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

Background and Program Objectives:
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 evolving the Bridge Funding for Disrupted Neurodegenerative Research (BFDN) grant program.** The Alzheimer's Association has partnered with the Robertson Foundation and other philanthropic partners to support this unique funding program.

This program specifically aims to ensure continuity of career support for early career researchers and researchers who are within 7 years of their designation as an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) based on the NIH definition. This program will provide 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 specific changes in the federal research funding landscape, such as those at the NIH and/or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency.

Investigators meeting the career stage eligibility (see above) and have been impacted by at least one of the following challenges may apply:

- **Delayed Review**: Projects stalled due to study review process delays related to operational changes at the NIH and/or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency.
- **Termination**: Laboratories whose federal grants have been terminated and/or cut significantly due to changes in funding priorities and/or area of interest and are seeking other permanent funding.
- **Priority Misalignment**: Projects that no longer fit the NIH and/or other U.S. federal agency.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.

Investigators whose proposals do not meet the above criteria and are experiencing challenges meeting revised paylines due to an increasingly competitive funding landscape do not meet the intent of this program.

Funding and award period:
Proposed budgets may vary but should not exceed USD$250,000, although very rare and extraordinary circumstances may warrant a waiver of this requirement. Investigators may apply for bridge funding spanning 3 to 12 months for U.S. and international projects impacted by changes in federal funding landscape. Funds can be used to bridge salary costs for the investigator, essential team members and/or the costs to maintain perishable laboratory items such as reagents and animal models. More information on allowable costs are found below.

Institutional cost sharing:
Institutions are required to commit to investment in the career and/or research of the application's named principal investigator applying to this opportunity. To demonstrate this, all applications are required to contain an element of institutional cost-sharing of up to 25% of the total requested budget. Institutional cost share may support the following, included but not limited to: protected research time, facility and core fees, salary and fringe, as well as computing and other equipment otherwise not allowable under Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation funding.

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

Letter of Intent Launch	**June 2026, October 2026, January 2027 and April 2027.**
Letter of Intent Deadline, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern time*	**July 30, 2026; October 30, 2026;** **January 29, 2027; April 30, 2027**
Letter of Intent Notifications	**LOIs will be reviewed by the Alzheimer's Association and The Michael J. Fox Foundation scientific staff, respectively.**
Application Deadline	**Invited applications will be provided a specific submission deadline (within 4 weeks of receiving the invitation) and instructions for application submission.**
Award Notifications	**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 either be designated as an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) or be within **7 years** of their ESI designation. ESI for this program is based on the NIH definition, as follows:
    - NIH Definition of an ESI: 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-investigators. 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.
  - Note: in rare exceptions, the Alzheimer's Association and the Michael J. Fox Foundation will consider a window outside of the 7 years, however, that must be approved prior to the LOI submission. Consideration for the exception could include documented career disruption such as family or medical leave, military service and similar.
    - Any exemption must receive written approval prior to submitting the LOI; failure to secure approval will result in immediate disqualification of the LOI. For prior approval, please contact a member of the Alzheimer's Association Grants staff at grantsapp@alz.org or The Michael J. Fox Foundation at grants@michaeljfox.org.
  - Applicants must be able to demonstrate research disruption based on recent U.S. federal funding challenges and provide the federal agency review, communication, and/or summary statement demonstrating the delay as part of the application.
    - Note: **This program will not support projects that were not funded due to specific payline cutoffs.**
  - Applicants must demonstrate financial need for their continued research program to move forward.
  - 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 or ESI plus 7 years are ineligible.
        - **Investigators who received written approval for their career level exemption are excluded from this statement.
    - Applicants who have not experienced research disruption due to federal policies in the US are not eligible.
    - Multiple PI requests are not eligible. However, if a project was a Multiple PI project and is impacted, this could be appropriate with a single investigator submitting this request. Collaborators may be included as key personnel on the project.
    - Individuals currently enrolled as a student in an undergraduate, Master or Doctoral Program are not eligible, regardless of prior degree status.
    - Applicants with T32 or other institution-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.
    - Investigators may not submit more than one proposal to this program, even if the proposals cover distinctly different topics.
    - Investigators who are delinquent in reporting are not eligible to apply. 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.
    - 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.
    - More than one proposal from the same investigator to this program will not be allowed/ accepted unless as a resubmission in a different cycle.

Note: 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.

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 career level in accordance with the eligibility criteria listed above.
    - Confirmation of research disruption type:
        - **Delayed Review**: Projects stalled due to study review process delays related to operational changes at the NIH and/or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency.
        - **Termination**: Laboratories whose federal grants have been terminated and/or cut significantly due to changes in funding priorities and/or area of interest and are seeking other permanent funding.
        - **Priority Misalignment**: Projects that no longer fit the NIH and/or other U.S. federal agency 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.
    - Brief description of the research disruption within the identified above type.
    - Total estimated requested amount.
    - A letter from the institution detailing its commitment to cost-sharing and amount.

- 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 will be 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 applications are proofread before submission as no changes to the application will be accepted after the deadline 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.

By submitting an application seeking funding from the Alzheimer's Association, it is expected that the institution and/or applying organization has read and will accept the Alzheimer's Associations award Conditions of Award.

Signatures are not required at the time of submission by the Association, however, the signature page provided is for use should your institution/organization require signatures; the Association does not override any institutional policies and/or procedures. Please do not submit the signature page with your application.

LOIs focused on Parkinson's disease or other related disorders will be invited to submit a full application by The Michael J. Fox Foundation will use the MJFF 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:

If you are invited to submit a full application, the required materials including the application format, templates, and instructions, will be available online at proposalCENTRAL or the MJFF Grant Portal after your LOI has been approved in the system.

- 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 or Michael J. Fox Foundation 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 account.

Applicants must complete the required sections and upload required documents as listed.

Required materials for the application:

- 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.
- Original application to NIH or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency including all attachments from the original submission.
- Summary statement from NIH or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency from the review process demonstrating this was funded and/or within the payline.
- If applicable, the most recent progress report to NIH or other U.S. Federal Funding Agency, as well as a written summary of any changes that have happened to the study or study team since that last submission.
- 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.

- **Institutional Cost Sharing:** Institutions are required to commit to investment in the applicant. To demonstrate this, all applications are required to contain an element of

institutional cost-sharing of up to 25% of the total requested budget. Institutional cost share may support the following, included but not limited to: protected research time, facility and core fees, salary and fringe, as well as computing and other equipment not otherwise allowable under Alzheimer's Association and Michael J. Fox Foundation funding.

- **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 for subcontracts. Allowable costs include:
    - 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.
    - Costs related to the care of laboratory animals.
    - Costs related to the care of reagents, biosamples, cultures, and other perishable items.
    - 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.

Purchases over $10,000 require prior approval, even if included in the project proposal budget. For prior approval, please contact a member of the Alzheimer's Association Grants staff at grantsapp@alz.org or The Michael J. Fox Foundation at grants@michaeljfox.org.

- **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.
    - 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. Reviewers with conflicts of interest will not be assigned. 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 years. This excludes workshop or large consortia (i.e. ADNI, IGAP, etc.)
- The reviewer has been a co-investigator on a grant application or award with the Applicant in the last four 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.

Recognizing impacted scientific projects in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research have been thoroughly vetted through the NIH and/or other U.S. federal agency 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 second tier of review includes further "review of the review" and discussion of the reviewer critiques and scores, to normalize across reviews and programs.

The second tier 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.

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 but not limited to 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 interim and final scientific and financial reporting based on the duration of the award. 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.

In addition, while animal welfare and human volunteer ethical assurances are not required at the time of application, investigators have until their chosen start date (within 6 months or less of award notification) to submit these approved documents. The Alzheimer's Association and Michael J. Fox Foundation encourage investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule that recognizes that rDNA certification, ethical approvals (such as the IRB/IACUC) at many institutions can take more than 90 days. The organizations accept only certifications that apply specifically to the funded project and must include the name of the awardee.

Projects involving human volunteers must address the appropriate inclusion or exclusion of individuals in the proposed research project and describe recruitment efforts to represent the community in which the study is planned or being conducted. Prior to distribution of funding, the researcher must provide a description of their recruitment plan, including an outline describing how their recruitment efforts will ensure representative diversity in their volunteers. Recruitment efforts should focus on diversity within key target groups, including a diverse representation of (but not limited to): sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. This will be tracked throughout the duration of the grant.

Electronic copies of publications, presentations and abstracts that report research supported by funds from the Alzheimer's Association must be submitted electronically at the time of publication. These copies will become part of the official file of the grant and will be provided to the Communications Division of the Alzheimer's Association to assist in the efforts to further inform the public about the International Research Grant Program of the Association. Any intellectual property disclosures resulting from the award must be submitted electronically at the time of publication. The Alzheimer's Association may request any of the research outputs listed here from any awardee up to 7 years following the end of the award.

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 or The Michael J. Fox Foundation at grants@michaeljfox.org.