



Quality of Life (QoL) Research Grant Program

2026 Application Guidelines for the QoL Research Award

Letter of Intent Due: April 13, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET

Full Application for Finalists Due: August 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET

Anticipated Award Date: December 31, 2026

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1. ABOUT NBTS

For over 30 years, the National Brain Tumor Society (NBTS) has been committed to curing brain tumors and improving the lives of patients and families. NBTS 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.

2. NBTS'S QUALITY OF LIFE GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Quality of life (QoL) may be defined as an individual's sense of well-being and ability to enjoy and participate in life. For individuals diagnosed with brain tumors and for their families, QoL is a major concern. For those living with a brain tumor, QoL may be affected by a wide range of physical, psychosocial, and emotional needs that may arise following diagnosis or that are a consequence of treatment. Family members and care partners may also experience significant QoL challenges as they support their loved ones.

Historically, limited research has focused on the specific QoL needs of persons affected by primary brain and central nervous system (CNS) tumors and their support networks. To address this gap, the NBTS conducted an in-depth stakeholder community engagement initiative to identify key issues and previously under-recognized concerns. This work informed the development of a brain tumor-specific [QoL Research Agenda](#) to guide future patient-centered research and a commitment to QoL research funding. NBTS released its inaugural QoL Request for Proposals in 2024 and funded two applications following peer review. For more information and the history of this program see <https://braintumor.org/research/initiatives/quality-of-life-research/>.

3. INTENT OF THE QoL RESEARCH GRANT

NBTS invites researchers to submit **patient-centered QoL research proposals**, including clinical research and trials, aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of adults, young adults, or children diagnosed with primary brain and CNS malignant tumors. Projects must:

- Propose a research project that can be feasibly completed within **two (2) years** of the award start date.
- Be supported by up to **\$200,000 total funding (direct costs only) from NBTS** (\$100,000 per year). Supplemental, non-overlapping funding is allowed.
- Focus on persons affected by primary brain or CNS malignancies and address a **critical gap** in existing knowledge, care, or services.

- Be designed or easily adapted for use by other healthcare providers and/or lay a foundation for future research.

4. FOCUS AREAS FOR THE QoL RESEARCH AWARD

To be considered for funding, all applications for the 2026 QoL Research Award must address one of the two focus areas described below. Please note that proposals that address QoL needs across the life span, including pediatric, adolescent, and young adult populations, are welcome. For additional details around each focus area please refer to the [QoL Research Agenda](#).

A. Survivorship

- Research on understanding, monitoring, and addressing the concerns of brain tumor survivors throughout their lives.

B. Behavioral and Emotional Healthcare/Support

- Research focused on mental health, depression, anxiety, coping and caregiver burden and distress, nutrition, exercise, sleep, and complementary therapies.

5. KEY ELEMENTS FOR EVALUATION:

A. Impact:

- Projects should focus on research that improves outcomes for the brain tumor community or provides a foundation for future research projects. High-impact projects, if successful, will significantly advance QoL research and/or meaningfully improve the lived experience for persons affected by brain tumors.

B. Patient Advocate Collaboration:

- Applicants must actively collaborate with a patient with a brain tumor and/or a care partner throughout the research process and describe how this collaboration will strengthen the project and its impact on QoL outcomes.

C. Implementation:

- Applicants must describe how the results of the project will be transitioned to the next stage of research, development, or dissemination to maximize benefit to the brain tumor community.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

- All applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI) and attest to confirmation of eligibility.

- LOIs and full proposals will be evaluated through a peer-review process conducted by an independent panel of experts and overseen by the NBTS Research Program.
- Only applicants invited to submit a full proposal following the LOI review process will be considered for funding.
- Full proposals must meet all guideline and eligibility requirements. Applications that do not meet these requirements will be administratively rejected.
- All applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision regarding the status of their LOI and full application.

Timeline	
Letter of Intent Due	April 13, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET
Invitation to Submit Full Proposal	May 29, 2026
Full Proposal Due	August 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET
Award Notification	October 2026
Anticipated Award Date	December 2026

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Principal Investigators (PIs) and co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) must hold an MD, PhD, MD/PhD, or equivalent.
- PIs must be based in the United States and affiliated with an academic institution, a health care organization, or community-based organization with demonstrated infrastructure and experience in clinical research, including access to appropriate human subjects' research oversight.
- Applicants must be independent investigators with a demonstrated track record of peer-reviewed publications and prior funding to support successful completion of the proposed project within the funding period.
- Grant funds must be awarded to nonprofit institutions or organizations.

8. ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- Investigators must not have overlapping funding that would duplicate the proposed work.
- Multiple applications may be submitted from the same institution; however, PIs or co-investigators may not be key personnel on more than one application.
- Members of the NBTS QoL Scientific Advisory Committee may not be a PI or co-investigator on any application.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

A. General Formatting Instructions for LOI and Full Applications

- Page Headers: All pages in each section of the application should be numbered; the name of the principal investigator should appear in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
- Page Format: Use NIH format guidelines: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia fonts with a font size of 11 points or larger with a minimum of 0.5-inch margins.
- Order and Length: The order of the LOI and full application should be followed, adhering to the maximum number of pages for each section as specified below.

B. LOI Guidelines

All applicants must submit a LOI to ensure that the proposed research aligns with the scope of the NBTS QoL Research Award. All LOIs will be reviewed by a review board prior to advancing to the full proposal stage. (See [General Formatting Instructions for LOI and Full Applications](#)).

LOIs must be submitted through the [NBTS's online portal](#) by 11:59 p.m. ET on April 13, 2026.

LOI Content Description: (1 page maximum)

- PI and co-PI(s) Name(s)
- PI Institution
- Project Title
- QoL Focus Area that will be addressed by the proposed research project
- Project Description to include:
 - Brief background
 - Hypothesis to be tested and specific aims
 - Brief description of planned experimental approach
- Impact statement describing how this project will impact the QoL of persons affected by brain tumors and/or advance the field of QoL research.

C. Full Proposal Guidelines (by invitation only)

Only applicants invited to submit a full proposal following the LOI review process will be considered for funding. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will receive an electronic notification. All components of the full proposal must be submitted through the [NBTS's online portal](#) by 11:59 p.m. ET on August 3, 2026. (See [General Formatting Instructions for LOI and Full Applications](#))

- a. Plain-Language Summary (0.5 page)
- Prepare a plain language summary that can be readily understood by readers without a background in science or medicine. Avoid the overuse of scientific jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations.
 - Describe the rationale, anticipated outcomes, and potential impact of the project, including how the work will impact the QoL of patients with brain tumors or their care partners.
- b. Scientific Abstract and Impact Statement (1 page)
- Identify the QoL Focus Area addressed by this proposal.
 - Provide an overview of the hypothesis to be tested or objective to be reached, including the specific aims and overall design.
 - Describe how this project will enhance the QoL of the brain tumor community. Specify how the project will work towards improving patient outcomes or provide a foundation for future QoL research.
- c. Patient Advocate Collaboration Plan (0.5 page)
- Describe how the proposed research project has been generated in partnership with a patient with a brain tumor or a care partner. Detail how the PI will engage the patient advocate community throughout the conduct of the proposed research.
- d. Research Plan (up to 8 pages including Literature Cited; to be uploaded as a PDF file)
- Hypothesis/Objective and Specific Aims
 - **Hypothesis:** Clearly state the hypothesis to be tested or objective(s) to be achieved, including relevance to patients with brain tumors and their care partners.
 - **Specific Aims:** Outline clear, measurable, and achievable aims that can be completed within the funding period.
 - Background/Significance:

Describe the scientific background and significance of the proposed project, including its relevance to the selected QoL Focus Area. Provide a critical review of relevant published literature and sufficient preliminary data, as appropriate, to support project feasibility and rationale.
 - Approach:

Provide a detailed description of the experimental design, methods and analytical plan(s) proposed to evaluate the hypothesis to be tested or objective(s) to be achieved. Describe how the experimental approach is appropriate to satisfy the aims of the project. Include a

realistic project timeline with key milestones and deliverables. Address potential challenges and limitations and describe strategies to mitigate them.

- Implementation Plan:

Describe plans and anticipated timelines for disseminating the findings, resource(s), tool(s) or intervention(s) to the brain tumor community. Specify how the results of the project will be transitioned to the next stage of research and/or development.

- Literature Cited:

Use National Library of Medicine (NLM)/Vancouver format. References should be numbered sequentially as cited in the research plan.

e. Budget and Budget Justification:

- Budget Overview:

- The requested funds should be in proportion to the project scope.
- The submitted budget should include any additional sources of institutional funding, in-kind support, or supplemental funding that have been secured to ensure sufficient financial resources for the project. **NOTE: Projects with substantial overlapping or duplicative funding are not permitted.**
- Travel funds may be requested for one member of the study to present research project findings at one relevant national meeting per year.
- NBTS adheres to the NIH salary cap for investigator(s).
- Study relevant supplies and small pieces of equipment are allowed.
- Publication submission costs are allowed.
- Indirect costs are not allowed. Note: Salary and fringe may be included.
- NBTS funds cannot be used for tuition remission.
- Subawards are discouraged. If utilizing a subcontract or subaward, you must include this expense in the budget. Note: The PI's institution is responsible for disbursing funds for subawards and/or subcontracts in a timely fashion.

- Budget Template:

The budget template will be available for download at the [NBTS's online portal](#).

- Budget Justification (2 pages):
Include a brief description and justification of all cost categories included in the budget.
- f. Current and Pending (Other) Support documentation (to be uploaded as a PDF file):**
- Provide for the principal investigator(s) using the [NIH format](#).
 - Specify any additional sources of funding and in-kind support that may have been secured or will be sought to ensure sufficient financial resources for the proposed project.
 - Specify any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Conflicts will be identified and handled on a case-by-case basis. All applicants are required to disclose relationships with for-profit entities.
- g. Biographical Sketches (to be uploaded as a PDF file):**
Use the most current [NIH biographical sketch](#) format for the principal investigator and all key project personnel.
- h. Letters of Support (to be uploaded as a PDF file):**
- A letter of support from a patient or care partner advocate is required (2 maximum).
 - An institutional letter of support for applications with institutional supplemental or in-kind support is required. This letter should describe the terms of the commitment (e.g., total amount and duration of support).
 - Letters of support/collaboration are required from key collaborators external to the applicant institution.

10. REVIEW PROCESS

- A QoL Scientific Advisory Committee, composed of members with expertise relevant to the full proposals and patient advocates, will review LOIs and full submissions.
- All applicants will be notified in writing of the final status of their LOI or full proposal application.

A. LOI REVIEW CRITERIA

LOIs submitted to this funding opportunity will be evaluated to ensure adherence to the scope and intent of the funding opportunity and the anticipated impact to the field of brain tumor QoL research.

B. FULL APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

To assess technical merit, all applications will be individually evaluated according to the following scored criteria, which are of equal importance.

a. Research Strategy and Feasibility

- To what extent the scientific background and significance of the proposed project are relevant to the selected QoL Focus Area.
- Whether the critical review of the relevant published literature and preliminary data, as appropriate, support project feasibility and rationale.
- To what extent the experimental approach is appropriate to satisfy the aims of the project.
- Whether potential challenges and limitations are described and sufficiently mitigated.

b. Impact

- If successful, to what extent the project will enhance the QoL of the brain tumor community.
- If successful, how well the project will improve patient outcomes and/or provide a foundation for future research.

c. Patient advocate collaboration

- To what extent the proposed research was generated in partnership with the brain tumor patient and care partner advocate community.
- How effectively will the PI engage the community throughout the conduct of the proposed research.

d. Implementation plan

- To what degree the description of the plans and anticipated timelines for disseminating the findings, resource(s), tool(s) or intervention(s) to the brain tumor community are appropriate and feasible.
- Whether the plans for the transition of the results of the project to the next stage of research and/or development are appropriate and feasible.

11. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grant awardees are expected to share the progress of their work with NBTS staff via videoconference meetings held twice per year. In addition, at the inception of the project, the PI will present an overview of the research project to a group of patient and care partner advocates.

A detailed written **annual progress report** listing accomplishments and a **financial report** are required at the end of each grant cycle year. A **final research and financial report** must be submitted at the conclusion of the grant.

If grant-supported work results in publishable findings, recipients are expected to publish their results in peer-reviewed scientific journals and present their findings at scientific conferences. The NBTS must be appropriately acknowledged in all manuscripts, poster presentations, news releases, or institutional publications arising from NBTS funded research. Reprints or copies of such publications or news releases should be provided to the NBTS.

12. QUESTIONS

Please direct all questions to research@braintumor.org.