



Request for Letters of Intent

Early Career Investigator Grant

2027 Grantees

Purpose

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance is requesting Letters of Intent for the 2027 Early Career Investigator Grant. The Early Career Investigator Grant (ECIG) is for junior faculty with a strong commitment to an investigative career in the field of ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers who are on a path towards independence. The intent of these grants is to support a substantial time commitment to research and academic endeavors in ovarian cancer.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

1. Researcher Requirements

- a. Principal Investigator (PI) must be working in institutions with strong existing ovarian cancer research programs, in a school of medicine or public health, or a recognized non-profit scientific research facility.
- b. PIs should have strong training in preparation for an investigative career in ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancer research and prior academic accomplishments. This grant is intended to help the applicant reach full independence in their career.
- c. PIs must have an MD/DO and/or PhD degree and should be in the **first seven years of their first academic appointment** after having completed their fellowship or post-doctoral training (Assistant Professor or equivalent). Individuals who will begin such a position by July 2026 are eligible for this grant.
- d. Dedicated Time:
 - i. For MDs/DOs or MD/DO-PhDs with clinical responsibilities, at least 50% of the time must be dedicated to ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancer research.
 - ii. For applicants without clinical responsibilities, at least 75% of the time must be dedicated to ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers research.
- e. Applicants are not eligible if they **currently hold or have previously held** substantial early career-focused funding from other agencies or foundations. This includes, but is not limited to, multi-year (3+ years) early career development grants such as: U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) early career awards, Rivkin Center Early Career Investigator Awards, and NIH K-series (career development) grants. Investigators who currently hold or have previously held an NIH R01 or comparable independent research grants are also not eligible.

- f. There are no citizenship requirements for OCRA Grants; international applicants are welcome to apply.
 - g. Clinician Scientists are encouraged to apply.
- 2. Project and Mentorship Requirements:**
- a. The proposed research plan should have sufficient scientific depth to allow the Early Career Investigator to compete for additional funding after the period of this grant.
 - b. Projects must focus on ovarian cancer or demonstrate clear, direct relevance to ovarian cancer, including work in related gynecologic cancers.
 - c. Mentors:
 - i. A mentor must be selected; only one mentor can be listed.
 - ii. Mentors must be at the same institution as the applicant.
 - iii. If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants will be required to provide two letters of recommendation, including one from the mentor.
- 3. Institutional Eligibility and Applicant Limits:**
- a. Funding is limited to accredited academic institutions (e.g., universities and colleges) and other eligible research institutions, provided they are non-profit, including research hospitals, research institutes, and recognized scientific research facilities. OCRA does not provide funding to for-profit entities, consulting companies, non-research organizations, or non-profits that are not conducting the research themselves.
 - b. An individual may serve as Principal Investigator on only one LOI; however, they may participate in additional LOIs in another role, provided they are not the lead PI.
 - c. A PI may hold only one active OCRA grant at a time. If a PI has an active OCRA grant, it must conclude before a new grant may begin.
 - d. Grant recipients may only receive OCRA's Early Career Investigator Grant once.
- 4. Review Considerations:**
- a. The selection committee will consider most favorably applications that are creative, original, and hold the most promise in the areas of early detection, prevention, treatment, and translational research.

If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact us (see last page).

Terms of Grant

- Support of up to \$150,000 USD annually for three years (\$450,000USD total) will be granted to the institution of the Principal Investigator.
- Early Career Investigator Grants will have a start date of February 1, 2027.
- Grant recipients will be required to submit activation deliverables and annual progress reports (narrative and financial) throughout the life of the grant.
- It is expected that the project will result in peer-reviewed publication(s). Any publications or presentations of work resulting from this grant should acknowledge support from OCRA.

Selection Process

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), which is comprised of distinguished members of the medical, research and patient advocacy community from across North America. The majority of LOIs will be triaged at this stage; only a fraction of those submitting LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals. Last year, only ~28% of LOIs were invited to the full proposal stage.

We recognize that preparing a full application requires a significant amount of time and energy for investigators, and we believe this process will ensure that only those applications most likely to be competitive will advance to the final round of selection.

Please note that due to the small size of the OCRA staff and Scientific Advisory Committee, we can not provide feedback to applicants on their LOIs or Full Proposals.

Timeline

- **LOI Deadline: 5:00pm Eastern Time (NY) on March 25, 2026.**
- Late submissions and extension requests are not permitted.
- All applicants will be notified of their status in mid-May 2026.
- For those selected to submit full proposals, full proposals will be due mid-June 2026.

Please be sure to add grants@ocrahope.org mailto: to your safe sender list in your email so you can get all emails from OCRA's grant system.

Application Process

LOIs must be submitted in English via SmartSimple: <https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/> by **5:00 PM ET on March 25, 2026.**

The LOI must be submitted through the Principal Investigator's (PI's) SmartSimple account. The individual logged into SmartSimple when the LOI is created will automatically be designated as the PI.

Applicants are encouraged to log into SmartSimple early to review system requirements.

Required Components:

1. Scientific Abstract

Provide a summary of the proposed research project. The abstract should clearly outline your proposed research project & aims, an overview of the research team, and resources for the project. The abstract should be presented in 6,000 characters or less (including spaces). Text only; figures, images, and graphs are not permitted.

2. BioSketches

NIH biosketches are required for all listed investigators and key personnel and must use the NIH biosketch template available in SmartSimple. *If an individual does not have an eRA Commons user name, this field may be left blank.*

- a. **Principal Investigator (PI):** A current NIH biosketch for the PI (must be the submitting applicant).
- b. **Mentor's Biosketch:** A current NIH biosketch for the mentor is required.
- c. **Key Personnel:** NIH biosketches for all other listed key personnel, combined into one PDF

3. Budget

Indicate the estimated **total** funding amount requested, up to \$450,000 USD, inclusive of indirect costs. A detailed budget is not required at the LOI stage.

No figures, references, appendices, detailed budgets, or letters of recommendation or collaboration are required or accepted at this stage.

Answers to frequently asked questions about the application process are available online [here](https://ocrahope.org/research/for-grantees/grant-application-faq/) (<https://ocrahope.org/research/for-grantees/grant-application-faq/>).

Technical Support

If you are having technical problems with SmartSimple please email OCRA – grants@ocrahope.org. SmartSimple works best when using Google Chrome. Be sure your pop ups are not blocked on your web browser as some items will open a new window.

Questions about the substantive aspects of the application should be directed to Kristin McGowan (contact info below).

About OCRA

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA) is the largest global organization dedicated to combating ovarian and all gynecologic cancer. Since its founding in 1994, OCRA has invested \$140 million in scientific breakthroughs, and supports 95,000 people annually through its programs, which are free to all participants. As the only dedicated voice for ovarian and gynecologic cancer on Capitol Hill, OCRA has helped to secure \$3.8 billion in federal research and education funding. Learn more at ocrahope.org.

For inquiries or further information, please contact:

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