Brain Research Foundation Seed Grant Program

To be eligible for this $100,000 two-year grant program, your institution **must receive an email invitation from Brain Research Foundation,** to nominate **one faculty member (assistant or associate professor)** to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the BRF Seed Grant Program.

Brain Research Foundation's Annual Seed Grant Program was initiated in 1981. The purpose of our program is to provide start-up monies for new research projects in the field of neuroscience that will likely lead to extramural funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or other outside funding sources.

Brain Research Foundation's Scientific Review Committee will review the seed grant proposals and make recommendations for funding to the Foundation. The Committee consists of senior scientists broadly representing the various neuroscience-related programs. A representative of Brain Research Foundation is also present when the Committee meets.

Objectives:
The objective of the BRF Seed Grant Program is to support new and innovative projects, especially those of junior faculty, who are working in new research directions. BRF Seed Grant awards are not intended to supplement existing grants.

Funding and award period:
Each total grant is limited to $100,000 (direct costs) for a two year grant period. The first grant payment of $50,000 will be made upon completion of the Seed Grant Acceptance Form (June 2027). The final payment of $50,000 will be made contingent upon receipt of a preliminary progress and financial report (June 2028). **Funds must be utilized within the grant period**.

Final financial and progress reports, including a lay summary, will be required **within 60 days from the end date of the grant period.**

Funding Specifics:

1. **Funding is to be directed at pilot research projects that are both innovative and will likely lead to successful grant applications to NIH and other public and private funding entities.**
2. **Assistant Professor** – Junior faculty with a new research project that will generate pilot data that will lead to RO1 funding or a comparable outside grant will be first priority.
    - Must provide abstract and specific aims for current grants and indicate if there is any overlap.
3. **Associate Professor** – Faculty who are pursuing new research directions.
    - Must explain how the project is a new research direction.
    - Must provide abstract and specific aims for current grant(s) and indicate if there is any overlap.
4. A new technique is not considered a new direction unless it pertains to a different area of study.
5. Grants are NOT to be used for bridge funding between grants.

Allowable costs under this award:
100% of these BRF Seed Grant funds must be utilized for **direct costs**.

These costs may include:

- Purchase and care of laboratory animals
- Small pieces of laboratory equipment, totaling $7,500 or less
- Laboratory supplies
- Salary for scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians)

Costs not permitted:

- Facilities and administrative costs
- Salary recovery for the PI
- Domestic and foreign travel
- Conference or seminar fees
- Personal computers, computer hardware or software
- Large laboratory equipment (anything $7,500+)
- Tuition reimbursement
- Graduate student stipends or salaries
- Publication costs
- Indirect costs, including university fees associated with salary, equipment, etc.
- Charges or other costs that support the infrastructure an institution provides researchers
- **No fringe benefits including insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, additional compensation, etc.**

Publications resulting in projects funded in whole or part by the **Brain Research Foundation** Seed Grant will acknowledge **Brain Research Foundation** as a funding source.

I. Guidelines

Eligibility
To be eligible, PI must be a **full-time Assistant or Associate Professor at an invited US academic institution**, working in the area of studies of brain function. This includes molecular and clinical neuroscience as well as studies of neural, sensory, motor, cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning in health and disease. **The grant proposal must detail a new research project that is not funded by other sources.** This grant is **not to be used as bridge funding.**

Investigators at institutions that are affiliated with a medical school or university are eligible to apply **only through the institution where they hold a full-time faculty position.**

Scientists that have previously received a BRF Seed Grant may not receive the award for a second time unless all grant requirements from all previous awards are met. Only one PI may apply per application.

Ineligibility

1.) PI is ineligible if they are **not a full-time faculty member at the institution in which they are applying under.**
2.) PI is ineligible if they are a **Full Professor.**
3.) PI is ineligible if they are a **research assistant professor or research associate professor.**
4.) PI is ineligible to **submit more than one** BRF Seed Grant proposal in a funding period.
5.) PI is ineligible if they have BRF funding that will **overlap this grant period.**
6.) PI is ineligible if they have been awarded prior BRF funding, but have **failed to submit progress and financial reports** at the end of their grant period.
7.) PI is ineligible if they are a **member of the BRF Scientific Review Committee.**
8.) PI is ineligible if they are a **relative of BRF a representative**, including the SRC, as defined by the Foundation.

Nondiscrimination statement

Brain Research Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, ethnic origin and age.

II. Application Procedures

Applications must be submitted electronically via the BRF grants website **BRF will only accept one LOI per institution.**

The application process will be conducted in two phases:

PHASE I: Letter of Intent (LOI)

The first step in applying for a BRF Seed Grant is to submit a Letter of Intent. The purpose of the LOI is to determine worthy projects that will be asked to submit a complete Seed Grant application for further review. The LOI and invited application must be submitted by a single investigator.

LOI submission must include an institutional signature to verify nomination. LOI's submitted without an institutional signature will not be accepted.

LOI submission includes:

- BRF LOI form, including the following information:
  - Name and academic title of PI and department
  - Contact information, including mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and email address
  - Title of program project
  - Brief summary of program project (1400 word count) figures or images are not included in that count, you may add them in addition to the word count.
    - Include closing paragraph that explains how this research will develop (next steps)
  - References may be included on an additional page(s)
  - PI Signature
  - Institutional representative signature (verifies nomination by institution).
  - List of current grants (include abstracts, specific aims, and indicate if there is any overlap)
- Biographical sketch (using current NIH format) **with other support page** (*5 page maximum)*
  - Due to limited space, you can supply a link to your full list of publications

Deadline for the LOI is Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CST. LOIs will NOT be accepted after the deadline. No exceptions will be made. Submitted LOI's that have not been nominated by their institution will not be considered. You will be notified via email in early **January** with the decision on your LOI.

PHASE II: Application

If the LOI receives a favorable review, the PI will be invited to submit a grant application. The application **deadline is Thursday, March 4, 2027 at 4:00 pm CST. Applications will NOT be accepted after the deadline. No exceptions will be made.**

Application submission includes:

- BRF application form, including the following information:
  - Name, department and academic title of PI
  - Contact information, including mailing address, telephone number, and email address
  - Title of program project
  - PI Signature
- Research Plan *(3,500 word maximum)*
  - Figures are allowed and not counted towards the word count
  - You must use keystrokes to cut and paste images and figures, not your mouse
  - Include closing paragraph that explains how this research will develop (next steps)
- References may be included on an additional page(s)
- Biographical sketch (using current NIH format) **with other support page** (*5 page maximum)*
  - Due to limited space, you can supply a link to your full list of publications

Review Procedures

LOI submissions are reviewed and rated by the BRF Scientific Review Committee. So there is not a conflict of interest, the proposals will not be reviewed by committee members from the same institution as the applicant. (Note: Review procedures and guidelines will be followed according to NIH Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Non Disclosure Rules.) If the LOI receives a favorable review, the PI will be invited to submit a grant application.

Grant applications are subject to a two-stage peer-review process. In the first stage, proposals are reviewed and rated by senior scientists from the BRF Scientific Review Committee. The second stage includes further review and discussion of the scores and comments resulting from the initial review process. This process is also carried out by the BRF Scientific Review Committee.

In order to keep administrative costs of review minimal for the Foundation, no feedback can be provided to applicants.

IV. Animal and Human Subject Assurances

Brain Research Foundation requires animal welfare and human subject certifications that apply to your specific project. The certifications are not required for the LOI or application (if you are invited to submit) but are required if you are a seed grant recipient.

V. Contact Information

For additional information, you may contact the BRF at info@theBRF.org.