



## Alzheimer's Association AI-BOND Leaders (ALZ AI-BOND) Pilot Awards in Brain Health Program Request for Application (RFA)

### **Program Objective:**

AI-BOND (African Initiative for Bioinformatics Online Training in Neurodegenerative Diseases) is a comprehensive capacity-building program created to cultivate a new generation of African AD/ADRD researchers. AI-BOND was founded to build a network of African researchers capable of leading state-of-the-art AD/ADRD studies within Africa. Launched in 2022, AI-BOND integrates online coursework, in-person workshops, and mentored research experiences into a scalable training model. More information on the AI-BOND program can be found at [AIBOND.org](https://AIBOND.org).

The Alzheimer's Association aims to support AI-BOND alumni and scholars through this unique program to advance skills, knowledge, activities, and general efforts to improve data analysis capacity in the field of brain health, Alzheimer's and all other neurodegenerative diseases in Africa. This invitation-only pilot award aims to leverage the overlapping missions of the Alzheimer's Association and the AI-BOND program to advance AD/ADRD research led by African scientists.

Applicants are eligible for the ALZ AI-BOND Pilot Awards if they are either currently enrolled in or have completed the AI-BOND training program.

**Note:** Adjustments to the eligibility period may be considered for documented career interruptions due to family leave, military service, or medical circumstances, with all exemption requests requiring submission and approval prior to the LOI deadline. Only one primary applicant is allowed per proposal; multiple Principal Investigators (PIs) are not permitted, though collaborators and key personnel may be included.

Applications should use a bioinformatics-focused secondary data analysis approach to address an important question pertaining to AD/ADRD. Preference will be given to projects that elevate or leverage African data sets and/or Africa-specific setting(s) or relevant question(s). Applicants are required to emphasize one or more of the following four key domains in their proposal:

- **Programming and Data Science:** Development and application of computational or statistical methods tailored to AD/ADRD research. Projects may include but are not limited to creating data analysis pipelines, bioinformatics tools, or statistical models that account for the unique characteristics of African Data Sets.
- **Secondary Analysis of Clinical Data:** Investigations into dementia phenotypes, risk factors, disease subtypes, and clinical outcomes relevant to global populations, in particular to African countries.
- **Genetic Epidemiology:** Research on the genetic architecture of AD/ADRD in African cohorts, including genome-wide association studies, polygenic risk score development, and other analyses of genetic factors.
- **Integrative Multi-omics:** Comprehensive approaches that combine multiple "omics" data types (genomic, proteomic, transcriptomic, metabolomic, epigenomic, etc.) to



elucidate the biology of AD/ADRD, including in an African country setting.

**Funding and award period:**

Each AI-BOND award is limited to a maximum of USD \$16,500 total funding. Indirect costs may not exceed 10% of the total costs. Projects may be designed for a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years.

**Key Dates:**

LOI and application submissions must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern time (ET) by their respective deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted - *no exceptions*.

<b>Letter of Intent Launch</b>	<b>By June 15, 2026</b>
<b>Letter of Intent Deadline*</b>	<b>July 31, 2026 at 5:00 pm ET</b>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>October 7, 2026, at 5:00 pm ET</b>
<b>Application Review</b>	<b>October– November, 2026</b>
<b>Award Notifications</b>	<b>By December 30, 2026</b>

\*Note: Due to the high number of submissions, specific feedback and reviewer comments are not provided at the letter of intent (LOI) stage.

**Eligibility and Ineligibility Considerations:**

To avoid disqualification, investigators are encouraged to carefully consider these eligibility and ineligibility requirements before applying. The Alzheimer’s Association reserves the right to find an investigator ineligible to submit for a particular program, based on the guidelines below. This section describes general inclusion and exclusion criteria. Specific requirements and additional exclusions to eligibility are noted in some detailed competition descriptions.

- **Eligibility (Applicant):**
  - Applicants must either be a member of the current cohort enrolled in the AI-BOND program or successfully completed the AI-BOND program.
  - Applicants must be considered full-time employees or students, based on their organization/institution’s definition of full-time.



- Adjustments to this eligibility period may be considered for documented career interruptions such as family leave, military service, or major illness or injury. The approval of any exemptions must be obtained prior to submitting a LOI.
- Only one primary PI per application. Multiple PI projects are not allowed; however, collaborators may be included as key personnel on the project.
- The Alzheimer's Association reserves the right to request further documentation to confirm eligibility of an applicant.
- Eligibility (Organization/ Institution):
  - In general, non-profit public or private research laboratories, medical centers, hospitals, and universities are eligible to apply. State and federal government-appropriated laboratories in the U.S. and abroad, and for-profit organizations are prohibited from serving as the applicant institutions for this program. However, state and federal government scientists can participate as collaborating scientists with research teams from other eligible applicant institutions.
    - For the Letter of Intent (LOI), you will be required to upload proof of your organization's not-for-profit status. An IRS Letter of Determination is no longer accepted, and you must submit either of the following:
      - a W-9 that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official for US entities
      - a W-8 or W-8-BEN that is signed and dated within the past five years by the signing official for international entities
      - The form must include the EIN, TIN or VAT number
  - For non-profit organizations (non-academic), additional documentation may be required to confirm your organization has segregation of duties between transaction execution and transaction recording.

Important Note: Alzheimer's Association grants are generally open to scientists and researchers across the globe; however, as a U.S.-based charity, the Alzheimer's Association is subject to, and complies with, U.S. law. As a result, the Alzheimer's Association cannot award, and will not award, grants in violation of applicable U.S. statutes and regulations. This means, among other things, that the Alzheimer's Association cannot, and will not, fund any individual or entity (i) that is subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the "U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals" or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.

- Ineligibility (Applicant):
  - Individuals who are not either a) currently enrolled in or b) successfully completed the AI-BOND program.
  - Individuals who are not considered full-time employees by their institution at the time of LOI submission..
  - Investigators who are delinquent in reporting to the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association will not accept new grant applications from investigators currently awarded an Association grant who are delinquent in submitting required reports and other deliverables on active grants. Investigators that have previous Alzheimer's Association awards closed as "Incomplete" are not eligible



to apply without exception. This policy will be strictly adhered to with no exceptions.

- Individuals that are subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.
- Applications that represent the same aspects of a project should not be submitted to different programs of the Alzheimer's Association. There are some exceptions so please contact [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org) if you have questions.
- Current Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG) and International Research Grant Programs (IRGP) Council members of the Alzheimer's Association cannot serve as principal investigators in any award. They may serve as key personnel or collaborators, provided there is no financial benefit and/or salary allocated to them. They are permitted to serve as a mentor for AI-BOND awardee but must forfeit their mentor stipend.
- **Ineligibility (Organization/ Institution):**
  - State and federal government-appropriated laboratories in the U.S. and abroad.
  - For-profit organizations are prohibited from serving as the applicant institutions for this program.
  - Institutions that are subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.
  - Applications will not be accepted if the institutional official responsible for fiscal oversight of the award also serves as the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project. Additionally, no familial relationship may exist between the PI and the institutional official with fiscal authority.

Additional note for eligibility, applicants CANNOT submit more than one proposal to any of the programs in the current grant competition—even if the proposals cover distinctly different topics (i.e. only one application is allowed regardless of the distinct areas of focus). Members of the same research team may submit different aspects of a project to different programs if they are complementary and not the same project.

### **Letters of Intent- Additional Details:**

LOIs are a required component of the application process. No application will be considered without an approved LOI, including resubmitted applications. Additional details about the LOI components, review criteria, and process are included below.

To ensure a fair and unbiased review process, the Letter of Intent (LOI) will undergo blinded review. Applicants must not include any personally identifiable information (e.g., names, institutions, locations, or other identifiers) within the body of the LOI. Any submission containing such information may be disqualified or returned for revision. Please adhere strictly to this guideline to maintain the integrity of the review process.



- **LOI Components:** Applicants must complete the required sections and upload any required documents. Some of these required fields are described below:
  - **Principal Investigator** - Name & contact information
  - **Lead Institution** - Institution/organization name must be in English
  - **Current academic rank/position**
    - Must be current at the time of submission; *pending promotions are not allowed*
  - **Proposal title**
  - **Area of focus** - Specific options will be available from a dropdown menu
  - **Brief project description - each section limited to 1000 characters, including spaces:**
    - Brief project summary, including methodology
    - Specific aims of the proposed project
    - Innovation/novelty of the proposed project
    - Overall Impact on the field of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
  - **Employer Identification Number (EIN) or TIN**
    - This number must match the non-profit documentation and is information specific to the institution, not specific to the applicant.
  - ORCID ID
  - **Non-profit verification**
    - W-9 (US entities) signed and dated within the past five years by an authorized institutional signing official and must include the EIN number
    - W-8-BEN (non-US entities) signed and dated within the past five years by an authorized institutional signing official and must include the EIN/TIN or VAT number **NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD NOT CONTAIN THE APPLICANT'S INFORMATION.**
  - **Biosketch**
    - For Principal Investigator and primary mentor only. Applicants will be able to provide biosketches for other members of the project team at the full application stage.
    - The Alzheimer's Association highly recommends using the latest NIH biosketch format (excluding Section D. Scholastic Performance), but any format will be accepted. Hyperlinks are allowed in biosketch only for individual research projects.

#### LOI Review Criteria and Process:

LOIs will be evaluated in a **blinded review**, where the reviewer has no information about the applicant and their environment for conducting the research. Each LOI is evaluated with attention to:

- Demonstrable innovation / novelty of the proposed project
- Alignment with the research priorities of the Alzheimer's Association
- Impact of project on Alzheimer's and all related dementia research
- Evidence of methodological rigor that address the research question(s) being



proposed

- Alignment with the goals of the ALZ AI-BOND program

LOIs will be reviewed by two or three reviewers with expertise in the area of the application. Due to the number of LOIs received, individual feedback or comments from reviewers will not be shared.

A fraction of LOIs will be invited for full application.

Each AI-BOND award must identify up to two mentors. The mentor(s) should be experienced in conducting Alzheimer's and dementia research and in mentoring junior investigators. Mentors should be senior researchers in the field of brain health, Alzheimer's and all other neurodegenerative diseases.

### **Applications - Additional Details:**

Following the LOI review, some of these projects are invited to submit full applications. The PI who submits the application must be the same PI who submitted the approved LOI. 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. 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.

The application must be submitted by the receipt date / time deadline. Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail from proposalCENTRAL that your application was successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation, click the Proposals tab and under the "Status" column make sure it says **Submitted** and not **In Progress** which indicates you have not yet submitted your application. It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that the application is complete and accurate before submission. Only a single copy of an application will be accepted.

Applications should include a mentorship plan that is clearly described. The role of the mentor(s) in the applicant's proposed pilot project must be defined in the proposal. Mentor(s) may include a member of the AI-BOND faculty or network, regional experts, or another expert that agrees to provide the necessary support to the applicant.

The applicant and proposed mentors must specify a mechanism for ensuring effective mentoring. The application should include a plan and an evaluation strategy for the mentoring process for enhancing diversity in the professional research workforce. A successful plan will include specific details on the mentoring goals designed towards achievements both related to research and other professional development.

*Signatures are not required at the time of submission by the Association, however, the signature page provided is for use should your institution/organization require signatures; the Association does not override any institutional policies and/or procedures. Please do not submit the signature page with your application.*

Applicants may use LLMs and other generative AI tools in the preparation of their LOIs and full applications. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of their proposal, even those parts produced by an AI tool. Using one of these tools will not affect the review of your application.



Additional details for the application process are described below:

### **Application Components:**

- If you are invited to submit a full application, the required materials, including the application format, templates, and instructions, will be available online at proposalCENTRAL after your LOI has been approved in the system.
- Applications include both the research plan and training plan.
- Full applications will not be accepted without an approved LOI from the current cycle
  - If you did not receive an email from an Alzheimer's Association staff member about your approval to submit a full application for the current cycle you should not submit an application, even if one is available in your proposalCentral Account.

### **Budget Considerations:**

A budget justification for the proposed research project is required and must be submitted with the application and within the allowable two-page limit. However, if the application is to be awarded, a more detailed budget will be required and must be approved before the disbursement of funds.

**Direct Costs Allowed:** It is required that most of the funds awarded under this program be used for direct research support. No more than 10% of the total direct costs may be included as indirect costs; this is inclusive of indirect costs for the implementing institution as well as any subcontracts. Allowable costs include:

- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies
- Purchases over \$10,000 require prior approval, even if included in the project proposal budget
- Computer software if used strictly for data collection (requires prior approval)
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians and administrative support directly related to the funded grant); there is no salary cap
- Costs associated with data access/collection for the proposed research
- Membership to scientific associations
- Support for travel, up to \$5,000 over the duration of the award.
- Training costs to visit and perform research related to the awarded project on another laboratory/facility (this is not to be included in the travel costs)
- As part of Alzheimer's Association ongoing efforts to develop programs that support family-friendly research environments, Alzheimer's Association awardees can request up to \$2,500 per budget period for childcare costs provided by a licensed childcare provider.

### **Direct Costs not allowed:**

- Computer hardware or standard software (e.g. Microsoft Office, mouse monitor, computer parts, AppleCare)
- Laboratory equipment such as freezers, ultracentrifuges, RT-PCR machines, microscopy/imaging equipment
- Service contract fees of equipment
- Construction or renovation costs
- Tuition
- Rent for laboratory/office space



- Visa costs and fees
- Expenses such as Data Network Recharges and Computing and communication device support services. However, data sharing and/or data storage for imaging, sequencing and other study data is allowed.
- General liability insurances, such as GAEL
- Wire and currency exchange fees; it is important to note that the Association does not adjust total funded amount in relation to fluctuations in exchange rates. All grants are paid in U.S. dollars.
- Institutional overheads associated with staff time
- The Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG), the International Research Grant Program (IRGP) Council members and current employees of the Alzheimer's Association are allowed to be key personnel or collaborators on projects, however they are NOT ALLOWED to receive any salary or compensation. A complete list of MSAG and IRGP Council members can be found on our website [alz.org/grants](http://alz.org/grants)
- *The Alzheimer's Association reserves the right to decline any charge that is an institutional fee and/or service charge.*

#### **Application Review Criteria and Process:**

All applications are subject to a multiple stage peer-review process carried out with an online system. This multi-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.

In the first stage, applications are reviewed and rated by peer scientists with expertise in the proposed area of research. Applicants may include recommended reviewers and also have the option to exclude specific reviewers from evaluating their application if a conflict of interest exists. Conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):

- The Applicant trained with/ by the reviewer.
- The reviewer published with the Applicant in the last four (4) years. This excludes workshop or large consortia (i.e. ADNI, IGAP, etc.)
- The reviewer has been a co-investigator on a grant application or award with the Applicant in the last four (4) years.
- The reviewer has a conceptual difference of opinion with the Applicant that will prevent a fair review.
- The reviewer will receive financial benefit from the Applicant receiving an award.

In stage one of review, each application will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- Applicant's ability and promise as a scientist and leader in brain health based on prior record of achievement and career plan, letters of support, and CV (25%).
- A well-designed and feasible proposed pilot project plan, including an evaluation plan; proposed plan is clearly linked to the long-term goals of this initiative as outlined above (40%)
- Quality of the mentorship plan that describes adequate support for the proposed work and appropriate plans for continued training (20%).
- Significance of the question being studied, the impact-risk of the proposal, and impact on advancement of the brain health and AD/ADRD science ecosystem (15%)

The second stage includes further review and discussion of the scores and comments resulting



from the initial review process to normalize across reviews and programs. The second review is carried out in alignment with the Alzheimer's Association policies and includes key members of the AI-BOND faculty.

Final recommendations from the second stage of review are shared with the Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG) and with the Alzheimer's Association for final approval. Members of the IRGP Council and MSAG are internationally recognized experts with distinguished careers in Alzheimer's and related dementia.

### **Financial Responsibility:**

Funding is awarded to the institution and/or organization, not to the individual principal investigator. The principal investigator or a first-degree relative cannot be listed as the signing official or financial officer, or have checks sent to their attention if awarded.

### **Reporting Requirements, if Funded:**

For funded awards through this program, there will be required scientific and financial reporting. Interim scientific and financial reports must be submitted at the end of each reporting period as long as the grant remains active. Interim mentor evaluations, including tracking progress toward the Fellowship benchmarks (described below) and a final mentor evaluation are also required. Final scientific and financial reports must be filed within 90 days of the grant's end date. All reports must be submitted electronically via proposalCENTRAL. The financial report must be approved and signed by someone with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs or Grants and Contracts Office at the recipient's institution. Unobligated funds remaining at the end of the award must be returned to the Alzheimer's Association.

Note: The continuation of the grant over the awarded duration is contingent upon the timely receipt of all required reports.

### **Mentoring plans and Fellowship Reporting and Benchmark Requirements:**

The designated mentors must agree to provide evaluations of the applicant's progress for the duration of the award, as required for the yearly progress report.

Additionally, successful mentorship plans should include the following required benchmarks. Please note that additional benchmarks as determined in the mentorship plan may also be included.

- Mandatory documentation of hours spent on face-to-face mentoring
- Citation of specific exercises of mentorship such as supervision of manuscript writing and submission or grant writing and submission.
- Reviewing grant applications. This is not limited to the Alzheimer's Association review process, as reviewing for other funding organizations, but supervised reviews are encouraged for those with little to no review experience. The Alzheimer's Association staff will provide additional resources for those new to reviewing for the Association.
- Documentation of specific instances of the facilitation of networking, including introductions to colleagues, inclusion in discussions at scientific meetings, etc.
- Demonstration of actionable plans for continuing the pilot project, which may include, but is not limited to collaborations, submission of funding proposal(s) to



other funding agencies, publications, etc.

In addition, while animal welfare and human volunteer ethical assurances are not required at the time of application, investigators have until their chosen start date (within 6 months or less of award notification) to submit these approved documents. The Alzheimer's Association encourages investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule that recognizes that approval at many institutions can take more than 90 days.

The Association accepts only certifications that apply specifically to the funded project and must include the name of the awardee. For Fellowship programs, if the ethical certification is on the mentor's name, the Fellow must include the ethical approval and a signed letter stating that the ethical approval (such as IRB approval) covers the awarded project with the Fellow's name and award number included.

Projects involving human volunteers must address the appropriate inclusion or exclusion of individuals in the proposed research project and describe recruitment efforts to represent the community in which the study is planned or being conducted. Prior to distribution of funding, the researcher must provide a description of their recruitment plan, including an outline describing how their recruitment efforts will ensure representative diversity in their volunteers. Recruitment efforts should focus on diversity within key target groups, including a diverse representation of (but not limited to): sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. This will be tracked throughout the duration of the grant.

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. Any intellectual property disclosures resulting from the award must be submitted electronically at the time of publication. The Alzheimer's Association may request any of the research outputs listed here from any awardee up to 7 years following the end of the award.

### **U.S. Sanctions:**

Alzheimer's Association grants are generally open to scientists and researchers across the globe; however, as a U.S.-based charity, the Alzheimer's Association is subject to, and complies with, U.S. law. As a result, the Alzheimer's Association cannot award, and will not award, grants in violation of applicable U.S. statutes and regulations. This means, among other things, that the Alzheimer's Association cannot, and will not, fund any individual or entity (i) that is subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.

### **Nondiscrimination and Harassment Statement:**

The Alzheimer's Association is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The Alzheimer's Association strictly prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race; creed; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; national origin; ancestry; age; Veteran status; citizenship status; marital status; physical or mental disabilities; pregnancy, gender identity or expression (including transgender status); genetic information; and any other



characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

**Contact Information:**

For any inquiries or additional information, please contact a member of the Alzheimer's Association Grants staff at [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org)

The Alzheimer's Association is excited to partner with the AI-BOND team on this unique funding program, and is open to discussions for future iterations of this funding program that engage other training programs with specific areas of focus and goals on their training objectives. To elevate a potential program for consideration, please email [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org).