited from serving as the applicant institutions for this program.
  - Applications will not be accepted if the institutional official responsible for fiscal oversight of the award also serves as the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project. Additionally, no familial relationship may exist between the PI and the institutional official with fiscal authority.

#### **Letters of Intent- Additional Details:**

LOIs are a required component of the application process. No application will be considered without an approved LOI, including resubmitted applications. Additional details about the LOI components, review criteria and process are included below.

- **LOI Components:**
  - Statement of resources available, including annual other annual research support outside of the specific grant(s) or project with disruption; this should include a list of other funding to the investigator, the team and/or the lab.
  - Biosketch (PI) (NIH or other format allowed)
  - Confirmation of ESI status, by NIH definition.
  - Confirmation of research disruption type:
    - **Delayed Review:** Projects stalled due to NIH review process delays.
    - **Termination:** Laboratories whose NIH grants have been terminated due to changes in funding priorities and/or area of interest and are seeking other permanent funding.
    - **Priority Misalignment:** Projects that no longer fit NIH focus areas requiring redirection to align with reframing to reflect adjusted priorities and areas of interest.
    - **Gaps:** Previously funded projects awaiting reapproval under new criteria.
    - **Personnel Continuity:** Salary support for key personnel due to changes in project timelines.
    - Brief description of the research disruption within the identified above type.
  - Total estimated requested amount. **Note: this program will fund salary costs for essential team members and the costs to maintain perishable laboratory items such as reagents and animal models.**

- For the Letter of Intent (LOI), you will be required to upload proof of your organization's not-for-profit status. An IRS Letter of Determination is no longer accepted and you must submit either of the following:
  - A W-9 that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official for US entities
  - A W-8 or W-8-BEN that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official.
  - Each must include the EIN, TIN or VAT number.
- LOI Review Criteria and Process:
  - LOIs will be evaluated by the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation internal research team for alignment with the eligibility and goals of the funding program.
  - Budget requests will be considered in the context of the project and/or need demonstrated in the LOI.

#### **Applications - Additional Details:**

Following the LOI review, some of these projects are invited to submit full applications. The PI who submits the application must be the same PI who submitted the approved LOI. The application does not need to be completed in one session; a partially completed application can be saved and completed at any time before the deadline. It is imperative that applicants proofread their application before submission; no changes to the application will be accepted after the deadline or once applications are under review.

If you are invited to submit a full application, the required materials including the application format, templates, and instructions will be shared with the applicant either via proposalCENTRAL (ALZ) or SmartSimple (MJFF).

LOIs focused on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias invited to submit a full application by the Alzheimer's Association will use proposalCENTRAL. Once submitted, applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail from proposalCENTRAL that the application was successfully submitted. If no confirmation is received, click the Proposals tab and, under the "Status" column, ensure the status reflects **Submitted**, and not **In Progress**, which indicates the application has not yet been submitted. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and accurate before submission. Only a single copy of an application will be accepted.

LOIs focused on Parkinson's disease or other related disorders invited to submit a full application by The Michael J. Fox Foundation will use their grant portal, SmartSimple. An email with detailed submission instructions will be sent if invited.

Applicants may use LLMs and other generative AI tools in the preparation of their LOIs and full applications. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of their proposal, including any parts produced by an AI tool. Using one of these tools will not affect the review of your application.

Additional details for the application process are described below:

- **Application Components:**

- Full applications will not be accepted without an approved LOI from the current cycle
  - If you did not receive an email from an Alzheimer's Association staff member about your approval to submit a full application for the current cycle you should not submit an application, even if one is available in your ProposalCentral Account.
- Applicants must complete the required sections and upload required documents as listed.
- Required materials for the application:
  - Original application to NIH or other federal agency, including all attachments from the original submission.
  - Summary statement from NIH or other federal agency from the review process demonstrating this was funded and/or within the payroll.
  - If applicable, the most recent progress report to NIH or other federal agency, as well as a written summary of any changes that have happened to the study or study team since that last submission.
  - Two page summary from the investigator and/or research team of how the requested funding would enable and/or allow the project to move forward.
  - Brief description (2000 characters or less) on how this funding will inform future activities, including applying to additional funding opportunities. These funds should be setting the team up for a future step; it will be important to describe this to the reviewers.
  - Budget for the request and budget/ resource documentation (details about budget below).

- **Budget Considerations:**

- A budget justification is required and must be submitted with the application and within the allowable two-page limit. However, if the application is to be awarded, a more detailed budget will be required and must be approved before the disbursement of funds.
- **Direct Costs Allowed:**
  - It is required that the majority of any funding awarded under this program be used for direct research support. No more than 10% of the total direct costs may be included as indirect costs; this is inclusive of indirect costs for the implementing institution as well as any to subcontracts. Allowable costs include:
    - Care of laboratory animals.
    - Care of reagents, biosamples, cultures, and other perishable items.
    - Purchases over \$10,000 require prior approval, even if included in the project proposal budget.
    - Support for travel to scientific and professional meetings and travel expenses necessary to carry out the project– this may include site visits. A total of \$7,000 over a 3 to 12 months period may be requested for travel purposes.



- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians and administrative support directly related to the funded grant); please refer to NIH salary caps for allowable costs.
  - **Direct Costs not allowed:**
    - Computer hardware or standard software (e.g. Microsoft Office, mouse monitor, computer parts, AppleCare).
    - Laboratory equipment such as freezers, ultracentrifuges, RT-PCR, Microscopy/imaging equipment.
    - Service contract fees of equipment.
    - Construction or renovation costs.
    - Tuition.
    - Rent for laboratory/office space.
    - Visa costs and fees.
    - Expenses such as Data Network Recharges and Computing and communication device support services. However, data sharing and/or data storage for imaging, sequencing and other study data is allowed.
    - General liability insurances, such as GAEL.
    - Wire and currency exchange fees; it is important to note that the Association and MJFF do not adjust the total funded amount related to fluctuations in exchange rates. All grants are paid in US dollars.
    - Institutional overheads associated with staff time.
    - Specific to grants to be funded by the Alzheimer's Association or through the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG), the International Research Grant Program (IRGP) Council members and current employees of the Alzheimer's Association are allowed to be key personnel or collaborators on projects, however they are NOT ALLOWED to receive any salary or compensation. A complete list of MSAG and IRGP Council members can be found on our website [alz.org/grants](http://alz.org/grants).
    - We reserve the right to decline any charge that is an institutional feed and/or service charge.
- **Application Review Criteria and Process:**
  - All applications are subject to a multiple stage peer-review process carried out with an online system. This multi-stage process is central to our award decisions and is designed to ensure both scientific rigor and fairness in the review of all submitted applications.
  - In Stage 1 of review, each application will be evaluated with a look toward the overall impact of the disruption on the work, including prior investment in the project or work. Recognizing impacted scientific projects in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research have been thoroughly vetted through the NIH peer-review process, the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation will ask reviewers to evaluate projects with the following considerations:
    - What are the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the project?
    - Are there potential workforce losses and/or expertise lost?

- What have been past investments in this space and/or the timeline for the work to be complete?
  - What is the plan for the future of the project and/or its next step?
  - In addition, reviewers can take into consideration - for projects with ongoing progress reports - the progress being made in the project and/or the progress toward the proposed aims/ project objectives and original timeline of the project, including but not limited to the productivity of the team.
- The Stage 2 includes further review and discussion of the scores and comments resulting from the initial review process to normalize across reviews and programs.
    - The Stage 2 review is performed by a committee selected from representatives of the International Research Grant Program (IRGP) Council members and invited review committee members and the Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG) to ensure balance in the funding recommendations to the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation.
  - Final recommendations from the committee are shared with the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation for final approval.
  - Applications are reviewed and rated by peer scientists with expertise in the proposed area of research. Conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):
    - The Applicant trained with/ by the reviewer.
    - The reviewer published with the Applicant in the last four (4) years. This excludes workshop or large consortia (i.e. ADNI, PPMI, IGAP, etc.)
    - The reviewer has been a co-investigator on a grant application or award with the Applicant in the last four (4) years.
    - The reviewer has a conceptual difference of opinion with the Applicant that will prevent a fair review.
    - The reviewer will receive financial benefit from the Applicant receiving an award.
    - The reviewer is based at the same institution as the applicant, regardless of department or relationship.

**The Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation reserves the right to share applications with potential/prospective partner organizations, in confidence, for their funding consideration, including the Alzheimer Society UK and The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (AFTD).**

#### **Financial Responsibility:**

Funding is awarded to the institution and/or organization, not to the individual principal investigator. The principal investigator or a first-degree relative cannot be listed as the signing official or financial officer, or have checks sent to their attention if awarded.

#### **Reporting Requirements, if Funded:**

For funded awards through this program, there will be a required annual scientific and financial reporting. Final Scientific & Financial Reports must be filed within 90 days of the grant's end date. All reports must be submitted electronically via proposalCENTRAL or SmartSimple



depending on your funding agency. The Financial Report must be approved and signed by someone with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs or Grants & Contracts Office at the recipient's institution.

**U.S. Sanctions:**

Alzheimer's Association grants are generally open to scientists and researchers across the globe; however, as a U.S.-based charity, the Alzheimer's Association is subject to, and complies with, U.S. law. As a result, the Alzheimer's Association cannot award, and will not award, grants in violation of applicable U.S. statutes and regulations. This means, among other things, that the Alzheimer's Association cannot, and will not, fund any individual or entity (i) that is subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.

**Nondiscrimination and Harassment Statement:**

The Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation are committed to providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation strictly prohibit harassment and discrimination based on race; creed; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; national origin; ancestry; age; military veteran status; citizenship status; marital status; physical or mental disabilities; pregnancy, gender identity or expression (including transgender status); genetic information; and any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

**Contact Information:**

For any inquiries or additional information, please contact a member of the Alzheimer's Association Grants staff at [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org) or The Michael J. Fox Foundation at [grants@michaeljfox.org](mailto:grants@michaeljfox.org).