



Request for Applications: Milton Safenowitz Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

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1 Overview Information

1.1 Funder Overview

The ALS Association is doing “whatever it takes” to bring us closer to a cure for ALS and to make ALS a livable disease. Our strategic priorities are to find new treatments and cures, optimize current treatments and care, and prevent or delay harms of ALS. To support these priorities, our Research Program funds cutting-edge research across the translational pipeline from basic science to clinical trials

in addition to research in other important areas such as assistive technology, natural history, tool development, prevention, fellowship training and infrastructure. The Association is the largest philanthropic funder of ALS research worldwide, and our efforts have led to some of the most promising and significant advances in ALS research.

1.2 Funding Opportunity in Brief

Title: Milton Safenowitz Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Award: \$150,000 in total funding over two years to support the development of junior postdoctoral fellows doing research of high scientific merit and relevance to ALS. Applicants who received their highest degree (e.g., Ph.D. or M.D.) less than two years before the date the award starts are eligible to apply.

1.3 Key Dates

Request for Applications Open: February 1, 2023

Letter of Intent Due Date: March 8, 2023, 5 p.m. US ET

Full Proposal Due Date (by invitation only): May 10, 2023, 5 p.m. US ET

Anticipated Award Decision: July 2023

Anticipated Earliest Start Date: August 2023

Our expectation is that contracting is completed within 60 days of award offer. If not, we reserve the right to rescind the award offer and redirect the funds to other projects.

1.4 Grants Policy Statement

For more detail on all policies described in this document, please consult our Grants Policy Statement, available at: <https://www.als.org/Grants-Policy-Statement>.

2 Full Text of the Announcement

2.1 Funding Opportunity Description

2.1.1 Overview

The ALS Association believes that attracting bright, young scientists to enter and then remain in ALS research is essential for developing more effective treatments and a cure as soon as possible. That is why the Association supports the development of early career researchers through the Milton Safenowitz Postdoctoral Fellowship. The Safenowitz family established this award in memory of Milton Safenowitz, who died of ALS in 1998.

Safenowitz fellows work with a senior mentor and receive extensive exposure to the ALS research community through meetings and presentations. After completing this fellowship, approximately 75% of awardees stay in ALS research. Many go on to establish their own laboratories and mentor more ALS researchers along the way. Other Safenowitz fellows have moved on to successful careers in industry, medical writing and non-profit organizations.

2.1.2 Topics of Interest

We are especially interested in supporting fellowships focused on:

- New target validation, including in animal models and human cell models.
- Target or pathway biology in disease-relevant models, including defining upstream/downstream modifiers and convergence of promising target pathways.
- Factors that could ultimately reduce the risk of developing ALS, including studies of genetic risk factors, epigenetics, gene-environment interactions, lifestyle, occupational or dietary factors and epidemiology.
- New biomarker identification and the development and/or validation of biomarker assays.
- Managing ALS, including the development and/or validation of novel assistive technology and measurement of patient/caregiver/family burden.
- Analysis of omics data from resources including, but not limited to, PRO-ACT, Project MinE or Answer ALS to identify disease-relevant patient subtypes, new therapeutic targets or new biomarkers.

2.1.3 Topics Not Supported Under This Funding Opportunity

Priority will be given to biological targets and areas of research not funded through this program in the last three years. Proposals with significant overlap to already funded work will likely not be considered. To review previous fellowships awarded through this program, please visit The ALS Association's website: www.als.org/research/research-we-fund/fellowships/milton-safenowitz-postdoc-fellowship-program.

2.2 Award Information

2.2.1 Funding Instrument

- Grant: A support mechanism providing money to an eligible entity to carry out an approved project or activity
- If the funded research contributes to revenue generation, the Association expects to share, proportionally, in that revenue (see [Grants Policy Statement](#) for details)

2.2.2 Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards

- The number of awards is contingent upon The ALS Association's budget allocation and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.

2.2.3 Award Budget

- Budgets for total direct costs up to \$75,000 per year may be requested.
- Indirect costs are not provided for postdoctoral fellowship awards.

2.2.4 Award Period of Performance:

- The maximum period of performance is two (2) years.

2.3 Eligibility

2.3.1 Eligible Individuals

- Applicants who received their highest degree (e.g., Ph.D. or M.D.) less than two years before the date the award starts are eligible to apply.
- Individuals must have the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research and have an existing postdoctoral position, including the support of their mentor.

2.3.2 Eligible Organizations

- U.S. and non-U.S. public and private non-profit entities, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local governments and eligible agencies of the federal government.
- U.S. and non-U.S. biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies, or other publicly or privately held for-profit entities.

2.4 Content and Review of Applications

2.4.1 Content of Letter of Intent

By the date listed in [Key Dates](#) above, prospective applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent that includes the following information:

- Descriptive title of proposed activity
- Name, address, and telephone number of the principal investigator
- Names of other key personnel
- Participating institution(s)
- Title of this funding opportunity
- A scientific rationale for the proposed study and its relevance to ALS
- A brief description of the study hypothesis and/or objectives and overall experimental plan to meet those objectives

2.4.2 Review Criteria for Letter of Intent

- **Fit:** The letter of intent should allow reviewers to assess whether or not there is a good match between The ALS Association's interests/priorities and the project.
- **Relevance & Rationale:** The Letter of Intent should provide appropriate scientific rationale for the proposed study and its relevance to ALS.
- **Overall Experimental Objectives:** The Letter of Intent should provide a study hypothesis and/or objectives in addition to an overall experimental plan to meet those objectives.

The Letter of Intent can either be accepted or declined. If the Letter of Intent is accepted, the applicant will be invited to submit a full proposal. Reviewer comments from the Letter of Intent review phase will not be provided to the applicant.

2.4.3 Content of Full Proposal

If/when an applicant's Letter of Intent is accepted, instructions for submitting a full proposal will be provided.

2.4.4 Review Criteria for Full Proposal

- **Impact/contribution to ALS:** Potential of the proposed study to make an important contribution to ALS research.
- **Justification/Rationale for the Proposed Study:** Justification provided for the work proposed and overall goals/hypothesis for the project.
- **Research Plan:** Feasibility, timeline and methodology of experiments and whether the research plan will result in concrete results.
- **Research Team:** Qualifications of the postdoctoral fellow, senior PI, key personnel and collaborators/consultants are appropriate to perform the proposed research project.

2.4.5 Peer Review and Selection Process

- All full proposals are peer reviewed by an ad hoc Scientific Review Committee constituted by The ALS Association.
- The Scientific Review Committee's priority scores are forwarded only to The ALS Association Board of Trustees, which has the sole authority for approving the funding of research grants.
- For applications selected for funding, The ALS Association will send the reviewer comments to the PI. To the extent practical and within the scope of the budget, The ALS Association recommends that the PI integrate any recommendations that the reviewers may have suggested to further optimize the project and outcomes.

2.5 Submission Information

2.5.1 Format of Submissions

- All Letters of Intent and full proposals are to be submitted through our online grants management platform, Proposal Central: <https://proposalcentral.com/>.
- To find this funding opportunity on Proposal Central, navigate to the Grant Opportunities tab (<https://proposalcentral.com/GrantOpportunities.asp>) and search for Grant Maker: The ALS Association.
- Instructions on how to register as a new user of Proposal Central: <https://docs.proposalcentral.com/RegUser.pdf>.
- Applications must be prepared according to Proposal Central's instructions: <https://docs.proposalcentral.com/CreateApp.pdf>.
- Upon receipt, applications will be evaluated for completeness and compliance with application instructions. Applications that are incomplete and/or non-compliant will not be reviewed.

2.5.2 Funding Restrictions

The ALS Association awards are subject to the terms and conditions described in The ALS Association [Grants Policy Statement](#) and the award Agreement.

- Awards will be limited to \$150,000 total direct costs for the entire 2-year period of performance.
- Indirect costs are not provided on postdoctoral fellowship awards.
- Salary and fringe benefits of the postdoctoral fellow is allowed.
- Economy travel up to \$2,000 per year to attend scientific conferences is allowed.
- Equipment costs not to exceed 20% of the annual budget.
- Recurring annual cost-of-living/inflationary increases limited to 3% for personnel and consumable supplies.
- All funds must be expended within the approved period of support.
- All unexpended funds remaining at the end of the project must be returned to The ALS Association.

2.5.3 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All ALS Association grants include The ALS Association [Grants Policy Statement](#) as part of the Research Grant Agreement. The Grants Policy Statement includes the requirements applicable to animal welfare, human subject protections, data sharing, research resource sharing, publications, etc. All necessary ethical and regulatory approvals must be in place before experiments are initiated.

- **Animal Welfare Requirements:** The ALS Association requires its grantees to establish appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the humane care and use of animals used in research supported by The ALS Association.
- **Human Subject Requirements:** The ALS Association requires its grantees to establish appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the protection of human subjects participating in research supported by The ALS Association.
 - **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):** Domestic grantees must comply with the requirements of HIPAA.
 - **General Data Protection Regulation (E.U. 2016/679):** Foreign grantees must comply with the Regulation E.U. 2016/679, or its amended regulation, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016.
- **Intellectual Property:** Grantees shall have the first right, but not the obligation, to prepare, file, prosecute, and maintain all registerable rights in Intellectual Property arising from implementation of the Research Scope of Work at its sole expense.
- **Revenue Sharing:** If the funded research contributes to revenue generation, the Association expects to share, proportionally, in that revenue (see [Grants Policy Statement](#) for details).

2.6 Award Administration

2.6.1 Award Agreement and Payment Schedule

- A formal notification in the form of an ALS Association Research Grant Agreement (Agreement) is the authorizing document and will be provided to the applicant organization for successful applicants.
- The Agreement, signed by the applicant's authorized organizational representative (AOR), principal investigator and The ALS Association, will include the negotiated terms and conditions of the award between The ALS Association and the Grantee.
- Milestone-driven award payments will be made to the Grantee on an annual or semi-annual basis as outlined within the Agreement.

2.6.2 Administrative Requirements

- The Grantee is expected to utilize The ALS Association funds in direct support of the research project and expend funds in accordance with the established organizational policies and procedures.
- Funds charged to The ALS Association award must be for allowable project costs that are determined to be reasonable, allocable, consistently applied and conform to the program guidelines and/or limitations outlined in The ALS Association Funding Opportunity Announcement and the Agreement.
- The Grantee is expected to seek The ALS Association's approval at least 30 days before making certain types of post-award changes (see [Grants Policy Statement](#)).

2.6.3 Reporting Requirements

- The Grantee will be required to submit semi-annual Research Progress Reports and annual Grant Expenditure Reports during the period of an award unless otherwise noted in the Agreement.
- Future grant payments are contingent upon the grantee's submission of and The ALS Association's acceptance of the report(s).
- The ALS Association's issuance of the next award payment, when applicable, serves as confirmation that the information provided has been reviewed and approved by The ALS Association.
- Final closeout reports (i.e., final research progress and expenditure reports) are due within 90 days following the termination date of the Agreement.

2.7 ALS Association Contacts

We encourage inquiries concerning this fellowship program and welcome the opportunity to answer questions from potential applicants. Submit all correspondence to ResearchGrants@als.org.