

Alzheimer's Association and NACC New Investigator Award Program (NIAP) RFA 2025-26 Funding Cycle

Overview:

National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC) is home to one of the largest, oldest, and most powerful Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (AD/ADRD) datasets, built in collaboration with more than 36 Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) throughout the US over the past 20+ years. The Alzheimer's Association is the world's largest non-profit funder of Alzheimer's and all dementia science, with over \$430 million in funding committed today to over 1,100 projects in 56 countries.

Building on the success of their previous collaboration, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association are again partnering to offer the Alzheimer's Association and NACC New Investigators Awards Program (NIAP).

Up to ten (10) NIAP awards will be granted in the spring of 2025 based on the scientific merit of submitted applications (through peer review, as described below). Eligible candidates include new and early-career investigators from across the ADRCs programs. These awards aim to support career development and advance scientific research on AD/ADRD.

Funding early career investigators remains a core tenet of the missions of the Alzheimer's Association, NACC, and the ADRCs. This ongoing partnership between NACC and the Alzheimer's Association reinforces their shared commitment to supporting and advancing the careers of the next generation of AD/ADRD researchers.

Features of a Successful New Investigator Project:

Successful NIAPs must demonstrate scientific rigor. This will be determined through peer review; the peer-review process will evaluate the scientific merit and potential impact on the field of AD/ADRD. Areas of study are open across the entire spectrum of proposed research ongoing within the ADRC network, including but not limited to data-driven and methodological studies if they rely on credible data sources. The research studies may be discovery science, translational, clinical, or care-related and may include a range of methodologies, including health equity, genomic studies, and data science.

Research proposals should advance AD/ADRD science through new approaches that have the potential to identify and characterize important gaps in knowledge. The program aims to foster innovative, impactful research that advances AD/ADRD understanding and treatment.

Research questions may be rooted in multiple disciplines, such as neuropathology, epidemiology, neurology, psychiatry, gerontology/aging, psychology, psychosocial, imaging/radiology, pharmacology, informatics, recruitment science, and data science/biostatistics. Projects may focus on, but are not limited to, studies on environmental exposures, social and structural determinants of health, psychosocial factors, recruitment science, biomarkers, disease mechanisms, or novel therapeutic approaches, among other relevant topics in AD/ADRD biomedical research.

Importantly, the research should provide novel insights into our understanding rather than replicating previous studies.

Data Sources:

New Investigator projects may leverage any data source or study base for their proposed study but must defend its scientific rigor to address their research questions. This includes secondary data analysis. NIAP proposals do not require the use of NACC data. However, proposals that include plans for the investigator to visit and/or collaborate across and between Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) are strongly encouraged, including proposals based on CLARITI ([Clarity in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Through Imaging](#)).

Funding and Award Period:

The partners will fund up to ten (10) awards, totaling \$135,000 in direct costs for one to two years total for the 2025-2026 award cycle, with funds to be distributed from June 2025 through May 2027. **For awards funded by the Alzheimer's Association, the indirect rate will be restricted to 10% on top of the direct costs.** Details regarding the budget and timeline are addressed in the Application section below.

Funding decisions will be made jointly by the NACC Steering Committee and the Alzheimer's Association based on the scientific merit and potential impact as determined by peer review.

New investigators will have up to two years to complete their project.

For each application, the ADRC Director is expected to provide oversight of the NIAP award for the distribution of funds and/or expenditures. The partners will work with the ADRC institutional Grants Office on the appropriate reporting.

Timeline:

Launch of Program	October 7, 2024
Letter of Intent and Request a Mentor from the ADRC RECs Deadline*	November 8, 2024, 5pm EST
Application Deadline*	January 16, 2025, 5pm EST
Application Review	January– April 2025
Award Notifications	May 2025 Award winners announced at 2025 Spring ADRC Meeting

KEY DATES* The Request for a REC Mentor, Letter of Intent, and Application must be received by 5pm EST on their respective deadlines.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be new investigators affiliated with an ADRC and must have a pre-existing affiliation with an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). You must be a new investigator. For the purposes of this award, a researcher must meet the following criteria to be eligible for this funding program, no exceptions:

- A postdoctoral fellow, resident, or junior faculty member who has not yet received an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health.
- Have not been promoted beyond assistant professor rank (MD or PhD). Researchers with academic ranks higher or lower than those specified are not eligible to apply.
- Are within 10 years of their terminal degree. Exceptions to this 10-year limit may be considered for applicants who have experienced career disruptions. Such disruptions may include, but are not limited to, family care responsibilities, military service, severe illness or medical conditions, disability, or clinical training. Applicants requesting

consideration under this exception must clearly explain the circumstances in their application.

- Has not been awarded a New Investigator Award Program award previously.
- Candidates are expected to have a minimum of 10-20% of their position dedicated to the proposed research project.
- For questions or clarifications of eligibility, potential applicants should email grantsapp@alz.org.

You must be affiliated with an ADRC. Affiliation is defined by individual ADRCs at the discretion of each ADRC Director and varies across the ADRC Program. Affiliation is inclusive of the examples below. To qualify, applicants must have a letter from their ADRC Director confirming the following:

- The applicant is affiliated with the ADRC. Additionally, they must confirm that this affiliation was established before October 2024 and is ongoing.
- The specific nature of the affiliation is at the ADRC Director's discretion, and should be noted in the letter, and may include but is not limited to the following:
 - Holding a formal position at the ADRC
 - Active engagement in ADRC activities
 - Receiving or being eligible to receive a salary from the ADRC
 - Working in an ADRC-affiliated laboratory, a faculty member, or a clinician
 - Being a postdoctoral researcher contributing to ADRC-funded research
- The Director does not need to specify which criteria are met, only that the applicant is considered affiliated with the ADRC.
- The letter must also confirm that the ADRC can manage and disburse the New Investigator Award funds to the winner via the ADRC's existing subcontract with NACC.

A Director's letter template is provided in the online application materials.

If you are not eligible for this award, we encourage you to apply for other funding mechanisms, such as an [RO3 Award](#) and other funding mechanisms of the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org/grants).

Apply for a New Investigator Award

How to Apply

Step 1: Submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) and Request a Mentor

How to Request a Mentor (optional):

All applicants will have the opportunity to be connected with a mentor who can provide guidance during the NIAP application process. These mentors will be provided through a partnership with the ADRC Program's Research Education Component (REC) Steering Committee.

To request a mentor, applicants must complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) and indicate on the LOI form if they would like to be matched with a mentor by the REC Steering Committee.

Mentor and Mentee expectations:

- REC will do their best to connect applicants with a mentor who is knowledgeable about the area(s) of research indicated by the keywords on the LOI.
- Mentors and applicants are expected to meet between November 15, 2024, and January 8, 2025.
- When an applicant requests a mentor by indicating it on the LOI form on ProposalCentral, the partners will work with the REC Steering Committee to help match NIAP applicants with appropriate mentors.

How to Submit a Letter of Intent:

The first step in applying for a NIAP award is to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) through the ProposalCentral online application system at proposalcentral.com. Applications will not be accepted without an approved LOI submitted within that grant cycle/program. First-time users must register and complete a Professional Profile in ProposalCentral to begin the LOI and application process.

Key Requirements:

- The LOI, mentor request, and completed application must all come from the same new/early career investigator.
- You must submit an LOI for the current active grant cycle you're interested in; **no exceptions** will be allowed.
- Hard copies or emails of the LOI will **not** be accepted.

Purpose and Deadline:

- The LOI ensures your eligibility for the competition and assists in the planning of peer reviews.
- **No LOIs will be accepted after the deadline; no exceptions.**

Submission Guidelines:

- Applicants are responsible for adhering to space limitations and other submission requirements.

- Decisions on progressing an LOI will be based on the information submitted.
- Complete the LOI through the online interactive system, making sure to fill in all required tabs.

Required Fields to Complete for your LOI:

- Name of the new investigator, academic rank, position title, and contact information; this should not include pending promotions and should be specific to your academic rank and position title at time of application.
- Name of Alzheimer's Disease Research Center – and the ADRC Director (applicant must be affiliated with an ADRC at the time of submission).
- Proposal Project Title, keywords, and 1-2 sentence brief description of the topic area.

NACC and Alzheimer's Association teams review each LOI to verify eligibility.

Step 2: Write the Research Plan

Prepare a research plan that emphasizes methods and uses the following outline format. Your plan should reflect your chosen track (social/behavioral or biomedical) while addressing all required elements. Your proposal should demonstrate how your research will advance AD/ADRD science through innovative approaches that address critical knowledge gaps, regardless of the specific research area within your selected track.

- **DO NOT SKIP ANY SECTIONS.** Applications missing any of the following sections will be considered incomplete and will NOT be reviewed.
- Save your completed research plan as a PDF file and upload it to your online ProposalCentral application as one of your required application documents.
- Do not include hyperlinks in your Specific Aims or Research Strategy.
- **Resubmission**
 - It is up to the applicant as to whether or not they wish to declare their application a resubmission.
 - Even if you are submitting an application that is similar to a prior submission to NIAP you do not need to declare it a resubmission.
 - Resubmissions are granted a one-page summary for addressing comments raised by reviewers from a prior NIAP application review.
 - Resubmissions are scored and ranked along with new submissions. No advantage or disadvantage is given to any application because it is a resubmission.

- **Specific Aims (one page)**
 - State the goals of the proposed research and summarize the rationale and expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved.
 - List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology). These may be stated as specific “research questions” or as testable hypotheses.

 - **Research Plan (6 pages total for 1, 2, 3 below)**
 - Organize the research strategy in the specified order and using the instructions provided below or as stated in the RFA. Start each section with the appropriate section heading—**Significance, Innovation, Approach**. Cite published experimental details in the research plan section text, in order of occurrence, consistent with AMA or similar numbered style, and provide the full reference in the bibliography and references cited in section #4 below.
- 1. Significance**
- a. Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses.
 - b. Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application.
 - i. Describe the “rigor of prior research” in your topic area in that it identifies weaknesses or gaps in knowledge. See NIH “Rigor and Reproducibility” links below.
 - ii. <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/resources.htm>
 - iii. <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/guidance.htm>
 - c. Explain how the proposed project will improve, impact, drive scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in some manner for Alzheimer’s disease and/or related dementias.

2. Innovation

- a. Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- b. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or intervention(s).
- c. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

3. Approach

- a. Describe the overall scientific strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the Specific Aims of the project. Depending on your specific aims, you may wish to describe each Specific Aim individually, or you may treat them as a group.
 - i. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted and any appropriate resource sharing plans.
 - ii. Describe how your methods for analysis and sample size are appropriate for your plans.
 - iii. If applicable, describe your strategy to establish feasibility and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
 - iv. Explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans. Refer to the [NIH Guide Notice on Sex as a Biological Variable in NIH-funded Research](#) for additional information.
 - v. Include a timeline and milestones for your study.

4. Bibliography and References Cited (No page limit)

- a. Provide a bibliography of references cited in the Research Strategy or Specific Aims sections. Reference citations should be provided in AMA or a similar style in order of their occurrence in the text. (Tip: Use a reference manager tool such as EndNote to do this more easily). There are no page limits for the included references.

Step 3: Complete ProposalCentral Application and Upload Required Documents

Complete the online application in ProposalCentral (NIAP application platform):

- Enter applicant information, proposal, and budget details directly into the platform.
- List the applicant as the PI, along with the applicant's home institution (not the ADRC).
- All contact and related information should reference the applicant/PI.
- Review and adhere to the following cost guidelines when completing the budget section:
 - **Allowable costs under this award:**
 - Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows), and technical staff (including modest administrative support).
 - Computer software, if used strictly for data collection and/or analysis.
 - Research supplies needed for the proposed studies.
 - Open access publication fees for journal articles related to the funded research project.
 - Support for travel to scientific and professional meetings, not to exceed \$5,000 in any given year, that may include site visits. A total of \$5,000 over a two-year period may be requested for travel purposes and is not to exceed \$5,000 in any given year.
 - NACC will provide separate funding for travel to the annual ADRC Meeting to present research study results. Awardees do not need to include this expense in their travel budget.
 - Consultant costs, recognizing that the goal of the program is to support new investigators.
 - **Not allowable as direct costs under this award:**
 - Salary and/or compensation for REC Mentors, NACC or Alzheimer's Association staff, or current members of the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG) or NACC's Scientific Review Committee (SRC)
 - Computer, laptop, or other hardware or standard software (e.g., Microsoft Office, mouse, monitor, computer parts, AppleCare)
 - Laboratory equipment such as freezers, ultracentrifuges, RT-PCR, Microscopy/imaging equipment
 - Service contract fees for equipment
 - Construction or renovation costs
 - Tuition
 - Rent for laboratory/office space

- Visa costs and fees
- Inpatient/outpatient care costs
- 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 insurance, such as GAEL
- 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

***Note on Indirect Costs and Funding Source:**

- The NIAP is a collaborative program between NACC and the Alzheimer's Association
- ProposalCentral defaults to the Alzheimer's Association's 10% indirect cost rate for all applications
- Indirect cost rates may change based on the final funding source:
 - Alzheimer's Association funding: 10% indirect cost rate (as preset in the application)
 - NACC funding: If selected, the indirect cost rate will be adjusted to align with the ADRC's federally negotiated indirect cost rate
- For awards receiving NACC funding:
 - Applicants will be required to submit a Cover Page that aligns with NACC's sub-award to the ADRC, and an updated budget page reflecting the ADRC's federally negotiated indirect cost rate will be required at the time of award

Prepare and upload the following documents:

1. ADRC Director's Letter of Support:
 - Review and download the Letter of Support template from ProposalCentral.
 - Ensure the letter from the ADRC Director includes all of the following:
 - Confirmation of the New Investigator's ADRC affiliation and NIAP eligibility
 - Commitment to oversee award distribution and expenditures
 - Agreement to work with the grants office for appropriate reporting

- Verification that the New Investigator has received appropriate training in the responsible conduct of research, as mandated by DHHS
 - The letter should be on official letterhead and follow the provided template format.
2. Biographical Sketches (NIH-Format, 5 pages max each)
 - Upload biosketches for applicant (mandatory) and research career mentor(s) (optional for non-post-doctoral applicants)
 - For post-doctoral applicants, both applicant and mentor biosketches are required
 - **Note:** Do not include biosketches for application mentors from the NIAP mentorship program
 3. Additional Letters of Support (optional):
 - Allowed up to 3 additional letters of support (1 page max each)
 - Mentor letter(s) may be included
 - Letters confirming access to specific resources (e.g., data, lab materials, imaging) not funded by the NIAP are acceptable
 - Letters supporting your academic achievements or character references, while nice, are not allowed for the New Investigator Award Program.
 4. Instruction for Non-Profit Verification Documentation and W-9.

Step 4: Submit the New Investigator Award Program (NIAP) Application

Applications must be submitted using the ProposalCentral online application platform. The applicant submitting the application must be the same individual who submitted the approved LOI. Applications submitted on behalf of another applicant or by an administrator will be rejected.

Applicants will find on-screen instructions upon entering the application system. The application can be saved at any stage and completed later as long as it's before the deadline.

Proofreading is crucial; no changes will be permitted post-deadline or during the review process. It's the applicant's responsibility to:

- **Ensure the application is submitted before the deadline.** A confirmation email from ProposalCentral will confirm a successful submission. If no confirmation is received, check the 'Status' column in the 'Proposals' tab to ensure it says 'Submitted.'

- **Verify the application is complete and accurate.** Only one application copy is accepted. Neither NACC nor the Alzheimer's Association require signatures at submission time. Comply with your ADRC's policy if it requires a signature page.
- **Note that revisions, additional materials, and appendices are not allowed** and will be removed from your application if included.
- **Submit applications online via the [ProposalCentral](#) platform.** Log in to the platform with the profile you used to submit the LOI.

For more information, contact grantsapp@alz.org.

Review Process Overview

Proposals undergo a thorough, multi-stage review to assess scientific and technical merit. This process is facilitated by the online system ProposalCentral and involves multiple organizations and committees, including NACC, the Alzheimer's Association, and NACC's Scientific Review Committee (SRC). All reviews will be conducted by the Scientific Review Committee.

For the 2025 NIAP cycle, proposals will be evaluated and scored based on criteria relevant to both social/behavioral and biomedical aspects of AD/ADRD research. This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of each proposal while maintaining consistent evaluation standards across the spectrum of AD/ADRD research methodologies and focuses. The review process has been designed to accommodate the diverse nature of AD/ADRD research, recognizing the importance of both social/behavioral and biomedical contributions to the field.

Review Criteria

All applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Overall Impact:** The potential for the project to significantly influence relevant research fields.
- **Significance:** The importance of the project.
- **Investigator(s):** The qualifications of the research team.
- **Innovation:** The novelty of the research and/or methods.
- **Approach:** The overall scientific strategy, methodology, and analyses.
- **Environment:** The adequacy of the research setting.
- **Budget & Resources:** Quality and suitability of the proposed budget and resources.

Additional Criteria

- Protections for Human Subjects

- Inclusion of underrepresented populations, including racial, ethnic, gender/sex, and other populations
- Vertebrate Animals
- Biohazards

Review Stages (For Full Applications)

First Stage: NACC and the Alzheimer's Association review applications for eligibility and completeness. Once an application is approved, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association will assign it to one of two review committees: biomedical or psycho/social review panels, based on the proposed research.

Second Stage: The NACC Scientific Review Committee (SRC) evaluates applications through Proposal Central, including:

- A panel of at least three peer scientists with relevant expertise to the subject of the project submitted.
- Written commentary and scores (using NIH scale) from reviewers.
- Evaluation based on the criteria noted above.

Third Stage: Review Selection and Full Panel Discussion NACC and the Alzheimer's Association will review the SRC evaluations and scores to determine a cut point for the top applications. Applications above this cut point will be selected for discussion by the full review panel. The full panel will engage in a thorough discussion of each selected application. The Committee's evaluation centers on the criteria noted above.

Overall Impact: Following the discussion in the SRC meeting, Committee members with no conflicts of interest will collectively rank the applications. This ranking reflects the Committee's assessment of each project's potential to significantly advance its relevant research field. The ranking process incorporates all review criteria and any additional factors specific to each project. This method facilitates a comparative evaluation of applications within each focused area, identifying proposals with the highest potential for scientific impact and contribution to the field.

Note: Applications that initially score below the median may not be discussed during the committee meeting and will be marked 'unscored.' However, written reviews for these applications will still be returned to the applicant.

Final Approval

NACC and the Alzheimer's Association will review the Scientific Review Committee's (SRC) final impact scores and review summaries. Based on these scores and rankings, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association formulate recommendations, which are then forwarded to the NACC Steering Committee and the Alzheimer's Association Medical & Scientific Advisory Group for final approval. This rigorous, multi-level review ensures fair and scientifically sound award decisions.

Once finalists are identified, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association will contact the ADRC and the New Investigator to finalize the award details, including award amounts. At that time, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association will also provide a list of required documents—such as “Just in Time” information, PHS 398 Cover, and budget page.

Post Award Information

ETHICAL/REGULATORY APPROVALS & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If awarded funding, NACC and the Alzheimer's Association require any necessary ethical and/or regulatory approvals to be kept current and may also require specific reporting throughout the lifetime of the Award. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Ethical/Regulatory Assurances

Animal welfare and human subject assurances are not required at the time of application. Investigators have until their chosen start date to submit these documents, provided the start date is within 6 months from award notification. However, the Alzheimer's Association and NACC encourage investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule, recognizing that rDNA certification IRB/IACUC approval at many institutions can take more than 90 days. The Alzheimer's Association and NACC only accept certifications that apply specifically to the funded project and must include the name of the awardee.

For post-doctoral researchers, if the Ethical certification is in the mentor's name, the post-doctoral researcher must include the Ethical approval and a signed letter stating that the ethical approval (rDNA certification, IRB/IACUC approval) covers the awarded project with the post-doctoral researcher name and Award number included.

Annual Scientific and Financial Reports

Annual Scientific and Financial Reports must be submitted at the end of each reporting period as long as the grant remains active. Final Scientific and Financial Reports must be filed within 90 days of the grant end date. All reports must be submitted electronically via ProposalCentral

Central. The Financial Report must be approved and signed by someone with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the recipient's institution.

Publications, Presentations, and Abstracts

Electronic copies of publications, presentations, and abstracts that report research supported by funds from NACC and 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 and NACC to assist in the efforts to further inform the public about the Research Grant Program of the Alzheimer's Association, NACC's New Investigator Award Program, and the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Program.

Recruitment Efforts for Clinical Studies

If your project involves human participants, your application must clearly describe your inclusion and exclusion criteria and your efforts to recruit a diverse participant pool from the community where the study takes place.

Upon awarding and before fund disbursement, if your research project includes recruitment of participants, you will need to submit a detailed recruitment plan. This should outline how you'll ensure diversity across key demographic variables, such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

These diversity and inclusion goals will be a key focus in the grant's ongoing reporting requirements. Continued funding depends on your success in meeting these objectives.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Financial Responsibility

Funding is awarded to the institution of the ADRC, 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.

Multiple and Overlapping Submissions

Multiple submissions from one applicant are not permitted. This includes multiple submissions from the same group and/or collaborators. Applicants who are awarded under the New Investigator Award Program can't reapply to the New Investigator Award Program.

Nondiscrimination and Harassment Statement

NACC and the Alzheimer's Association are committed to providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. NACC and the Alzheimer's Association strictly prohibit 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.