



Application Guidelines for the 2026 'A' Award Grant

*Application Due: June 16, 2026
By 8pm ET*



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About Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation

Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of 4-year-old Alexandra “Alex” Scott, who was fighting cancer and wanted to raise money to find cures for all children with cancer. Her spirit and determination inspired others to support her cause, and when she passed away at the age of 8, she had raised \$1 million. Since then, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a national fundraising movement. Today, ALSF is one of the leading funders of pediatric cancer research in the U.S. and Canada, funding research projects and providing programs to families affected by childhood cancer. ALSF has been given the NCI peer-reviewed funder designation for rigorous selection of research grants. The mission of ALSF is to change the lives of children with cancer through funding impactful research, raising awareness, supporting families and empowering everyone to help cure childhood cancer.

‘A’ Award Grant Program Description

The purpose of the ‘A’ Award Grant is to advance ALSF’s mission to find cures and better treatments for childhood cancers by providing support to early career scientists who want to establish a career in pediatric oncology research. The ideal applicant has an original project that is not currently being funded. Demonstration of a future commitment to pediatric cancer investigation as well as institutional support for the career development of the investigator are critical components of a successful application. A mentor is required, and a career development plan must be included.

Application Timeline and Review

- A full proposal must be submitted that meets all guideline criteria as well as all eligibility criteria; otherwise, applications will be administratively rejected.
- Proposals will be reviewed by an independent panel of experts according to the NIH recognized peer-review process.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

PROPOSALS DUE	June 16, 2026 (8pm ET)
AWARD NOTIFICATION	November 2026
PROJECTED START/END DATE	February 2027 – January 2031

Applicant Eligibility: must be met at the time of application

- Applicant institutions must be based in the United States or Canada. Applicants need not be United States citizens. Funds must be granted to nonprofit institutions or organizations.



- Applicants must have an MD, PhD or MD/PhD (DO, MBBS or equivalent) and be within five years of their first faculty appointment as an Assistant Professor at the time that their application is submitted as well as:
 - MD and MD/PhD must be within 10 years of their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training (whichever date is later).
 - PhD must be within 10 years of their terminal research degree.
- More senior Assistant Professors, as well as Associate and Full Professors, are ineligible. If still at the Instructor level, the applicant must have a firm commitment from the Department Chair/Division Chief at the time of grant submission for an Assistant Professor position within one year of receiving the award.
- A minimum of 75% of the applicant's time during the 'A' Award period must be allocated as non-clinical protected time for *all* research activities. This percentage of time includes both 'A' Award activities and the applicant's other research responsibilities.
- Mentor(s) must be identified and must be in the applicant's home institution. A co-mentor whose research expertise is aligned with the application could be added from an outside institution.
- Applicants cannot be the Principal Investigator (PI) of a K99/R00 or other independent, nationally competitive award (e.g., R01 or equivalent, P or U award) that has been funded or recommended for funding (i.e., will be funded) any time before the 'A' Award grant start date.
 - Please review [ALSF's R01 equivalency policy](#) on the grant recipients page of our website. If the applicant has an award not listed on the equivalency policy, contact ALSF **at least four weeks** before the application due date to determine eligibility.
- Applicants may have mentored-career development grants (such as K01, K08, K23, K25) or mentored-research grants (such as ACS-Clinician Scientist Development Grant; DoD Physician Research Award) from other funding sources before or during the 'A' Award period, but there must be clear documentation of how scientific and budgetary overlap will be avoided.
- Applicants currently holding an ALSF Young Investigator (YI) Grant may apply. If the 'A' Award is given, it would supersede the YI grant if there is an overlap in the funding periods.

Scope of Proposal

- Proposals must fall within the scope of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's mission, focused on childhood cancers. Proposals with a sole/primary focus on patients >19 years of age will not be considered.



Budget

The requested budget should be in proportion to the scope of the proposed project and should be at or under \$800,000 USD in direct costs over four years. A maximum of \$200,000 in total costs may be requested per year.

- Restrictions:
 - ALSF adheres to the NIH salary cap for principal investigators.
 - Indirect costs are not allowed.
 - The grant may not be renewed; one no-cost extension request, to a maximum of 12 months, is allowed with the Final Report
 - Other budget items may include the following: fringe benefits, travel, supplies, and equipment under \$10,000. ALSF funds cannot be used for tuition remission. View ALSF's complete [budget policy](#).
- If utilizing a subcontract or subaward, you must include this expense in the budget.
 - No indirect costs will be paid.
 - The PI's institution is responsible for disbursing funds for subawards and/or subcontracts.

Resource and Data Sharing

Grant recipients are expected to share unique resources developed under this funding award, and as part of the application, applicants are required to submit a Resource Sharing Plan using [ALSF's Resource Sharing Form](#). Applicants should describe their track record of generating resources that are broadly re-used, the specific resources that will be generated in this proposed project, and the mechanisms by which those resources will be shared. To demonstrate a commitment to sharing that will be actualized, applicants should provide information in their sharing plan that clearly states the type of resource that will be shared, the method, characterization and timing of such sharing and the anticipated resources (budget, personnel, etc.) required by the applicant and the resource user. Reviewers will consider the extent to which the dissemination of resources produced under the award will enhance or diminish the impact of the proposed work. For a full description and an example, see the [Resource Sharing Form](#). For the full Resource Sharing Policy visit our [Resources for Grant Applicants](#) page.

Childhood Cancer Data Lab Collaboration (optional)

Applicants may elect to work with the [Childhood Cancer Data Lab](#), at no cost to the investigator(s), as part of this award. This is not required and is meant to serve as a benefit. If you are interested in collaborating with the Data Lab, please fill out [this form](#) (preferably three weeks before Grant due date) and indicate your submission is associated with an Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation grant application. This resource does not have a cost associated with it and should not be included in the budget.



Resubmissions

One resubmission of an application previously reviewed by ALSF's Review Board is permitted. Applicants should respond to the prior ALSF critique of the proposal in the Resubmission section of the application. The response to critique will be scored in the review process, and resubmissions compete with new applicants for funding.

Restrictions

- ALSF does not fund proposals for research utilizing human embryonic stem cells or non-human primates. Research with human induced pluripotent stem cells is permissible.
- Projects focused on epidemiological aspects of pediatric cancer and/or cancer control are not eligible for the 'A' Award.
- Proposals focused on social determinants of health with an emphasis on oncologic outcomes (rather than psychosocial outcomes) are permitted.

Grant Policies & Reporting Requirements

- Please review ALSF's Grant Policies, including Budget Expenditures, Resource Sharing and Grant Agreement with IP, found on the [Resources for Grant Applicants](#) page.
 - ALSF does not negotiate the Grant Agreement or IP policy, so we encourage applicants to review prior to applying for an ALSF grant.
- Annual progress reports are required, and each year of funding is contingent upon demonstration of satisfactory progress toward the completion of proposed research objectives and appropriate budget expenditures.
- Minor carry-over of funds (25% or less) is permitted each year with justification. Each year's budget will be approved subsequent to the review of project progress and milestones.
- ALSF may elect to partially fund or to hold new funds if carry-over is excessive.
- A final report is required at the conclusion of funding. Report must state findings, expenditures, as well as publications and presentations which acknowledge ALSF funding.
- One no-cost extension may be requested in the final report, for a maximum of 12 months.
- Publications, presentations and posters featuring results of the experiments funded by this grant mechanism should acknowledge "Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation" and include the award number. Copies should be sent via email to Grants@AlexsLemonade.org.

Application Package Instructions

- All sections described below should be combined into one PDF (max 20 MB) and uploaded to the ALSF online application form (see submission instructions below).



- All templates mentioned can be found at ALSF's [Resources for Grant Applicants](#) page.

Format Instructions

- **PAGE HEADER:** All pages of the application should be numbered; the name of the principal investigator should appear in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
- **FORMAT:** Follow NIH format guidelines: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia fonts with a font size of 11 points or larger with a minimum of ½ inch margins.
- **ORDER & LENGTH:** The order of the application should be followed, adhering to the maximum number of pages allowed for each subsection indicated in parentheses.

Section Descriptions

1. Project Information:

- a. **Cover Page (1 page):** Download and complete the [Cover Page Template](#).
- b. **Table of Contents (1 page):** Provide a Table of Contents with page numbers to the corresponding sections.
- c. **Scientific Abstract (0.5 page):** Summarize the research objectives and rationale.
- d. **Impact Statement (0.5 page):** How will this project impact childhood cancer?

2. Budget/Justification (3 pages):

- a. **Budget Template (1.5 pages):** Complete the [ALSF Budget Template](#). Signature from an institutional representative on the cover page of this grant application specifically acknowledges and accepts this budget and acknowledges that no indirect costs will be paid.
 - i. The award amount is \$800,000 over four years.
 - ii. ALSF adheres to the NIH salary cap for Principal Investigator.
 - iii. Indirect costs are not allowed.
 - iv. If utilizing a sub-contractor, you must include their budget. No indirect costs will be paid to the sub-contractor.
 - v. Reasonable travel expenses to national/international research meetings to disseminate findings may be budgeted.
- b. **Budget Justification (1.5 pages):** Include a narrative for the following. Use N/A in sections as needed:
 - i. Personnel
 - ii. Subcontractors/Subawards/Consultants
 - iii. Equipment (for equipment costs above \$5000)
 - iv. Travel
 - v. Computer and Software
 - vi. Other

3. Career Development:



- a. **PI Statement (0.5 page):** Describe goals and long-term objectives for the PI over the four-year funding period. Include what the PI hopes to gain from the experience and any future aspirations.
 - b. **Mentoring & Career Development Plan (1 page):** A mentor is required. The career development plan should include a detailed strategy for professional activities/responsibilities that will enable the PI to successfully complete the proposed research project and foster the PI's development as an independent pediatric cancer researcher. An environment appropriate to the proposed mentoring and research project must be clearly described. The plan should include strategies for mentorship, continued education and future research.
 - c. **Institutional Commitment (1 page):** Include a specific plan from the institution (typically a statement from the Division Chief or Department Chair) demonstrating that the applicant is, or is on the fast track to become, an independent investigator. The plan should include the institution's guarantee of protected time for this research, mentoring support for the applicant, and what start-up funding, laboratory facilities, office space and equipment are dedicated to this project.
 - i. If the current mentor is also the Division Chief or Department Chair, please have a separate institutional official write this commitment letter.
 - ii. ***If the applicant is not yet an Assistant Professor, the application must also include a written commitment from the institution for an Assistant Professor position within one year of receiving the Award.***
4. **Biographical Sketch(es):** Use the [NIH SciENcv biographical sketch format](#) for the principal investigator and all key personnel.
 5. **Research Plan:**
 - a. **Resubmissions (1 page, if applicable):** If this proposal was previously submitted to ALSF and did not receive funding, describe any changes in response to the reviewer critiques (e.g., changes in experimental design, scope, new data).
 - b. **Specific Aims (1 page):** List the goals, long-term objectives and what the specific research proposed in this application is intended to accomplish. State the hypothesis to be tested and relevance to childhood cancer research.
 - c. **Significance (0.5 page):** Describe the relevant background that supports the current research plan. State the significance and importance of your proposed project with respect to childhood cancer research. Relate the specific aims to the goals and long-term objectives. Include potential impact in the clinic for children battling cancer.



- d. **Innovation (0.5 page):** Describe how the proposed research challenges and shifts paradigms or introduces a novel concept, approach or technology and how this could potentially translate to the clinic in the near- or long-term.
 - e. **Approach (4 pages):** Describe the experimental approach to the research question and how the research will be realistically accomplished within the proposed funding period. Images, graphs and charts that are critical to the project should be included within this section, not in the appendix. They will count against the page limit. This section must include but is not limited to:
 - i. Feasibility of the approach to reach project goals; if available, include PI's preliminary studies pertinent to the project.
 - ii. Anticipated potential problems and plans to address these issues.
 - iii. A timeline.
6. **Resource Sharing (1-2 pages):** Use the [Resource Sharing Form](#) to complete this section of the application to describe the outputs from the proposed project and how they will be shared. Reviewers will be asked to consider the manner in which outputs from this project will be shared and the extent to which this plan will increase or decrease the impact of the proposed project.
7. **Other Support Document (no limit):** Attach a [NIH SciENCv other support document](#) for the lead PI only.
8. **Literature Cited (no limit):** Use Vancouver or NIH style (numbered citations within text) format.
9. **Human Subjects (1 page):** If approved, include the IRB approval letter or equivalent. If approval is pending, indicate the expected approval date. If IRB approval is not applicable, include a note in this section.
10. **Vertebrate Animals (1 page):** If approved, include the IACUC approval letter or equivalent. If approval is pending indicate the expected approval date. If IACUC approval is not applicable, include a note in this section.
11. **Letters of Recommendation:** Include three letters of recommendation. At least one letter should be from a current mentor and should address the applicant's potential for independence, success and potential for making an impact in the field. Letters should address the applicant's strengths as they align with the goals of the 'A' Award Program.
12. **Letters of Support (no limit):** Include any appropriate letters from individuals confirming their roles in the project. Institutional letters of support are not required but can be included, especially if there are feasibility issues that can be addressed. If you have requested support from the CCDL (optional) insert the Letter of Support from the Director of the CCDL here.



13. **Appendix:** A brief appendix is allowed for 'A' Award Grants. Appendices should be included only if essential to the understanding of the application. Appendices are limited to one accepted but not yet published manuscript OR two pages of additional information such as a summary of the protocol and supplementary figures. *(Reminder: tables and figures noted in the text should be embedded in the body of the proposal.)* **Reviewers are not required to read the appendix.**

Application Submission Instructions

1. To start an application, navigate to [Proposal Central](#) and select "I am an Applicant."
 - a. **ORCID Registrants:** you can login using your ORCID. If you don't have one, please obtain one by registering through the link <https://orcid.org/register>. An ORCID is **required** for this application.
2. After you've logged in to Proposal Central, navigate to the Grant Opportunities tab and you can search *Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation* in the search bar to find our active grant application cycles, or click [here](#) to see the ALSF's Grant Opportunities currently open. Click the "Apply Now" button to start an application.
3. The application document must be uploaded as **one PDF** (maximum of 20 MB), in the Attachments tab. Please see the [guidelines](#) for specific format and section instructions.
4. You may save your application to finish later. Just click "Save".
 - a. When you return to Proposal Central, click the "Proposals" tab at the top to navigate to your applications. You can filter your application based on Proposal Status in the upper right-hand corner. Click "In Progress" to return to your existing applications.
5. Once completed, click "Submit". Within 10 minutes, you will receive a confirmation email. As long as the deadline has not passed, you may unsubmit your application to make changes by clicking the "Unsubmit" button on the "Proposals" tab.
6. If you have any questions regarding your Proposal Central account, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding the ALSF 'A' Award Grant, please contact Conner Holm by email at C.Holm@AlexsLemonade.org.