2027 Pediatric Oncology Student Training (POST) Program Guidelines for Applications

Application Due: February 17, 2027, 8:00 pm (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 is one of the only childhood cancer research organizations that 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.

POST Program Description

The POST Program is a summer research internship designed for undergraduate, graduate (only students pursuing a master's degree are eligible, PhD students are not eligible) and medical students interested in pursuing a career in pediatric oncology research. The goal of the ALSF POST program is to expose students to the field of pediatric oncology research while experiencing a real-time research project. It is expected that students will develop practical research skills and engage in a mentoring relationship with a pediatric oncology researcher.

The POST program provides an opportunity for students to train with a mentor who is conducting research in the field of pediatric oncology. A mentor/mentee pair is a prerequisite for applying. Students may join a research project underway in a mentor's lab or begin an original investigation with the mentor. Although the mentor and student should work together on the application, it should be submitted by the mentor. Students may train at an institution other than their own college, graduate or medical school, and the internship should last 8-10 weeks during late spring/summer over a period of time mutually acceptable to both the mentor and the student.

ALSF seeks to increase diversity in the pediatric oncology research community by supporting the next generation of biomedical researchers from underrepresented communities. A portion of the 2027 ALSF POST Program grants will be awarded to students who identify as being from a racial and/or ethnic group that is underrepresented in the scientific workforce, as outlined in the 'Overview' section of the National Science Foundation's Diversity and Stem Report. The following groups have been shown nationally to be underrepresented in biomedical research: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

There are three required virtual events during the POST Program to ensure that the students and mentors are introduced to one another, network and share their experiences. There will be an orientation/welcome session, a webinar with guest speakers and speed presentations led by the students.

Application Timeline and Review

- A full application must be submitted by the deadline that meets all guideline criteria as well as all eligibility criteria; otherwise, it will be administratively rejected.
- Applications are not processed on a rolling basis. All applications will be reviewed by ALSF after the deadline.

APPLICATION TIMELINE	
APPLICATIONS DUE	February 17, 2027, 8:00PM (ET)
AWARD NOTIFICATION	March 2027
PROJECTED START DATE	Late spring/summer 2027
GRANT DURATION	8 to 10 weeks
FINAL REPORT DUE	September 21, 2027

Mentor and Mentee Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Mentors must be ALSF grantees (past or present, including those who have previously mentored POST students), Advisory Board, or Review Board members.
- Mentors must be active in the field of pediatric oncology research.
- The Mentor's Institution must be in the U.S. or Canada. The Mentor/Mentee do not need to be U.S. citizens.
- Mentors must have all final years' POST requirements submitted (including final reports, budget sheets, and mentor surveys).
- Mentor/Student pairs must be identified prior to submitting an application.
- Mentors must commit to training the student by submitting a commitment letter with the application, and, during the program period, they must plan training activities and provide guidance.
- Students must currently be enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate (only students pursuing a master's degree are eligible; PhD students are not eligible) or medical degree-granting program.
    - Students who graduate from undergraduate studies in the spring and are accepted into an eligible program starting in the fall may apply.
- Students must be able to dedicate ***at least eight full consecutive weeks*** to the program, typically between May 1 and August 31. The dates may vary depending on the student's scheduled break.

Students seeking potential mentors may search the following lists but should know that mentors may have limited capacity to support summer students:

- ALSF Advisory Board Members: www.AlexsLemonade.org/grants/review-boards.
- ALSF Grantees: www.AlexsLemonade.org/grants/search.

Scope of Project

- 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

A maximum of $5,000 will be awarded, and indirect costs are not allowed. *Funds must be sent to and administered by the mentor's institution*. A specific lab may be designated. The budget may be allocated as follows:

- **Student Stipend**: At least $4,000 must be used for the student stipend over the program period.
- **Supplies**: A maximum of $1,000 may be designated for supplies associated with the student's work. Supplies should be for consumables during the POST grant period. The remaining balance must be used for the student's stipend.
    - Excludes equipment/computers, service contracts, or long-term supplies.

Restrictions

- Mentors are allowed to submit only one POST application as a mentor or co-mentor each year.
- Students who were funded by the POST program in previous years are not eligible to reapply.
- ALSF funds cannot be used for research utilizing human embryonic stem cells or non-human primates. Research with human induced pluripotent stem cells is permissible.
- Overlap with other funding sources for research is prohibited.
    - Additionally, POST students cannot have other sources of research funding during their POST award period.
- Students may not work on a research elective or curriculum-related activity during the POST Program.
- The program will support qualified graduate candidates pursuing master's degree only. PhD students and candidates may not apply.
- If the student withdraws or does not complete the 8-week minimum, the remaining funds must be returned to ALSF.

Grant Requirements

- The student is expected to reach program goals and complete the submitted training plan. ALSF expects the student to become productive in their role on a project; however, completion of a full research project is *not* required.
- Attendance at seminars and other educational events related to the field, occurring at the mentor's institution, is encouraged.
- Students are required to attend all three ALSF POST virtual sessions and are encouraged to attend the additional student networking events. Dates to be determined.
- Students are expected to respond to occasional follow-up surveys in subsequent years.
- A **Final Report** is due on September 21st, 2027. The Final Report consists of a student narrative, student survey and mentor survey. ALSF will not accept an NCE request. Please provide any remaining funds at the end of the program to the student.

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 Application Submission Instructions).
    - Note: Any 'portfolio PDFs' must be converted into a single, combined PDF before submitting.

Format Instructions

- **PAGE HEADER:** All pages of the application should be numbered; the name of the student 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 ALSF POST Program Cover Page. Cover page must be signed by the POST mentor and mentor's institution.
        i. **Any application submitted without an ALSF cover page signed by both the POST mentor and the mentor's institution will be administratively rejected.**
    b. **Student Personal Statement (0.5 page):** Describe what you hope to get out of the POST Program and how it will impact you as a future researcher. Describe your research interests in pediatric oncology and any additional pertinent information.

The following sections are to be completed by the mentor:

    c. **Role and Training Plan (1 page):** Describe the student's goals for the POST Program and their role on the research project. Outline how the student and mentor will work together to reach the goals. Include the start and end dates for the student's involvement in the project.
    d. **Letter of Commitment from POST Program Mentor (1-2 pages):** Letter should confirm mentorship role with the student and describe activities. Briefly address the research project and expectations for the student.
    e. **Student CV/Resume (2 pages):** Include other research and/or stipend support.
    f. **Mentor Biosketch:** Use the NIH SciENcv biographical sketch format.
    g. **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.
    h. **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.
2. **Budget and Justification (1 page):** Complete the POST Program Budget Form. The 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.
    a. The award amount is a maximum of $5,000.
    b. The minimum student stipend is $4,000.
    c. Up to $1,000 may be designated for supplies (see above restrictions).

Application Submission Instructions

1. To start an application, the POST mentor should 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. 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 POST Program Grant, please contact Conner Holm, Grant Coordinator, by email at C.Holm@AlexsLemonade.org.