



Young Investigator Award (YIA) 2026
\$100,000 over two years

Purpose of Award

This Award is intended to support the development of outstanding research scientists and clinical cancer research investigators who have demonstrated a commitment to improving the understanding, treatment, and/or experience of bladder cancer and/or upper tract urothelial cancer. Investigators may be working in basic, translational, clinical, epidemiologic, bioengineering or any other field, but they must be working in a research environment capable of supporting transformational bladder cancer research. Additionally, investigators may be working in a research environment capable of supporting transformational patient-oriented clinical bladder cancer research (e.g. studies of shared decision making, access to care, quality of care, quality of life, health disparities, comparative effectiveness research, patient-centered outcomes research, and survivorship).

Applications will be evaluated on the quality of the applicant's research plan and the resources and environment available to the applicant. This includes the ability of the primary mentor and relevant department to provide appropriate guidance and protected time during the Award period. Note, this Award does not cover indirect costs for the Award recipient's institution.

Eligibility

1. At the time of submission, the applicant must be within six years of completion of a professional degree such as a MD, DO, Ph.D., MD-Ph.D., DNP, DScPAS or equivalent, or clinical training such as residency, fellowship, or post-doctoral fellowship. The applicant may hold the title of Senior Postdoctoral Fellow, Instructor, Research Associate, Assistant Professor, or equivalent. Applicants holding the title of Associate Professor or higher at the start of grant funding are not eligible to apply.
2. The proposed research's focus must be bladder cancer, including upper tract urothelial cancer.
3. The applicant must be from a US or Canadian sponsoring academic, non-profit, or governmental institution. Proof of permanent resident status or a valid work visa is required if the applicant is not an American or Canadian citizen.
4. The applicant must have a mentor within or approved by the sponsoring institution. The mentor must assume responsibility for the overall conduct of the project, ensure protected research time, and provide guidance for the research. The sponsoring institution must

ensure institutional support for the research. Mentors who have specific knowledge and experience in bladder cancer are encouraged. In instances where the primary mentor lacks bladder cancer experience, additional collaborator support from bladder cancer experts is strongly advised. The applicant can have collaborators from outside institutions. The applicant must submit a letter of approval from their institution should they wish to have a mentor from an outside institution. BCAN will not identify mentors or “match” applicants to mentors, to ensure an equitable and fair process for all applicants.

5. Prior BCAN Young Investigator Award recipients are not eligible to apply for this Award.
6. The applicant may not have other funding with significant scientific overlap. If an applicant receives notice of funding from another funding agency for a proposal with significant scientific overlap following submission of their YIA application or following Award notice, the applicant must decide between the Awards. BCAN will not allow the modification of aims and will administratively withdraw an application under review or require relinquishment of a funded award.
7. Eligible applicants are allowed to hold only one active grant from BCAN at a time.
8. BCAN will accept only one proposal from each applicant per announcement. There is no limit to the number of applications per institution.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

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 application. Interested applicants must submit an application by **5:00 PM (EST) on Monday, February 23, 2026**. The Award decision will be announced by June 2026. The 2026 Young Investigator Awards will start in July 2026.

Applications will be evaluated by a Scientific Review Group (SRG) comprised of medical and scientific experts respected for their own accomplishments in genitourinary cancer research and as leaders in the field. The SRG will review and score the applications based on the merits of the research applications. The Award review process is based on the same peer review system utilized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Scoring of research projects is done individually by each medical expert, and scores are added together to determine the final ranking of each proposal. Any reviewer with a conflict of interest is excused from reviewing, discussing, and voting on a specific application.

The SRG Chair will present the highest ranked proposals to the BCAN Research Management Committee (comprised of members of BCAN’s Scientific Advisory Board, as well as patient advocates), 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 decisions, based on all included criteria specified in the Young Investigator Award Guidelines, 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 excused from discussing and voting on the Award decisions.

Evaluation of the proposals will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Merit of the research plan and objectives.
2. Applicant's qualifications.
3. Ability of primary mentor to provide appropriate guidance during the Award period and demonstration that there are adequate resources available to the applicant to support the research project.
4. Appropriateness of budget to completing the research plan during the grant period.
5. Relevance to the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and/or treatment of bladder cancer.
 - a. If the proposal is focused on patient-oriented clinical bladder cancer research, then the proposal will be evaluated on the degree of patient stakeholder/advocate involvement in the design and implementation of the study and evidence of the project's feasibility, acceptability, and relevance to bladder cancer patients.

Application Instructions

BCAN requires applicants to submit an online application using ProposalCentral by Monday, February 23rd, 2026, at 5:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time. The online application is available here:

<https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=2175&ProposalID=-1>

Exceptions will not be made to the application deadline of Monday, February 23rd, 2026, 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 application. 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 ProposalCentral customer support at: Phone: 703-964-5840, Toll-free phone: 1-800-875-2562, Email: pcsupport@altum.com. Please note the live ProposalCentral customer support is only available from 9am – 5pm U.S. Eastern Time.

Inquiries about the program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and application 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 EST deadline. Please do not contact BCAN for technical assistance.

Application Components

The following information is required to submit a complete application. Numbers correspond to the application sections found on the left side of the ProposalCentral website.

Please ensure that your application and ALL attachments conform to the instructions outlined in these guidelines and the related templates, including formatting (e.g., page limits, section headers, etc.) and required content. Additionally, please make certain that your application contains ALL the required components and attachments.

1. Project & Funding Information

2. Download Templates & Instructions

- a. Guidelines and templates can be downloaded from this page.
- b. You must download and complete the following templates: Research Proposal, Training and Environment Summary, References, Personal Statement, Applicant's Biosketch, and Mentor's Biosketch.
- c. If your proposal is focused on patient-oriented clinical bladder cancer research, then you will also need to download and complete the Patient Advocate Form.
- d. Templates must be uploaded as PDF files.
- e. Completed templates must be uploaded in section II Application Attachments.

3. Enable Other Users to Access This Proposal

4. Applicant Information

- a. Please be prepared to submit your ORCID number in your application.

5. Institutional and Signing Official Information

6. Mentor & Key Personnel Information Please include pertinent collaborators' information (e.g., Co-Investigators, etc.).

7. Abstracts & Key Words

- a. **Lay Abstract (2,000 characters)**: Describe the project in a way that will be understood by people who do not have scientific or medical backgrounds. The abstract should clearly describe the scientific objectives and rationale of the proposal and should avoid technical and scientific terms when possible. The lay abstract should not duplicate the technical abstract. If the proposal is selected to receive an Award, BCAN may use this information in press releases, Award announcements, and to provide information to the general public regarding its Awards program. A statement regarding the applicability of the research to patients with bladder cancer is required.
- b. **Technical Abstract (2,000 characters)**: The technical abstract should provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed work, including the background, research question, objective or hypothesis and its supporting rationale, significance of the proposed work to the program's goals, specific aims of the study, and study design.

8. Budget Period Detail

- a. Please enter all budget information here for the project. See instructions under section 9: Budget Summary & Justification.

9. Budget Summary & Justification (5,000 characters)

- a. Please use the budget template in ProposalCentral. The total Award amount is \$100,000, payable over two years in amounts specified in the proposed budget for each year. There is a spending cap of \$67,000 during the first year of the Award. At least 80% of the yearly budget must be expended by the end of each reporting year as a condition of approval for new funds.
- b. Identify, by name and title, any additional personnel, and their specific responsibilities during each year of the proposed project.
- c. No more than 15% of the budget may be used for salary support for the Principal Investigator including fringe benefits. Please include the percentage effort for the amount of time that will be devoted to this project. There is no minimum effort percentage, but time commitment to the project will be considered when evaluating the application.
- d. Salary support for other research personnel must be specified in the budget template and must adhere to NIH-applicable salary limits.
- e. Up to \$2,000 should be allotted specifically for the applicant's travel to the annual BCAN Think Tank meeting and/or for any other travel essential to conducting the study.
- f. No portion of the Award is to be used for indirect costs to the sponsoring institution (e.g. overhead/administrative).
- g. Funds cannot be used to support the purchase of capital equipment. BCAN considers the threshold for a capital expenditure to be the lower of \$2,000 or any capitalization threshold established by the applicant's institution. All equipment purchases require advance approval from BCAN.
- h. BCAN considers the budget submitted in the grant application to be the final, approved budget unless any changes are requested by the Awardee and approved by BCAN prior to signing the Grant Activation Form. Any deviation from an approved budget line item exceeding 10% requires prior written approval from BCAN. Awardees must submit a formal request outlining proposed budget adjustments before any related expenditures are made.

10. Organization Assurances

11. Application Attachments

- a. Complete and upload the following documents into your application as PDFs using the provided templates.
- b. Formatting instructions:
 - i. Must be in English, single-spaced.
 - ii. Paper Size: 8.5" x 11".
 - iii. Margins: at least ½" all sides.
 - iv. Font: Arial or Helvetica at least 11pt (or larger).

- c. **Research Proposal (Required; Limited to 4 pages, including figures and tables):** A two-year research proposal is required. Applicants must include a description of how this research may benefit patients with bladder cancer. If the proposal is focused on patient-centered clinical bladder cancer research, then you must also describe the specific elements of the study design and approach that are patient centered. The four-page limit applies only to the proposal and not to the references, CV, or supplemental information. The following key sections must be included and presented in this order: Title, Background, Research Question, Hypothesis and Specific Aims, Preliminary Data (Optional; If Available), Research Design and Methods, and a brief Summary with Timeline and Milestones delineating research activities to be completed over the course of the project.
- d. **References (Required):** There is no page limit for this section. Please use single-spaced, 11-point font for this section. References must be listed as FULL CITATIONS. Each citation must include the names of all authors, publication title, book or journal title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
- e. **Personal Statement (Required; Limited to 1 page):** Describe the applicant's career development plan, including:
 - i. Impact of the Award on advancing the applicant's career in academia-based bladder cancer research.
 - ii. The applicant's role in developing and implementing the proposed research study.
 - iii. Other funding agencies/organizations where this research proposal was or will be submitted. If none, please indicate N/A.
- f. **Training and Environment Summary (Required; Limited to 1 page):** This section should provide an accurate representation of the time commitment that will be dedicated to the proposed project and should provide a detailed description of the applicant's non-research responsibilities during this period. The time commitment described should also be reflected in the supporting mentor letter that will accompany this application. Additional information regarding resources available to the applicant to successfully complete the proposed project should be included.
- g. **Applicant's Biographical Sketch (Required; adhere to NIH page limits):** Please use the appropriate NIH biosketch form found in Section 2: Download Templates & Instructions.
- h. **Mentor's Biographical Sketch (Required; adhere to NIH page limits):** Please use the appropriate NIH biosketch form found in Section 2: Download Templates & Instructions.
- i. **Two Letters of Recommendation (required on institutional letterhead):**
 - i. **Primary Mentor Letter:** This letter should emphasize the applicant's potential for independence in an academic research setting. The letter should also describe mentoring experience, time protection for the

applicant, and a commitment to providing resources and mentoring for the applicant for the duration of the Award as related to this project.

ii. **Institution Letter from the Department Chair, Dean, or Cancer Center**

Director: This letter should guarantee a specific time effort dedicated to this project, mechanisms by which the applicant's time will be protected from other obligations, and a commitment to provide resources to support the applicant's research proposal.

j. **For patient-centered clinical bladder cancer research, please complete a Patient Advocate Form:**

Limited to one page. These applications will be reviewed by a patient advocate to evaluate how well the applicant explains the potential impact of the proposal. This form should be completed by the applicant and should address the following three questions to detail the relevance of the proposal to bladder cancer patients, caregivers, or other stakeholders, and the focus of the proposed work on patient-centered care:

- i. Describe the patient-centered problem, evidence gap and/or specific health decision being addressed, its scope, and the significance of this research for patients with bladder cancer. How will the results of this research improve outcomes that bladder cancer patients and other stakeholders care about (e.g., survival, functioning, symptoms, quality of life, etc.) and inform an identified healthcare decision?
 - ii. If the study is successful, what are the next steps to move the research into clinical practice?
 - iii. Has the applicant engaged patient advocates and relevant stakeholders in the design, selection of outcomes, and implementation of this study? If not, the applicant should describe plans to engage patient advocates during study implementation, including plans to consult with BCAN as needed. BCAN may be able to assist applicants/awardees in identifying appropriate patient advocate partners to engage and consult on their research.
 - iv. The response should be written in a way that will be understood by people who do not have a scientific or a medical background.
- k. **Supplemental Materials (optional):** Supplemental materials may be uploaded ONLY to include letters from collaborators and IRB/IACUC/IND approvals (do not include protocols), if applicable and already received. Do NOT include figures or submit reprints of articles with this application. Additional letters of recommendation may also be uploaded.

12. Validate

- a. Validate the application in ProposalCentral. This is an essential step. An application that has not been validated cannot be submitted. "Validate" checks for required data and attachments. You will not be able to submit if all the required data and attachments have not been provided.

13. Signatures Page

- a. The applicant, mentor, and institutional signing official must electronically sign this page in ProposalCentral. The application will be considered incomplete if this page is not complete. BCAN is no longer requiring an ink signature for submission. You can print signature pages to save or keep a copy of your application. You do not need to upload anything here.

14. Submit

- a. After successfully passing the “Validate” and “Application Attachments” checks, click the “Submit” link. An email will be sent to you confirming your submission.
- b. Once your application is submitted you may view it by accessing the “Submitted” link under the “Manage Proposals” tab. The status column will show “Submitted” and the date. You may need to refresh your browser screen after submitting the application to see the updated status.

There will be no exceptions to the **deadline of Monday, February 23, 2026 at 5:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time** to submit your application.

CHANGES TO YOUR APPLICATION

Withdrawal of Application: Please advise BCAN promptly, in writing, should you decide to withdraw your application for any reason. Your letter or email should include your name, the title of the proposal, and the reason for withdrawal.

Change of Address: Notify BCAN, in writing, of any changes of address, email, or phone number, following the submission of an application. Include your name and application number. The email address provided with your application will be used for all official communication about your submission, including the recipient selection results, and must be kept up to date.

Terms of Award

Award Administration and Disbursement

Payments will be made annually to the comptroller or to the designated financial officer of the sponsoring institution, which shall then disburse the funds to the individual Award recipient. BCAN considers the start of the grant to occur at the time of grant activation and disbursement of funds and aligns progress reports deadlines accordingly. The Award start date will be no earlier than July 1st, 2025. Any activities that occur from the time of grant activation through the end of the first reporting year, including start-up activities, should be reported on in the first progress report period. The Award recipient and the sponsoring institution shall pay at their own costs all taxes and impositions in connection with the Award. The Award does not create an employer-employee relationship between the Award recipient and BCAN. BCAN does not assume any legal responsibility or obligation for the conduct or acts of the Award recipient, the mentor, or the sponsoring institution.

BCAN considers the budget submitted in the grant application to be the final, approved budget

unless any changes are requested by the Awardee and approved by BCAN prior to signing the Grant Activation Form. Any deviation from an approved budget line item exceeding 10% requires prior written approval from BCAN. Awardees must submit a formal request outlining proposed budget adjustments before any related expenditure is made.

Funds cannot be used to support the purchase of capital equipment. BCAN considers the threshold for a capital expenditure to be the lower of \$2,000 or any capitalization threshold established by the applicant's institution). All equipment purchases require advance approval from BCAN.

Research Scope and Compliance Requirements

Any changes to the specific aims or major changes in research design must be communicated to BCAN in writing prior to implementation of such changes. Examples of a major change in research design include, but are not limited to, studying a different patient population or therapeutic than originally proposed.

Applications involving animals and/or human participants must receive approval from their Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and/or Institutional Review Board (IRB), respectively. Documentation of IACUC and/or IRB approval must be provided to BCAN prior to the distribution of the Award and yearly during the funding period. Applications involving an Investigational New Drug (IND) must receive approval from their IRB. Documentation of IND approval must be provided to BCAN prior to the distribution of the Award and yearly during the funding period.

The applicant may not have received another award or have other funding with significant scientific overlap. If an applicant receives notice of funding from another funding agency for a proposal with significant scientific overlap following submission of their YIA application or following Award notice, the applicant must choose between the Awards. BCAN will not allow modification to the aims and will administratively withdraw an application under review or require relinquishment of a funded award.

Reporting and Use of Funds

At the conclusion of the first 12 months of the Award period, the Award recipient shall submit a written summary documenting in reasonable detail about their progress in completing the research project. Funding for the second 12 months is dependent on the submission of this progress report and review and approval by BCAN. At the conclusion of the Award period, the Award recipient must complete a final report summarizing the research conducted, and any plans to continue the research beyond the Award period. No cost extensions are allowed with advance notification and BCAN's approval. BCAN requires a final financial report within 60 days of the end of the Award period. BCAN requires that any unused Award funds must be returned to BCAN by the sponsoring institution via check within 60 days of the end of the Award period.

Publications, research talks, and poster presentations based on any study or research done with the support of the Award should acknowledge the support of BCAN throughout and following the Award period. Reprints of such publications or abstracts should be sent to BCAN.

The Award recipient may be asked to complete brief Award outcome reports for BCAN detailing any publications, funding Awards, collaborations, or other outcomes resulting from this Award for a period of three years after Award completion. The Award recipient understands that this reporting obligation survives the Award period.

The Award recipient will be expected to attend BCAN's Bladder Cancer Think Tank Meeting and is **required** to present their research results at the conclusion of the Award at the Bladder Cancer Think Tank Meeting occurring two years from the start of the award (i.e., in July–August 2028).

Delays, Transfers, and Termination

In the event the Award recipient's research is substantively delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, or the recipient is unable to complete the project, the Award recipient and/or sponsoring institution is responsible for notifying BCAN as soon as possible to discuss next steps. In the event no mutually agreeable mitigation strategy is feasible that would allow for completion of the project and the Award is terminated, the unused portion of Award funds must be returned to BCAN by the sponsoring institution within 30 days of the date of termination.

BCAN permits the transfer of an active award to a new institution in the event that a Principal Investigator (PI) changes institutions during the grant period. Such transfers are subject to BCAN review and approval. Transfers will only be considered to another eligible academic, nonprofit, or governmental institution located in the United States or Canada. Transfers to for-profit, private industry, or pharmaceutical organizations are not permitted.

To initiate a transfer, the following documentation must be provided:

- A formal relinquishing statement from the original institution, including a financial report of expenditures to date and the unexpended balance available for transfer.
- Documentation from the new institution confirming the PI's appointment and willingness to assume administrative and fiscal responsibility for the award, including assurance of adequate facilities and resources.
- A request from the PI to transfer the award.
- A scientific progress report summarizing work completed to date and describing any modifications resulting from the transfer.

Upon BCAN's acceptance of the above, a new Grant Agreement Form (GAF) must be executed with the new institution. Transfers are not guaranteed and remain subject to BCAN's approval. If approved, BCAN will authorize the transfer of remaining funds.

BCAN reserves the right to terminate this grant, in whole or in part, if the Awardee materially fails to comply with any term or condition of the grant or if the Awardee receives concurrent funding with significant scientific overlap. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to adhere to performance objectives, reporting requirements, or the improper use of funds in accordance with the approved budget. Upon termination, the Awardee will be required to return any unspent or improperly used funds. BCAN may also withhold further payments pending resolution of the non-compliance.