



## **Alzheimer's Disease Strategic Fund: Endolysosomal Activity in Alzheimer's (E2A) Grant Program**

### **Program Objective:**

The Alzheimer's Disease Strategic Fund (ADSF), established in 2019 by the Alzheimer's Association and an anonymous foundation, aims to support innovative, high-risk, collaborative team science opportunities that investigate and focus on outstanding questions related to the biological underpinnings of Alzheimer's disease (AD). The ADSF expects timely sharing of data and resources generated from funded projects in accordance with the sharing principles detailed below. In this third call for proposals to advance scientific understanding, the ADSF will focus on understanding the role of the endolysosomal system in AD.

Although Alzheimer's research has made many advances in recent years, the field still faces gaps in our knowledge and ability to translate basic science discoveries into effective treatments and evidence-based clinical practices for dementia care. Some of these overarching questions focus on understanding of disease causes, need for models and other tools to evaluate disease biology, early and accurate detection and diagnosis procedures and diverse treatment modalities.

### **Program Overview:**

Alterations in the activity of the endolysosomal system - a cellular network of organelles that plays a role in the transport, sorting, recycling, and clearance of various molecules - are a common feature of neurodegenerative disorders. A deeper understanding of endolysosomal function and dysfunction in disease may provide insights into disease mechanisms and uncover potential therapeutic targets. While AD is the primary focus on this E2A Grant Program, understanding endolysosomal dysfunction in other neurodegenerative diseases could also yield insights that are relevant to AD and these brain disease more broadly.

The **Endolysosomal Activity in Alzheimer's (E2A) Grant Program** solicits projects that aim to address some of the key challenges in Alzheimer's research today as related to the endolysosomal system, including but not limited to:

- Define the role of AD associated genes in the functionality of the endolysosomal network and understanding how this impacts the cellular dysfunction that occurs in AD.
- Consider what are the specific components or functions of the endolysosomal system that are regulated by risk genes and how do endolysosomal associated risk genes impact different cell types.
- Understanding endolysosomal associated genes and functions in related neurodegenerative conditions if there is a clear and strong rationale for relevance to AD.
- Development of potential therapies or potential biomarkers specifically targeted towards the endolysosomal system and measuring changes in endolysosomal function.
- Development of key tools and/or resources that if developed will benefit a broader range of scientific questions and/or studies related to the endolysosomal network. Tools and resources developed through this funding would be made broadly available to the scientific field.

The E2A Grant Program aims to fund concerted and collaborative efforts that will explore these questions as they relate to the endolysosomal system to advance our understanding of disease.

**Funding and award period:**

The maximum grant amount is \$300,000; with anticipated funding ranges to be \$150,000 to \$300,000 depending on the project scope. Budget spending should be appropriately aligned to the specific aims and proposed milestone of the project. **No indirect costs are allowable for this funding program.** The maximum project duration is 3 years, and there is no minimum timeframe. The ADSF will evaluate projects on progress toward specific milestones; continued disbursement of funds is dependent on demonstrated progress toward key milestones.

**Eligibility:**

The E2A Grant Program is open to researchers at academic institutions as well as small companies. Both non-profits and small for-profit organizations are eligible. For-profits and non-profits must provide documentation verifying status. The Principal Investigator of the project must be a full-time faculty member or paid employee of the organization submitting the proposal. If the applicant is not a paid employee, they must demonstrate that they are part of the company and a listed employee. Applications from post-doctoral researchers will not be accepted.

Investigators that have received Alzheimer's Association funding and are currently delinquent in submitting required reports or have awards closed as "Incomplete" are not eligible to apply. For questions about eligibility, please contact the Alzheimer's Association at grantsapp@alz.org.

**Submitting a Letter of Intent:**

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is a required step in the application process. LOIs must be completed online at <https://proposalcentral.com>. First-time users must register and complete a Professional Profile to begin the LOI process. No hard copies will be accepted. The LOI is completed through the online interactive system; you will need to complete the required sections and upload any required documents. The main section will have a limit of 10,000 characters, approximately 3 pages, and should include the information below (no figures/graphics or images are allowed):

- Brief project description, including methodology
- Specific aims of the project
- Innovation/novelty of the project
- Project team
- Plan for data sharing

For U.S. entities, the LOI materials will include proof of your organization's not-for-profit status and a W9 signed and dated by the signing official. Non-US entities must provide a W8-BEN-E signed and dated by the signing official. **Your LOI will not be accepted without these documents.** Current awardees of Alzheimer's Association are eligible provided current funded grant does not overlap with this proposal.

**Evaluation of LOIs:**

All LOIs will be evaluated prior to invitation for a full proposal. Only LOIs that meet program specific guidelines and meet review criteria, including the goals of the ADSF call, will be invited to submit full applications. LOIs will be reviewed by a panel of experts with special attention to:

1. Demonstrable innovation/novelty of the proposed project (especially in the context of the PI/PIs and team recent work)
2. Alignment with the research priorities of the RFA
3. Impact of project on AD research
4. Evidence of methodological rigor that address the research question(s) being proposed
5. While not required, priority will be given to studies that leverage interdisciplinary and/or inter-institutional teams to accomplish the proposed project in a way no one group would be able to do independently.

***Feedback is not provided for LOIs that are not invited to submit a full application.***

### **Submitting a Full Application:**

For those invited to submit a full application, additional materials will be required. Templates and instructions will be provided after LOI approval.

Full applications will include:

- Executive Summary (1 page)
- Background/ Rationale (1 page): should include background and clearly defined hypothesis and/or rationale addressing why strategy is expected to be fruitful. This should also note the specific aims.
- Work Plan (up to 5 pages): should include goals/specific aims, methods and project plan and should be organized in alignment with the milestones as outlined in the application.
- Project Milestones: workplan should be separated into one-year intervals with specific milestones to be accomplished within that timeframe. Milestones should align with the overall project goals and be designed for easy progress evaluation and for clear determination on whether or not milestones have been met. For each milestone, indicate the relevant Project Aim. (No upload required)
- Principal Investigator(s) and Key Personnel Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch (no more than 5 pages per person); there is no limit on the number of CVs to be included
- Available Resources and Budget Justification (2 pages):
  - Expenses that will not be allowed under this award include: tuition for full degree programs, rent for laboratory/office space, construction or renovation costs, liability insurance, networking and communication fees, and any facilities fees and laboratory/supply costs not directly relevant to the project. If awarded, a full budget of planned expenses will be required.
  - Include a list of tools/models available (if appropriate, list critical tools and models to be used or needed in the course of the research)No indirect costs will be allowed. Budget should be broken down in 1year increments and align with project milestones.
- Data sharing plan (1page): it is expected that data generated through this funding mechanism will include a robust plan for sharing data as well as appropriate included budget to accommodate this plan. Data sharing is a key component of the application and will be considered in the review and evaluation. Information on timelines, feasibility and the platform(s) and/or mechanisms of sharing should be included. Failure to share data appropriately may prevent investigators from being eligible for future funding.
- Citations/References (1 page): Use the reference style that is most common in the major journal(s)
- W9/W8 Documentation
- (OPTIONAL) Up to 3 (three) letters of support (no more than 2 pages each) are allowed.

### **Deadlines and Award Timeline:**

- **Letter of Intent Opens:** February 2023 - [proposalcentral.com](https://proposalcentral.com)
- **Letter of Intent Deadline:** March 2, 2023 (No Exceptions)
- **Letter of Intent Notifications:** Week of March 20, 2023
- **Application Deadline:** May 1, 2023 (No Exceptions)
- **Application Review:** May – June 2023
- **Award Notifications:** By June 30, 2023

LOIs will be accepted through 5:00 PM EST, **March 2, 2023**. Letters of Intent will not be accepted after this date. **No exceptions will be made.**

All LOIs must be completed online at <https://proposalcentral.com>. No hard copies or emails will be accepted.

For those invited to submit a full application, the full application must be received by 5:00 PM EST, **May 1, 2023**. Applications will not be accepted after this date. **No exceptions will be made.** No hard copies or emails will be accepted.

Award announcements will be made by **June 30, 2023**. For More Information: Contact [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org)

### **Additional Details**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure and verify that:

- The application is submitted by the receipt date/time deadline. Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from [proposalcentral.com](https://proposalcentral.com) that your application was successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation, click the Proposals tab and under the “Status” column, make sure it says Submitted and not In Progress, which indicates you have not yet submitted your application.
- The application is complete and accurate before submission. Only a single copy of an application will be accepted. We do not require signatures at the time of submission. The signature page provided is for use should your institution/organization require signatures; we do not override any institutional policies and/or procedures. Please do not submit the signature page with your application.
- Revisions, additional materials, and/or reference, manuscripts, appendices, etc., are not allowed and, if attached, will be removed from your application.

### **Multiple and Overlapping Submissions:**

Multiple submissions from one applicant is not permitted. This includes multiple submissions from the same group and/or collaborators.

### **Allowable costs under this award include:**

- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies (**purchases over \$10,000 require prior approval, even if included in the project proposal budget**).
- Computer software if used strictly for data collection and/or analysis.
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including modest administrative support).
- Research supplies needed for the proposed studies.
- Support for travel to scientific and professional meetings, not to exceed \$2,500 in any given year.
- Open access publications fees are appropriate and reasonable for the project budget.

**Not allowable as direct costs under this award include:**

- Computer hardware or standard software (e.g., Microsoft Office, mouse monitor, computer parts)
- Construction or renovation costs.
- Laboratory equipment such as freezers, ultracentrifuges, RT-PCR, Microscopy/imaging equipment
- Service contract fees of equipment
- Tuition.
- GAEL insurance
- Rent for laboratory/office space.
- Expenses such as Data Network Recharges and Computing and communication device support services
- Wire and currency exchange fees
- Salary and/or compensation for Alzheimer's Association staff or for current members of the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG), International Research Grant Program (IRGP) Council.

**Additional Information****Ethical/regulatory approvals and reporting requirements**

If awarded for funding, the Alzheimer's Association require that any necessary ethical and/or regulatory approvals are kept current, and may require specific reporting throughout the lifetime of the award. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

**Human Subject Assurances**

Human subject assurances are not required at the time of application. Investigators have up to 90 days after receipt of their award notification to submit these documents. However, the Alzheimer's Association encourages investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule that recognizes that approvals at many institutions can take more than 90 days. We will accept only certifications that apply specifically to the funded project and must include the name of the awardee. An award letter will not be issued unless the appropriate certifications are in place and include the name of the awardee within the 90 days from award notification. The same applies for animal ethical approvals, if applicable.

**Annual Scientific and Financial Reports**

Interim Scientific and Financial Reports must be submitted at the end of each reporting period as long as the grant remains active. Final Scientific and Financial Reports must be filed within 90 days of the grant's end date. All reports must be submitted electronically via [proposalcentral.com](http://proposalcentral.com). The Financial Report must be approved and signed by someone with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the recipient's institution.

**Data Sharing:**

The ADSF expects and requires timely sharing, based on the following principles:

- Make useful datasets and supporting information available to the broader research community every 12 months, at minimum, through an appropriate data sharing platform and other repositories, noting that not all experimental datasets are useful at early or intermediate stages of generation, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if the ADSF agrees that the data are not yet ready to be shared.
- Use a streamlined data access process for the data sharing platform to allow high-throughput management of data access request approvals; make novel tools and

research reagents (including, but not limited to, research models, cell lines, plasmids, viral vectors, antibodies, code/analysis methods, etc.) available as quickly as possible to academic and industry researchers either directly, or preferably through an appropriate and accessible distribution platform (e.g. Jackson Laboratory, Addgene, and GitHub) with minimal costs and restrictions.

- Whenever possible, avoid use of reagents, tools, samples, or data that cannot be easily shared; pre-approval for use of animal models that cannot be freely shared is required.
- Rapidly bring research findings and results to the research community through presentations at meetings and open-access publication (e.g. preprint servers, open access journals, or making papers available on the investigator's website).

The research team's clear commitment to sharing in a timely manner will be part of both application and project evaluation throughout the project duration.

#### **Recruitment Efforts for Clinical Studies:**

Projects involving human participants 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 diversity in their participants (see <https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/about/overview/> for NIH operationalization). 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 and continued funding is contingent on applications addressing these goals.

#### **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.

#### **Appeals of Scientific Peer Review:**

To maintain a fair and rigorous review system, the Alzheimer's Association have a process for appeal of funding decisions. Appeals will not be considered for the letter of intent stage. Regarding applications, an appeal is intended to address extraordinary circumstances. Appropriate reasons for initiating an appeal might include:

- Evidence that a reviewer has an undeclared conflict of interest.
- An egregious error or misunderstanding in the review process.
- Active malfeasance or demonstrable lack of due diligence.

The appeal process is not intended to provide a mechanism for routine protest of failure to receive a grant. It is anticipated that funding through E2A Grant Program will be extremely competitive and is limited by availability of funds.

If an applicant believes an extraordinary circumstance has contributed to failure to receive funding, the principal investigator may send a two-page, double-spaced formal letter of appeal (Word document) to [grantsappeals@alz.org](mailto:grantsappeals@alz.org). Any supporting documents included must be submitted as a PDF. **Appeals must be submitted within 2 weeks from the date your application outcome notification is sent.** Notification of action on the appeal will be made via email, usually within 90 days of the appeal deadline.

**Nondiscrimination and Harassment Statement:**

Alzheimer's Association is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. Alzheimer's Association strictly prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race; creed; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; national origin; ancestry; age; 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.