



2024 Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award

\$300,000 over two years

Letter of Intent (LOI) Guidelines

Purpose of Award

The aim of the 2024 Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award is to support exceptionally novel and creative projects with great potential to produce breakthroughs in our understanding of bladder cancer. Applications to this funding mechanism must include innovative approaches and new ideas which may include, but are not limited to, novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions in the field of basic, translational, clinical, or epidemiological research with direct applicability and relevance to bladder cancer and/or upper tract urothelial carcinoma.

Projects that are high-risk and high-reward, as opposed to incremental in nature, are required. Applications lacking innovative approaches will be considered non-responsive to this funding mechanism. Successful proposals must propose projects that 1) address an important problem and/or critical barrier to progress in the field of bladder cancer research and 2) contribute to an area in which there is a significant gap in current knowledge. Well-justified proposals for innovative projects that demonstrate a high likelihood of developing preliminary data necessary to prepare and submit a competitive research grant application to a major funding agency are encouraged.

The award is available to full time, independent investigators who are affiliated with a non-profit academic, medical, or research institution within the United States or Canada. Eligible recipients include investigators who have experience in other areas of cancer or biomedical/health science research with promising ideas and approaches that can be applied to bladder cancer research. If the applicant's primary area of expertise is outside of bladder cancer, including a Co-Primary Investigator with expertise in bladder cancer research is acceptable and recommended.

The award is for \$300,000 over two years for direct research expenses, which may include salary and benefits for postdoctoral or clinical research fellows and/or research assistants (salary support for the Primary Investigator or Co-Primary Investigator(s) is limited to 20% of the total budget); research/lab supplies; and equipment. The second year of funding is dependent on approval of a one-year progress report after submission to and review by BCAN.

Up to two proposals will be funded for the Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award in 2024. The awardees are expected to attend the annual Bladder Cancer Think Tank meeting in August 2025 and to present the results of the funded research during the 2026 Think Tank meeting.

Application Process

Interested applicants must submit an LOI by **Friday, January 12, 2024, at 5:00pm EST**. The LOIs will be reviewed by members of the Research Innovation Award Scientific Review Group. Those applicants whose LOIs are deemed most meritorious will be invited to submit full research proposals and compete for the award. Applicants will be notified of the decision status of the LOI by Wednesday, February 28, 2024, and the deadline for complete applications will be Wednesday, April 10, 2024. The award decision will be announced in July 2024. BCAN will not discriminate based on gender, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, age, or any other factor irrelevant to the quality of the LOI.

Eligibility

1. Applicant must have a medical and/or doctoral degree (including Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.D.S, D.V.M, Pharm.D., Sc.D., D.N.S. or equivalent doctoral degree) at the time of submission. If the applicant's primary area of expertise is outside of bladder cancer, including a Co-Primary Investigator with expertise in bladder cancer research is acceptable and recommended.
2. Applicant must be an independent investigator employed by a non-profit academic, medical, or research institution within the United States or Canada. Proof of permanent resident status or a valid work visa is required if the applicant is not an American or Canadian citizen.
3. Employees or subcontractors of for-profit private industry are not eligible for the award but may serve as Collaborators for an applicant.
4. Applicant may not have previously received a BCAN Research Innovation Award nor have other funding with significant scientific overlap.
5. Eligible applicants are allowed to hold only one active grant from BCAN at a time.
6. Investigators may submit only one LOI for a Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award and may not apply for this award and for any other BCAN research award concurrently.
7. Applications may have Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). However, applicants should make the rationale and roles for this choice clear to the reviewers.

LOI Description

1. The LOI is limited to 2 pages and must describe the proposed bladder cancer research project, including the Specific Aims; Rationale, Methodology and Approach; Statement of Innovation (describing how the proposed study employs an innovative approach to bladder cancer research, either conceptual or technological); and Statement of Significance and Relevance to bladder cancer. Must be in English. Please follow NIH guidelines:
Paper Size: 8.5" x 11"
Margins: at least 1/2" all sides.
Font: Arial or Helvetica at least 11pt (or larger).
2. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to 2 pages (in addition to the 2-page LOI limit).
3. The applicant's biographical sketch, <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>, must be attached and adhere to NIH page limits. Applications with Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) must include the Co-PIs biosketch with the LOI submission. Co-Investigator biosketches are not required for the LOI submission but should be included with the full application.
4. The technical abstract is limited to 2,000 characters including spaces. The technical abstract should provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed bladder cancer research project. Specify the relevant background, research question, hypothesis, aims, and methodologies of the project.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

LOIs will be reviewed by the Research Innovation Award Scientific Review Group, comprised of medical and scientific experts recognized for their own accomplishments in cancer research and as leaders in the field. Approximately 10 applicants who submit letters of intent will be invited to submit a full proposal.

The Scientific Review Group will also review and score the full applications based on the merits of the research proposals. In full applications, the budget description should be sufficiently detailed to evaluate the feasibility and timeline of the project. The award review process is based on the peer review system used by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Any reviewer with a conflict of interest is excused from voting on a specific application.

The Chair of the Scientific Review Group will present the highest-ranked proposals to the BCAN Management Committee, which will accept the scientific merit scores. The Management Committee will review the ranking of the top applications based solely on those scores and recommend the final award decision, based on all included criteria specified in the RFA, for approval by the BCAN Board of Directors. Any member of the Management Committee or the BCAN Board of Directors with a conflict of interest is prohibited from voting on and discussing the award decisions.

Evaluation of LOIs and invited applications will include the following criteria:

1. **Investigator:** Does the applicant have appropriate experience and training to successfully complete the proposed project? Has the applicant achieved, or do they have the potential of achieving, a track record of accomplishments to advance the field of bladder cancer research? If the applicant's primary area of expertise is outside of bladder cancer, does the project include a Co-Principal Investigator with sufficient knowledge and expertise to ensure the project's success?

2. **Innovation:** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice patterns by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Areas to be addressed include but are not limited to bladder cancer prevention; bladder cancer detection and diagnoses; understanding tumor development, recurrence and progression; improving therapy and outcomes.

3. **Significance:** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field of bladder cancer research? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/ or clinical practice be improved?

4. **Approach:** Are the overall strategy, methodology, analyses, and statistics well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? Is the budget fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project and timeline?

5. **Environment:** What institutional support, equipment, and resources are available to the applicant, and are they adequate to successfully complete the proposed project?

LOI Filing Instructions

All applicants for the Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award must submit a LOI online by Friday, January 12, 2024 at 5:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time using the ProposalCentral website at <https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=2432&ProposalID=-1>

Exceptions will not be made to the LOI deadline of Friday, January 12, 2024, at 5:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time. BCAN strongly suggests beginning application submission well before the deadline to allow time for submission and electronic signatures.

You will receive a confirmation email once you submit your LOI. If you do not receive one, or if you have questions, please contact Anne Collins at acollins@bcan.org.

Inquiries or technical issues regarding ProposalCentral and the online application process should be directed to customer support at Phone: 703-964-5840, Toll-free phone: 1-800-875-2562, Email: pcsupport@altum.com. Please note that ProposalCentral live customer support is only available from 9am – 5pm U.S. Eastern Time.

Inquiries about the LOI award guidelines, eligibility requirements, and LOI materials can be directed to Rebecca Johnson (rjohnson@bcan.org), Anne Collins (acollins@bcan.org), or to BCAN (grants@bcan.org).

Applicants experiencing technical difficulties must contact ProposalCentral well before the 5:00PM deadline. Please do not contact BCAN for technical assistance.