



# **PATHWAY TO STOP DIABETES®**

## **Accelerator & Initiator Award: Call for Nominations**

  
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## Pathway to Stop Diabetes<sup>®</sup>: Purpose and Scope

The Pathway to Stop Diabetes<sup>®</sup> program intends to attract brilliant scientists approaching the peak of their careers in diabetes research, and to accelerate their research progress by providing the necessary resources and support for conducting transformative science.

This call for nominations will prioritize exceptional investigators across the spectrum of diabetes research, spanning basic science through public health research and implementation science. The ideal applicant will propose innovative research with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of people at risk of diabetes or living with the disease - and the *pathway* to this impact is clear.

ADA will accept up to two (2) nominations per institution with one (1) nomination spanning basic through preclinical research and one (1) nomination spanning clinical through public health research.

Examples of basic through preclinical research studies (for nomination #1) include:

- Innovative mechanistic studies on fundamental or new aspects of biology
- Novel insights derived from data science using AI/Machine Learning
- Development of new technologies, devices, and/or experimental approaches
- Identification and validation of novel and unique therapeutic targets

Examples of clinical through public health research (for nomination #2) include:

- Clinical experimental medicine studies
- Identification and validation of novel biomarkers
- Health services research
- Behavioral research
- Population epidemiology
- Health economics research
- Patient preference / Quality of Life
- Dissemination and implementation science
- Health Care system-based interventions

Nominations are welcomed from all areas of diabetes and span prevention, management, and cure of all diabetes types (i.e. type 1, type 2 and gestational), diabetes-related disease states (obesity, prediabetes, and other insulin resistant states) and complications. The program intends to attract a broad range of expertise to the field of diabetes from various fields of science and technology, including medicine, biology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, and physics.

## Funding Mechanisms

### Accelerator Award

The Pathway to Stop Diabetes® Accelerator award is intended to provide flexible, long-term salary and research support to early career researchers who are proposing innovative and ambitious diabetes-related research programs, and who have distinguished themselves as exceptionally talented and promising research investigators.

These awards are highly competitive and intended to support particularly innovative and transformational ideas that have the potential to have an exceptional impact in diabetes with an emphasis on the investigator's potential to significantly transform diabetes through research ('moving the needle') to improve the lives of people with diabetes.

Candidates for Accelerator awards should be in the process of establishing successful, independent diabetes research programs, and have records of independent productivity in research. For this award, demonstration of independent productivity should include that the candidate is currently in an independent faculty position, has demonstrated the ability to perform a particular set of experiments at a high-quality level, including senior author publications (independent of training mentors) and/or has demonstrated the ability to obtain independent funding/support for their work.

If funded, the Principal Investigator must agree to devote **at least 75% of their total time and overall effort towards research**. This percentage includes time dedicated to the Association-funded grant *in addition to* grants supported by other funding agencies. Please note that during the award's duration, the Principal Investigator must commit between 25-50% effort towards the Association funded project.

For Accelerator awards, applicants may request up to five (5) years of funding support. The proposed project budget should not exceed \$325,000 USD per year (including 30% indirect costs) for a maximum total budget up to \$1,625,000 USD over five (5) years.

### Initiator Award

The Pathway to Stop Diabetes® Initiator award is designed to support early career researchers who have distinguished themselves during their research training as exceptionally talented and promising research investigators with a high likelihood of establishing successful, independent research programs and making seminal contributions in diabetes research.

These awards are highly competitive and intended to support particularly innovative and transformational ideas that have the potential to have an exceptional impact in diabetes with an emphasis on the investigator's potential to significantly transform diabetes through research ('moving the needle') to improve the lives of people with diabetes. These awards provide salary and research support for applicants during late stages of mentored training through establishment as independent research faculty.

If funded, the Principal Investigator must agree to devote **at least 75% of their total time and overall effort towards research**. This percentage includes time dedicated to the Association-funded grant *in addition to* grants supported by other funding agencies. Please note that during the award's duration,

the Principal Investigator must commit between 75-100% effort towards the Association funded project in phase one and between 50-75% effort towards the Association funded project in phase two.

Initiator awards will provide two (2) distinct phases of research support. Applicants may request up to seven (7) years of combined funding support for phases one and two. The proposed project budget should not exceed the maximum total budget up to \$1,625,000 USD.

- **Phase One:** During phase one, applicants may request up to \$100,000 USD per year (including 10% indirect costs) for up to two (2) years for mentored research training to allow investigators to complete on-going research, publish results, receive additional training, and develop independent research plans.

Phase two support will be approved by the ADA Research Programs team contingent upon adequate progress in phase one, as well as the receipt and approval of documentation verifying that:

1. The candidate has obtained a faculty appointment at an accredited research institution.
  2. The institution has agreed to provide adequate laboratory space necessary to perform the proposed research and adequate time (75% effort) to dedicate to research.
  3. The institution provides the candidate with an adequate and protected start-up package.
- **Phase Two:** During phase two, applicants may request up to \$325,000 USD per year (including 30% indirect costs) for up to five (5) years to support independent research.

## Eligibility

### Accelerator Award Eligibility

Applicants must hold independent faculty positions and have demonstrated independent productivity in diabetes research. Applicants may currently hold independent NIH funding (K or R awards, including an initial NIH R01) **but must not have applied for, or received, an NIH R01 renewal or a second R01 award.**

Applicants must hold a MD, PhD, DMD, DO, PharmD, DVM or an equivalent health- or science-related degree.

Candidate's must hold a full-time appointment at their sponsoring institution. Rare exceptions to full-time positions may be granted on a case-by-case basis and must be pre-approved by ADA Research Programs staff prior to application submission.

Applications are open to individuals with current research positions at university-affiliated institutions or other non-profit research institutions within the United States and U.S. possessions.

To assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, the Association welcomes applications from all qualified individuals and strongly encourages applications from persons with diverse backgrounds, including minority groups that are underrepresented in biomedical

research.

Individuals must have permission to work within the U.S., either as U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or with appropriate work visas/permits. Institutional confirmation of permission to work within the U.S. will be required at the time of application submission.

### **Initiator Award Eligibility**

Applicants must currently be in research training positions (i.e. post-doctoral fellowships, research fellowships) and can have no more than seven (7) years of training since their doctoral degree.

Initiator award recipients cannot concurrently hold an NIH K99/R00 grant. All other Career Development awards are allowable (unless holding of concurrent awards is prohibited by the other granting agency).

Candidate's must hold a full-time appointment at their sponsoring institution. Rare exceptions to full-time positions may be granted on a case-by-case basis and must be pre-approved by ADA Research Programs staff prior to application submission.

Applicants must hold a MD, PhD, DMD, DO, PharmD, DVM or an equivalent health- or science-related degree.

Applicant fellowship positions must be at university-affiliated institutions or other non-profit research institutions within the United States and U.S. possessions.

To assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, the Association welcomes applications from all qualified individuals and strongly encourages applications from persons with diverse backgrounds, including minority groups that are underrepresented in biomedical research.

Individuals must have permission to work within the U.S., either as U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or with appropriate work visas/permits. Institutional confirmation of permission to work within the U.S. will be required at the time of application submission.

### **Nomination Guidelines**

For this funding opportunity, candidates will be identified through institutional nominations. Each institution is allowed a maximum of **two (2)** nominations per grant cycle: one (1) applicant must be focused on basic science/preclinical research and one (1) applicant must be focused on translational science. Each nomination can be for either of the Pathway Program Award types: Initiator or Accelerator. Please be aware that if an institution nominates two (2) applicants with proposed projects covering the same phase of research (i.e. basic through preclinical research studies), one of the submitted applications will be administratively disqualified from consideration for funding.

The Association requires a signed **Nomination Form** from the institution certifying that the application has been routed through the usual administrative channels of the sponsoring institution, that the institution has reviewed and agreed to all Pathway to Stop Diabetes® [Policies and Stipulations](#) and has approved submission of the application.

An appropriate institutional representative responsible for the final approval of the nomination submission (Dean of Research, Nominating Committee Chair, Division Chair, etc.) must submit a **Letter of Nomination** on behalf of the institution, co-signed by the nominee's Division or Department Head, delineating the institution's nomination and commitment to the applicant.

For your reference, the nomination form and the sample nomination letter is available under the application materials section of the *Pathway to Stop Diabetes®: Open Opportunities* page on our website: <https://professional.diabetes.org/research-grants/current-funding-opportunities>

The Letter of Nomination from the sponsoring institution must:

- Provide rationale for institution's nomination of candidate, including why candidate is uniquely suited for the award.
- Certify that the candidate has the appropriate full-time position at the sponsoring institution as required by the award.
- Outline the candidate's responsibilities and ensure that at least 75% of the nominee's total time and effort will be allocated to research during the term of this award.
- Provide assurance of an academic commitment to the candidate and to the research proposal.
- Outline the institution's plans to support the long-term development of the candidate, including specific expectations for the individual's career course.

Nomination materials must be submitted through SmartSimple, the Association's online grant management system. The Association will not accept such materials separately after the application submission deadline. ***Applications submitted without the appropriate nomination forms are considered incomplete and will be administratively disapproved.***

## **Sponsoring Institutions**

Nominations are accepted from accredited academic and non-profit research institutions in the United States. An institution generally includes all associated departments, medical schools, and graduate schools. Individual components of multi-component institutions (e.g., University of California Los Angeles and University of California Berkeley within the University of California system, or Harvard University and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center within the Harvard system) are sufficiently independent to be considered individual institutions. Institutions must have a unique DUNS and/or IPF number to be considered independent. Nomination of more than the two (2) allowable applicants may result in the administrative disapproval of all nominations from the same institution.

If there is any uncertainty regarding institutional status for nomination, please contact [grantquestions@diabetes.org](mailto:grantquestions@diabetes.org) for clarification.

## **Letters of Recommendation**

Three (3) **Letters of Recommendation** assessing the scientific abilities and potential of the applicant must be submitted. Please note that the recommendation letters are confidential and will not be released to the applicant. The recommendation letters must be uploaded and submitted directly through SmartSimple by the referee. Please note proposals cannot be successfully validated until all references are submitted.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all three (3) recommenders have submitted their letters prior to the submission deadline. **The system will prevent submission of any application without all three (3) recommendation letters uploaded and submitted by the application deadline.**

It is strongly suggested that all Letters of Recommendation be uploaded to the application at least two (2) weeks prior to the submission deadline. Due to potential institutional firewall issues, we propose

asking your recommenders for a personal email address versus work email address.

## Review Criteria

Scientific excellence is the primary benchmark to be evaluated for all Pathway applications, **with an emphasis on the investigator’s potential to significantly transform diabetes through translational research (‘moving the needle’) to improve the lives of people with diabetes.** The proposed research strategy serves as a reflection of the individual’s capacity for innovation, creativity, and collaboration.

The challenges of comparing different research approaches and investigators across a broad spectrum are met by assembling the Pathway to Stop Diabetes® Mentor Advisory Group; which is a committee of eminent scientists from diabetes research and other fields who personify the core elements needed for exceptional science: rigorous thought processes, keen intellect, and the capacity for innovation, creativity, and productivity.

Applications will be subjected to confidential scientific review by the Mentor Advisory Group and will be evaluated on the following:

*Principal Investigator:*

- Proven ability to establish independent research program.
- Proven ability for creativity, collaboration, and innovation
- Institutional commitment

*Research Strategy:*

- Innovation and creativity
- Potential impact for understanding/treatment of diabetes
- Clarity of thought and approach

## Application Submission

The Pathway to Stop Diabetes® application submission deadline is **Wednesday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, at 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time.** The application must be routed through and approved by the usual administrative channels of the Sponsoring Institution. Please note that only one person must be specified as the Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigators are not permitted for these grants.

Applications must be submitted through SmartSimple, the Association’s online grant management system, available through the Association’s [website](#). The applicant will receive a confirmation email through the online application system to confirm successful proposal submission. Emails and word processing files submitted outside of SmartSimple will not be accepted.

**SmartSimple Application Link:** [https://diabetes.us-2.smartsimple.com/s\\_Login.jsp](https://diabetes.us-2.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp)

## Projected Funding Timeline

Action Item	Deadline
2024 Pathway to Stop Diabetes RFA Launch	Monday May 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Full Proposal Submission Deadline	Wednesday July 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025
Funding Decision Notification	Monday November 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Earliest Award Start Date	Thursday January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2026

Notification of the funding decision will be sent directly to the applicant via email. If the applicant does not

receive a confirmation email within the indicated time frame, please contact [grantquestions@diabetes.org](mailto:grantquestions@diabetes.org). Applicants will be notified of their application's final funding decision only following the conclusion of the review process.

## SmartSimple

In May 2025, the ADA launched their new grant management system, SmartSimple. If you have previously applied for a grant or participated in a peer review, you may already have an account in our system. To access your SmartSimple account, please enter your email address as the username and click '*Forgot Password*'. If you do not have an account, please follow the instructions in the SmartSimple Pre-Award FAQ document to create a new one. This document can be found within the Pathway to Stop Diabetes: Application Materials section of the ADA website.

## Status Changes

The applicant must notify the Association in writing regarding any change in application status after submission. Status changes include the following:

**Contact Information Change:** Send an email to [grantquestions@diabetes.org](mailto:grantquestions@diabetes.org) and specify the lead applicant's name, institution, email address used, application type, application title, and contact information changes.

**Application Withdrawal:** To withdraw a pending application, the applicant must complete and submit a Grant Application Withdrawal Form. For your reference, the form is available under the application materials section of the *Pathway to Stop Diabetes*<sup>®</sup>: *Open Opportunities* page on our website.