



## Quality of Life Research Project Request for Proposals

April 2024

### BACKGROUND

For those living with a brain tumor, [quality of life \(QoL\)](#) is a major concern as it may encompass a wide range of physical, psychosocial, and emotional concerns stemming from loss of functionality and changes in personality. Simultaneously, care partners experience their own QoL needs as they care for their loved ones.

In an effort to expand and improve QoL-related brain tumor research, the National Brain Tumor Society engaged in an in-depth stakeholder community engagement process to identify and discuss key issues and surface previously under-recognized concerns. This effort culminated in the development of a brain tumor-specific [QoL Research Agenda](#) to serve as a guide for research focused on QoL for patients with brain tumors and their care partners.

NBTS seeks to fund a brain tumor QoL research project in 2025–2026, with the goal of translating the knowledge gained from scientific findings into outcomes that will result in the reduced burden or enhanced quality of life for adults, young adults, and children suffering from brain tumors. In this call for proposals, NBTS is focusing on two high-priority issues outlined in the Research Agenda: 1) supportive and palliative care and 2) patient and family brain tumor-related navigation.

### SCOPE

This award will support innovative patient-centered research designed to address critical problems or barriers to progress in the field of brain tumor QoL. The proposed scope of work must include brain tumor research focused on one of the following topics or a combination of the two:

- Supportive and palliative care
- Patient and family brain tumor-related navigation

NBTS welcomes proposals that focus on research questions relevant to QoL for people with brain tumors and their care partners. Projects should focus on research that will work towards

improving patient outcomes and that can provide the foundation for future research projects. Projects must be feasible to complete in two (2) years and with \$200,000 in funding (\$100,000 per year); address a key gap in current knowledge and services; and allow for tangible results to be achieved by the end of the project. NBTS will prioritize projects that also address health care disparities and health care access.

Examples of topics that may be appropriate for this grant program include, **but are not limited to**, the following.

### **Supportive and Palliative Care**

*Approaches to person-centered care utilizing services, models, and tools.*

For instance:

- Awareness and acceptability
- Dissemination and implementation research
- Educational materials and resources
- Symptom management, including mental health, cognition, and well-being
- Development of standards related to quality, competency, and/or effectiveness of service

### **Patient and Family Brain Tumor-Related Navigation**

*Navigating the health care system, community resources, and research opportunities.*

For instance:

- Decisions about treatment options and clinical trials
- Different stages of disease or life transitions
- Educational materials and resources
- Primary care, second opinions, centralized care coordination
- Development and use of technologies to improve brain tumor-related health care navigation

Applicants should review the [QoL Research Agenda](#) to learn more about NBTS's priorities for QoL research.

## **GRANT TERMS**

Applicants may request funding of up to \$100,000 per year for two (2) years.

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- April 1, 2024 - Request for Proposals Announced
- June 15, 2024 - Letter of Intent Due
- August 1, 2024 - Applicants Selected to Submit Full Proposal
- October 15, 2024 - Full Proposals Due
- December 31, 2024 - Funding Awarded

## APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI), and the National Brain Tumor Society will review the LOIs and invite full applications no later than August 1, 2024. Only applicants invited to submit a proposal following the LOI review process will be considered for funding.

LOIs should be submitted via [NBTS's online portal](#) by 11:59 p.m. ET on June 15, 2024.

### LOI Specifications

**Please submit a PDF file with the following:**

- 1-2 page LOI with PI name and title of the project at the top and the following components:
  - Significance: A brief description of the important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field of brain tumor quality of life that the proposed work will address.
  - Impact: A brief description in lay terms of how the proposed work is anticipated to impact the field of brain tumor quality of life research and how results of the study would be leveraged into future studies, connecting to the specifications and criteria listed in the scope.
  - Background/Rationale: A brief description of the background that supports the proposed project.
  - Approach: A generalized description of what will be achieved and how during the two-year funding period. Goals in the form of clear, specific aims are strongly encouraged.
  - Partnerships: Please list key collaborators on this project, even if they are not included as Co-PIs.
  - Engagement: A brief description of how this research has been generated in partnership with the patient and care partner advocate community or how the PI will engage the patient and care partner advocate community in the conduct of their proposed research.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Resources related to patient engagement include: [PCORI](#) engagement principles and [DICEMethods.org](#).

## Full Proposal Specifications

Applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will be required to provide the following:

- Scientific abstract
- Plain language abstract
- Project plan (to be uploaded as a PDF file)
  - Three- to five-page narrative providing:
    - Project-specific aims for the year, with anticipated milestones.
    - A detailed description of the experimental plan and scientific research approach to satisfy the aims of the proposal.
    - A description of how this research has been generated in partnership with the patient and care partner advocate community or how the PI will engage the patient and care partner advocate community in the conduct of their proposed research.
  - Preliminary data, as appropriate.
- Detailed budget (to be uploaded as a PDF file) - Budget should include additional sources of funding and in-kind support that have been secured or will be sought to ensure sufficient financial resources for the project. Supplemental funding is allowed, but projects for which funding has already been secured are not permitted (see below).
  - A budget template will be provided and may be updated to match the specific items included in your budget.
  - The budget should be uploaded as a PDF file, and there will be a separate space for a narrative budget justification.
- Letters of support - up to three (3) letters of support
  - NBTS encourages a letter of support from a patient or care partner advocate.
- Biographical sketch of the principal investigator(s) and key staff (NIH format may be submitted).

## **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### Geographic Considerations

Investigators who apply must be affiliated with an academic institution, health care organization, or community-based organization with an infrastructure and history of clinical research (including infrastructure or access to human subjects' research oversight) in the United States. Applicant institution must confirm proof of eligibility.

### Career Stage

NBTS welcomes applications from scientists at any career stage (e.g., well-established investigators who may already have related research that they are seeking to supplement; new investigators looking for seed funding as a pilot to future projects). Applicants must hold a clinical doctoral degree (e.g., MD, DO) or doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DrPH) from an accredited institution. They must hold an independent position at an accredited institution.

### Overlapping Funding

NBTS funding may not be awarded to a project for which funding has already been secured. However, if the project proposed for NBTS funding is a new subset of a larger project for which other funding has been secured, that should be described in the budget justification. Applicants are required to provide information on Other Sources of Funding, per NIH instructions.

### Conflict of Interest

Actual and perceived conflicts of interest will be identified and handled on a case-by-case basis. All applicants are asked to provide disclosures about their relationships with for-profit entities.

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Teams are encouraged to consider diversity in terms of discipline, seniority, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and any other parameters that will enhance the team's ability to approach challenging problems from fresh perspectives.

### Other

Multiple applications may be received from the same institution, but principal investigators may not be listed on more than one proposal.

National Brain Tumor Society will not accept applications from institutions at which a research grant recipient has neglected to submit the required reports.

## **ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

NBTS does not fund indirect costs. Salaries, including those of graduate students or postdoctoral fellows, may be requested at the Principal Investigator's discretion. Laboratory expenses, including supplies and materials, are allowed, but equipment purchases will be allowed on a case-by-case basis, pending approval by the National Brain Tumor Society. National Brain Tumor Society encourages collaboration. A portion of funds may be used for travel, presentation of study results at scientific meetings, and other appropriate expenses associated with non-laboratory planning requirements and collaborations, as well as for traditional appropriations.

## **REVIEW/FUNDING PROCESS**

Applications will be reviewed by National Brain Tumor Society staff and a Scientific Advisory Committee with specific expertise relevant to the submitted proposals. All applicants will be informed of the final decision about the status of their application. The start date will be dependent on the project's hiring of required staff to begin the suggested study and other relevant factors.

## **REPORTING**

The grant awardees are expected to share the progress of their work with National Brain Tumor Society staff via teleconference meeting twice per year. In addition, at the inception of the project, the Principal Investigator will present an overview of the research project to a group of patient and care partner advocates.

A detailed written Progress Report listing accomplishments and a financial report are required at the end of each year in the granting cycle. A final report must be submitted at the end of the grant.

Should grant recipients generate publishable results, they are expected to publish their results in peer-reviewed scientific journals and present their findings at scientific conferences. It is mandatory that proper reference be made to the National Brain Tumor Society in all manuscripts, poster presentations, news releases, or institutional publications resulting from this grant-supported work. Reprints and copies should be sent to the National Brain Tumor Society.

## **QUESTIONS**

Please direct all questions to [research@braintumor.org](mailto:research@braintumor.org).

## **ABOUT US**

*National Brain Tumor Society unrelentingly invests in, mobilizes, and unites the brain tumor community to discover a cure, deliver effective treatments, and advocate for patients and caregivers. Visit us at [braintumor.org](http://braintumor.org).*