Request for Letters of Intent/Expression of Interest

AI Accelerator Grant

Purpose

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA), Ovarian Cancer Action (OCA), Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC), and Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) are requesting Letters of Intent /Expression of Interest (the term 'Letter of Intent (LOI)' will be used for this funding opportunity) for a new Global Artificial Intelligence-driven Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, the **AI Accelerator Grant**. The purpose of this grantmaking program is to bring together researchers across the world and provide funds for ovarian cancer research using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, such as machine learning. We believe this type of collaboration will allow for sharing of knowledge, expertise, innovation and resources, spark new ideas to achieve groundbreaking results to better the lives of ovarian cancer survivors, and accelerate scientific research globally.

AI is transforming cancer diagnosis, risk prediction, drug discovery, and personalized treatment, including early applications in ovarian cancer. While much progress has been made, the opportunities unlocked by this new technology are only beginning to be fully explored.

There is a clear need to drive investment in AI technologies, unlocking new insights and accelerating advancements to improve prevention, early detection, treatments, and survival outcomes for ovarian cancer. By combining datasets and expertise, a collaborative approach to AI research can confer significant benefits.

In response to this opportunity, Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (USA), Ovarian Cancer Action (UK), Ovarian Cancer Canada (Canada) and the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (Australia) have formed the **Global Ovarian Cancer Research Consortium** and are launching a $1M (USD) international research grant program focused on harnessing AI to improve patient outcomes.

To further enhance this opportunity, Microsoft AI For Good Lab, a philanthropic program at Microsoft which offers access to advanced Microsoft Azure cloud computing for nonprofits, academia, and researchers working on challenges in the area of health, is offering additional support through this grant. Funded investigators will have access to support from Microsoft in the form of in-kind Azure computing credits. This in-kind support from Microsoft will be in addition to the financial support from OCRA, OCC, OCA and OCRF. For FAQs regarding this partnership, please look under the Collaborative Research Development Grant – Microsoft AI section of the FAQs found here: https://ocrahope.org/research/for-grantees/grant-application-faq/

Applications must demonstrate collaboration across USA, Canada, UK and Australia, in addition to the use of AI-driven innovation and patient involvement. Proposals may build upon existing work or introduce novel projects. Applications will be jointly reviewed by experts in ovarian cancer and AI, and global patient advocates. The process will be managed by the four global partners. Letters of Intent and applications will be accepted through Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance's (OCRA) grant management platform and OCRA will oversee the administration of funded projects.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

1. This collaborative grant requires a team of researchers. The Principal Investigator (one Principal Investigator [PI] must be selected and there may only be one PI) and other lead investigators must have full-time faculty appointments in a university, in a school of medicine or public health, a recognized non-profit scientific research facility, or medical research institute. They should not currently be in a training program, such as a postdoctoral fellowship program.
2. Teams must consist of at least 4 lead senior researchers with representation from at least the following countries – United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. The lead investigators from each country should not currently be in a training program.
3. Teams must include involvement of an AI specialist or experienced AI researcher to ensure robust methodology and innovation.
4. It is strongly preferred that teams include at least one member who is a clinician, MD/DO/PA, etc., or has relevant clinical experience, to ensure clinical translatability.
5. You may also include a named investigator who is a patient or consumer partner in your team (optional), but you must have a clear plan on how they will be included on the project and in decision making.
6. Proposed projects must demonstrate a significant application of AI in ovarian cancer research.
7. Teams will have the option to select if they would like to partner with Microsoft AI For Good Lab on this grant which will give the research team access to support from Microsoft in the form of free, in-kind Azure computing credits. Of note, Microsoft waves all rights to all existing and new intellectual property (IP) generated from the project, and IP will remain under the researcher and/or their host institution.
8. The selection committee will consider most favorably applications that are creative, innovative, that demonstrate a significant application of AI, and that hold the most promise in one or more of the following areas: screening and early detection; etiology and prevention; therapeutic discovery, development and response; recurrence monitoring; cancer biology; genetics. Submissions that focus on data management and infrastructure are also eligible.
9. Funding is only available to accredited non-profit universities/colleges, non-profit research hospitals or institutes, or a recognized non-profit scientific research facility. For-profit entities, consulting companies, or non-profits who are not conducting the research themselves are not eligible for funding.
10. Each applicant (the PI) may only submit one LOI.

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

Terms of Grant

1. OCRA will be the organization awarding & managing the grant.
2. Support of up to $1,000,000 USD total over three years will be awarded to the institution of the Principal Investigator.
3. All grants funded by Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA) are subject to OCRA's Terms and Conditions. OCRA will not modify the Terms and Conditions (T&C) at the request of individual institutions. Our current T&C can be found on OCRA's website under the FAQ section.
4. This grant has an anticipated start date of February 1, 2026.

5. Grant recipients will be required to submit activation materials and annual progress reports (narrative and financial) throughout the life of the grant to OCRA, which will be shared with the global funding partners.
6. 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 all funders.
7. *Successful applicants who elected to partner with Microsoft AI For Good Lab will contract directly with Microsoft for the support of that part of their project.*

Selection Process

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by all Funders and a special review committee, which is comprised of distinguished members of the medical, research and patient advocacy community from across the world. The majority of LOIs will be triaged at this stage; only a fraction of those submitting LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals.

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 we are not able to provide feedback to applicants on their LOIs.*

Timeline

The submission deadline for LOIs is 5:00pm Eastern Time (New York, USA) on June 18, 2025. Late submissions and extension requests are not permitted. All applicants will be notified of their status in early August 2025. Please be sure to add Grants@ocrahope.org to your safe sender list in your email so you can get all emails from OCRA's grant system. For those selected to submit full proposals, full proposals will be due early September 2025.

Application Process

Letters of Intent must be submitted in English via the [SmartSimple](https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/) website (https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/) by 5:00pm ET on June 18, 2025, by the Principal Investigator. OCRA grants may only have one Principal Investigator listed, however, there is no limit to key personnel.

The SmartSimple website is easy to use and will lead you through the completion of the LOI. We recommend you log into the website soon and familiarize yourself with the website as well as the required parts of the LOI.

Beyond basic contact information about yourself and key personnel, LOIs must include the following:

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 to allow the reviewers a clear understanding of your proposed project. The abstract should be presented in 6,000 characters or less (including spaces). Text only; figures, images, and graphs are not permitted.

2. **PI Biosketch** -- A current NIH biosketch for the PI is required (must match the person submitting the LOI). Please use the NIH biosketch template available for download in SmartSimple and adhere to its instructions and space limitations.

3. **Other Lead Investigators Biosketches** -- NIH biosketches should be provided for the other 3 lead personnel on this team project. Biosketches should be combined into one document, clearly indicate which country the researcher is from, and uploaded as a single PDF. Please use the biosketch template available for download in SmartSimple and adhere to its instructions and space limitations.

4. **Key Personnel Biosketches** -- NIH biosketches should be provided for anyone else you listed in SmartSimple as Key Personnel. All key personnel biosketches should be combined into one document and uploaded as a single PDF. *Please use the biosketch template available for download* in SmartSimple, and adhere to its instructions and space limitations.

5. **Budget** -- Requested total budget amount up to $1,000,000.00 USD. OCRA permits indirect costs (up to 10% of direct costs), those costs are included in the listed budget amount. A detailed budget is not required during the LOI; only an estimated total budget (in USD) request is required at this time.

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/).

Informational Webinar

The Global Ovarian Cancer Research Consortium will host an informational webinar on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 4:00 pm ET. This webinar will address information about this grant program, the four funders, how to apply, and specific questions. Register here: https://secure.ovariancanada.org/site/Calendar?id=103308&view=RSVP&s_locale=en_CA. If you are unable to attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted to OCRA's website for review.

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 the Funders:

OCRA – United States
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA) is the oldest and largest ovarian and gynecologic cancer charity in the world. Since its founding in 1994, OCRA has grown into the leading non-government funder of ovarian and related gynecologic cancer research, having invested over $128 million in research worldwide. Through innovative education and advocacy efforts, compassionate support programs, and cross-industry collaboration, OCRA is driving progress and pushing the boundaries of what's possible to improve outcomes for patients and advance research in its quest for a cure.

Ovarian Cancer Action – United Kingdom
Ovarian Cancer Action (OCA) are the UK's leading ovarian cancer research charity, working on early detection, prevention and treatments so that no woman dies of ovarian cancer. We live and breathe this lifesaving, world-leading research. We fund more ovarian cancer research than any other UK gynaecological cancer charity. It's how we've driven some of the biggest breakthroughs of the last 19 years. In the UK only 1 in 3 women live more than 10 years after a diagnosis. We are working to better prevent, treat and detect ovarian cancer, so that by 2032 at least half of women with ovarian cancer live for 10 years. We're also the only charity at the heart of the global ovarian cancer research community and have been for four decades through hosting the Helene Harris Memorial Trust (HHMT) Forum on ovarian cancer since the 80's. By connecting the world's leading scientists together, we're creating a powerful hub of experience, expertise and insight.

Ovarian Cancer Canada – Canada
Ovarian Cancer Canada is the only national health charity in Canada entirely focused on uncovering key discoveries that can change the reality of an ovarian cancer diagnosis. We are building research capacity, unlocking insights into rarer forms of the disease, addressing urgent needs, and bringing hope to people across the country. We are driving ovarian cancer research in Canada faster than ever – changing the landscape of available treatment options, investing in innovative early detection projects, and preventing ovarian cancer before it starts. To ensure this work has the greatest impact on women, we're putting the voices of those with lived experience at the forefront through our Patient Partners in Research program. After decades without real change, improved outcomes are finally possible.
Since being founded in 1998, we've come a long way, and we are not stopping now. Our time has come to reach even more people affected by ovarian cancer, others at high risk for this disease, and concerned Canadians who know everyone deserves to live their best lives. Ovarian cancer patients deserve our attention. They deserve our focus on eradicating this disease. We will not rest until we've achieved this.

Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation – Australia
The Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) is Australia's leading independent funder of ovarian cancer research, having funded close to $30M towards the prevention, detection and treatment of ovarian cancer. With fewer than 50 per cent of women and girls in Australia diagnosed with ovarian cancer surviving more than five years, our vision is a future where those impacted by ovarian cancer can live healthy, vital lives. To achieve this, we are catalysing change and accelerating progress by increasing awareness, advocating for greater investment and equity, collaborating nationally and internationally, and strategically funding high-impact medical research. Every dollar we raise comes from the Australian community, driven by a shared determination to make our vision a reality. Together, we will overcome ovarian cancer.

<div align="center">

For inquiries or further information, please contact:
Kristin McGowan
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Telephone: (212) 268-1002
E-mail: grants@ocrahope.org

</div>