

III. International Research Grant Program

i. Program Summary and Key Dates: Fiscal Year 2012

Grant Competition	New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG)	Investigator-Initiated Research Grant (IIRG)	Zenith Fellows Award	Everyday Technologies for Alzheimer Care Grant (ETAC)	U.S. – U.K. Young Investigator Exchange Fellowship	New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (NIRGD)	Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (MNIRGD)	Neuronal Hyper Excitability and Seizures in Alzheimer's Disease (NHESAD)	Development of New Cognitive/ Functional Instruments in Alzheimer's Disease (DNCFI)
Letter of Intent:	Open Receipt Date: November 15, 2011 Deadline Date: December 20, 2011, 5:00 PM EST								
Application Deadline Date:	February 7, 2012, 5:00 PM EST								
Review Process:	March–June 2012								
Award Announcement	Late July/Early August 2012								
Number of Awards:	Anticipate funding 45	Anticipate funding 30	Anticipate funding 4	Anticipate funding 2	Anticipate funding 2 U.S.	Anticipate funding up to 5 NIRGD & MNIRGD awards combined		Anticipate funding 2	Anticipate funding 2
Request per year (in any given year) may not exceed:	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Maximum per award:	\$100,000	\$240,000	\$450,000	\$200,000	\$260,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Maximum number of years:	2	3	3 (minimum, 2 years)	3	3	2	3	3 (minimum, 2 years)	3

Scientists from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply

The funding level for fiscal year 2011 was nearly 10 percent of submitted applications.

Each of the grant competitions, except the ETAC Grant and Zenith Fellows Award, shares the preceding areas of focus for fiscal year 2012, covered in Section II. Section IV of this program announcement provides complete details about each individual competition, including objectives, funding and award period, eligibility, receipt and award dates, mechanism of award, reporting requirements and allowable costs.

Procedures and processes common to all of the grant competitions are discussed here.

ii. Scientific Categories of Proposals

Each proposal must be submitted to a specific grant competition. In addition, all applicants in every competition are asked to classify their proposals according to five broad categories of scientific inquiry: (1) social and behavioral research, (2) clinical investigations, (3) basic biology, (4) adaptive technology, and (5) cognitive/functional. During second-level review, these categories help the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Council ensure a balanced, well-distributed award portfolio.

Topics that would fall into the five cross-competition categories might include, but are not limited to:

1. Social and behavioral research (relevant to the NIRG, IIRG, ETAC, NIRGD, MNIRGD, DNCFI, and U.S.–U.K. YIEF competitions): research in diverse populations; assessment of novel approaches to care and support diagnosed individuals and caregivers; special needs of early-stage and early-onset individuals; analysis of the impact of the physical and social environment; evaluation of services and interventions; quality of life; ethical issues; and health policy.

2. Clinical investigations (relevant to all competitions): projects in which the majority of data is derived directly from studies involving active participation of human subjects. Examples include pilot studies of new therapies; neuropsychological testing; drug administration; biomarker collection; imaging technology; and risk factors including genetics, cardiovascular issues, diabetes and metabolic factors and lifestyle issues. *In vitro* projects conducted in human samples should be categorized as basic biology (the category below) rather than clinical investigations.

3. Basic biology (relevant to NIRG, IIRG, Zenith, NIRGD, MNIRGD, NHESAD, and U.S.–U.K. YIEF): these are bench science projects involving *in vitro* or animal work pertaining to the causes of dementia; early and accurate detection and diagnosis; animal models; treatments; and prevention. Please note that *in vitro* work involving human samples falls into this category.

4. Adaptive technology (relevant to NIRG, IIRG, ETAC, NIRGD, MNIRGD and DNCFI

competitions): research focusing on the use of emerging technologies and their clinical and social implications, including mobile computing, high-bandwidth sensing, “smart” environments, robotics, imaging, face recognition, natural language processing and behavioral monitoring for early detection.

5. Cognitive/ functional (relevant to NIRG, IIRG, ETAC, NIRGD, and MNIRGD): research focusing on identification of cognitive/functional profiles, development of better measures for diagnosis, testing, clinical trials, identification of neural/biological correlates of cognition/function, investigation of how cognitive and functional changes impact on medical, legal, and day-to-day issues; and the use of the cognitive neuroscience approach to better understand and characterize cognitive/functional changes.

Please note that there are a few cases in which certain scientific categories do not apply to specific grant competitions. Applicability of categories to competitions is summarized in the table below. An empty box indicates the category does not apply.

Scientific Category	NIRG	IIRG	Zenith	ETAC	NIRGD	MNIRGD	US-UK YIEF	NHESAD	DNCFI
Social/ behavioral	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Clinical	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Basic biology	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Adaptive technology	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Cognitive/ Functional	X	X		X	X	X			X

iii. Eligibility, Ineligibility and Nondiscrimination Statement

To avoid disqualification, investigators are encouraged to carefully consider these eligibility and ineligibility requirements before applying.

Eligibility

In general, public, private, domestic and foreign research laboratories, medical centers, hospitals and universities are eligible to apply. State and federal government-appropriated laboratories and for-profit organizations are prohibited from serving as the applicant institution. However, state and federal government scientists can participate as collaborating scientists with research teams from other eligible applicant institutions.

For the Letter of Intent, you will be required to upload proof of your organization's not-for-profit status.

Ineligibility

This section describes general exclusion criteria. Specific requirements and additional exclusions to eligibility are noted in some detailed competition descriptions.

1.) Overlapping funding of more than one Alzheimer's Association grant **is not allowed. Investigators who currently have an active Association grant may apply for another award in the last year of their grant if that last year concludes by June 30th before the start of the new funding year on July 1.**

2.) Investigators delinquent in reporting: The Alzheimer's Association will not accept new grant applications from currently funded investigators who are delinquent in submitting required reports and other deliverables on active grants. **This policy will be strictly adhered to with no exceptions.**

3.) Current and past holders of a Zenith Fellows Award will not be considered for another award in the Zenith competition.

4.) Active members of the Association's Medical and Scientific Advisory Council are ineligible to compete for any research grant.

5.) In general, postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply for Alzheimer's Association grants. There are two exceptions: 1) postdoctoral fellows may apply for the U.S.-U.K. Young Investigator Exchange Fellowship and 2) applications for a New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG), New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (NIRGD) and Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (MNIRGD) will be accepted from postdoctoral fellows who can provide a letter indicating they will have a full-time faculty position, at a level equivalent to an assistant professorship, by the application deadline. The letter of employment must be uploaded to your application, printed on the hiring institution letterhead, signed by the department head/chair and must indicate that the position will be activated by the grant award date. If the anticipated position is not activated by the award date for any reason, any offer of funding will be withdrawn. There will be no exceptions. In the event your application is funded, you will be required to provide an official letter on organizational letterhead, signed by an institutional signing official, stating your position is equivalent to an assistant professor.

6.) Checks are awarded to the institution, not to the individual principal investigator. The principal investigator cannot be listed as the signing official or financial officer, or have checks sent to their attention if awarded.

7.) The Alzheimer's Association reserves the right to request additional documentation and/or materials to verify an applicant's status should any of the eligibility requirements be unconfirmed.

Nondiscrimination statement

The Alzheimer's Association values diversity and seeks applicants from diverse backgrounds. The Alzheimer's Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, nationality or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam Era Veteran or disabled veteran, in the administration of educational policies, programs or activities.

iv. Application Procedures

Submitting a Letter of Intent on-line via proposalCENTRAL

The first step in applying to the Alzheimer's Association for any research grant is to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) through the *proposalCENTRAL* on-line application system at <http://proposalcentral.altum.com>. Applications will not be accepted without an approved LOI. First-time users **must** register and fill out a Professional Profile in *proposalCENTRAL* to begin the application process. The Alzheimer's Association requires that all applicants must be registered as a reviewer with the Association to submit a letter of Intent. If you submit a letter of intent/application and are NOT currently registered as a reviewer, you will be automatically added to the Alzheimer's Association reviewer roster. Additionally, it is required that you review at least one grant proposal within your area of expertise, outside the grant competition to which you are applying.

The application materials, including the application format, templates, and instructions, are available online at *proposalCENTRAL* once your LOI has been approved.

The LOI and completed application must be submitted by a single Principal Investigator (PI). Additionally, a PI cannot submit an LOI that had been approved or rejected during a previous grant cycle. All LOIs must be approved or rejected in the current grant cycle. Hard copies of the LOI will not be accepted. The purpose of the LOI is to ensure that all applicants are eligible for the competition they are applying to and to assist Association staff in planning for peer reviews. **LOIs will not be accepted after the deadline date. No exceptions will be made.**

The LOI must include:

- Name of the principal investigator
- Contact information for the principal investigator (**complete** mailing address, telephone number, fax number and primary institution e-mail address (do not list Yahoo, Google or other g-mail accounts as your primary e-mail))
- Institution involved in the research proposal (institution/organization name must be in English)
- Academic rank/position title
- Title of the investigation
- Area of focus of the submission, such as diverse populations, social and behavioral or biological, as outlined in Section II

- Grant competition for which you are applying (Investigator-Initiated Research Grant, New Investigator Research Grant, Zenith Fellows Award, Everyday Technologies for Alzheimer Care Grant, New Investigator Research to Promote Diversity, Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity, U.S.-U.K. Young Investigator Exchange Fellowship, Neuronal Hyper Excitability and Seizures in Alzheimer's Disease, or Development of New Cognitive and Functional Instruments in Alzheimer's Disease).
- Brief rationale for the proposal
- Employer (institution) Identification Number (EIN)
- Non-profit verification for the institution or organization of the applicant

On-line application via proposalCENTRAL

Once the on-line LOI is approved, an email notification will be sent **from proposalCENTRAL** granting access to the on-line application at *proposalCENTRAL*. **The online system must be used to submit a grant application**—hard copies of the application will not be accepted.

The PI who submits the LOI must be the same PI who submits the application.

LOIs submitted on behalf of other applicants will result in a rejected application. Once the applicant enters the application system, on-screen instructions will be provided to complete the application process. The application does not need to be completed in one session; a partially completed application can be saved and completed at any time before the deadline. **(Important Note: It is imperative that you proofread your application before submission; you will not be allowed to make *any* changes to the application after the deadline or once applications are under review).**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure and verify that:

- (1) The application is submitted by the receipt date/time deadline. **Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail from proposalCENTRAL that your application was successfully accepted.**
- (2) The application is complete and accurate before submission. Only a single copy of an application will be accepted. **Signatures are not required at the time of submission.**
- (3) Revisions, additional materials, letters of collaboration/support and/or reference, manuscripts, appendices, etc., are not allowed and if attached, will be removed from your application. Additionally, we are no longer accepting the above under a separate email.
- (4) Application biosketch attachment(s) are on the Alzheimer's Association-provided template (available at proposalCENTRAL) or the NIH revised template **without** the personal statement included.

v. Multiple and Overlapping Submissions

If an applicant submits proposals to different grant competitions in the same grant cycle, each proposal submitted must address **a distinctly different topic**. Only one proposal will be funded if scores for multiple submissions fall within the funding range of different

grant competitions.

Applicants *cannot* submit more than one proposal in the same grant competition—even if the proposals cover distinctly different topics.

Applicants may revise and resubmit an application that was previously submitted for an earlier grant cycle; however, a new LOI is required each year. A current LOI corresponding to the application year must accompany each application. **Revisions of previous submissions will be treated as new applications. Efforts will be made to provide some continuity in reviews.**

Overlapping funding of more than one Alzheimer's Association grant is not allowed. Investigators who are receiving an **active** Association grant may apply for another award in the last year of their grant **if** that last year concludes by June 30th before the start of the new funding year, which begins on July 1.

vi. Review Procedures

All proposals are subject to a two-stage peer-review process carried out with an on-line system. In the first stage, applications are reviewed and rated by a minimum of three, and maximum of four, peer scientists with expertise in the proposed area of research. The second stage includes further review and discussion of the scores and comments resulting from the initial review process. This second review is carried out by the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Council (MSAC) to ensure fairness and equity in the initial review procedures and to make funding recommendations to the Association. Members of the MSAC are internationally recognized experts with distinguished careers in Alzheimer's and related dementias. A complete list of current MSAC members is available on the Alzheimer's Association Web site (http://www.alz.org/research/funding/advisory_council_alzheimers_association.asp).

This two-stage process is central to our award decisions and is designed to ensure both scientific rigor and fairness in the review of all submitted applications.

If you are interested in being considered a reviewer for the Alzheimer's Association International Research Grant Program, please submit your CV to grantsapp@alz.org.

General Requirements

- You must be a recognized authority in your field.
- You must be dedicated to conducting high-quality, fair reviews.
- You must be able to articulate your views succinctly, engage in productive exchanges and actively participate in the on-line discussion of applications.

vii. Appeals of Scientific Peer Review

To maintain a fair and rigorous review system, the Alzheimer's Association has

established a process for appeal of funding decisions. An appeal is intended to address extraordinary circumstances. Appropriate reasons for initiating an appeal might include:

- Evidence that a reviewer has an undeclared conflict of interest
- An egregious error or misunderstanding in the review process
- Active malfeasance or demonstrable lack of due diligence

The appeal process is not intended to provide a mechanism for routine protest of failure to receive a grant. Disparities in peer reviewers' enthusiasm for a proposal and the scores they assign are nearly always considered part of the normal variation in human judgment. The reality is that the Alzheimer's Association International Research Grant Program is extremely competitive and is limited by availability of funds. In recent grant cycles, 10 to 11 percent of proposals have been awarded grants, although about twice that number fall into the "fundable" category based on overall score.

If an applicant believes an extraordinary circumstance has contributed to failure to receive funding, the principal investigator may send as a Word document, a two-page, double-spaced formal letter of appeal to grantsappeals@alz.org – supporting documents must be submitted in PDF. **Appeals must be submitted within two weeks from the date your application outcome notification is sent to be considered by the Alzheimer's Association.** Notification of action on the appeal will be made via email, usually within 30 days of the appeal deadline.

viii. Animal and Human Subject Assurances

Animal welfare and human subject certifications are not required at the time of application. Investigators have up to 90 days after receipt of their award notification to submit these documents. **However, the Alzheimer's Association encourages investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule that recognizes that rDNA, IRB/IACUC approval at many institutions can take more than 90 days.** The Association accepts only certifications that apply specifically to the funded project. An award letter will not be issued unless the appropriate certifications are in place within the 90-day window.

ix. Reporting Requirements

Interim and final scientific progress reports

Investigators receiving Alzheimer's Association research grants are required to file annual progress reports.

- An Interim Scientific Progress Report must be filed at the end of each reporting period as long as the grant remains active.
- A Final Scientific Progress Report **must** be filed within 90 days of the grant's end date.

Financial progress report

Annual financial progress reports must be filed at the end of each reporting period while the grant remains active and within 90 days after the grant ends. These reports must be

submitted **ELECTRONICALLY** by the signing official or someone else with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the recipient's institution.

For questions about reporting requirements or these forms, please contact Mary Grilli, (mary.grilli@alz.org) or Rita Freeman (rita.freeman@alz.org), the Alzheimer's Association post-award grant specialists.

Publications, Presentation and Abstracts

Electronic copies of publications, presentations and abstracts that report research supported by funds from the Alzheimer's Association must be submitted **ELECTRONICALLY** at the time of publication. These copies will become part of the official file of the grant and will be provided to the Communications Division of the Alzheimer's Association to assist in the efforts to further inform the public about the International Research Grant Program of the Association.

x. Contact Information

This program announcement is posted on the website of the Alzheimer's Association at http://www.alz.org/research/alzheimers_grants/overview.asp. For additional information, send inquiries to grantsapp@alz.org or call 1.312.335.5747 or 1.312.335.5862.