



Request for Letters of Intent

Early Career Investigator Grant

2026 Grantees

Purpose

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance is requesting Letters of Intent for the 2026 Early Career Investigator Grant. The Early Career Investigator Grant (ECIG) is for junior faculty with a strong commitment to an investigative career in the field of ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers research on a path towards independence. The intent of these grants is to support a substantial time commitment to research and academic endeavors in ovarian cancer.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

1. Applicants (Principal Investigator) must be working in institutions with strong existing ovarian cancer research programs, in a school of medicine or public health, or a recognized non-profit scientific research facility.
2. Funding is only available to accredited non-profit universities/colleges, non-profit research hospitals, or a recognized non-profit scientific research facility. OCRA does not offer funding to any for-profit entities, consulting companies, or non-profits who are not conducting the research themselves.
3. Applicants should have strong training in preparation for an investigative career in ovarian cancer research and prior academic accomplishments, this grant is intended to help the applicant reach independence in their career.
4. The selection committee will consider most favorably applications that are creative, original, and hold the most promise in the areas of early detection, prevention, treatment, and translational research.
5. The proposed research plan should have sufficient scientific depth to allow the Early Career Investigator grantee to compete for additional funding after the period of this grant. Proposed projects should focus on ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers.
6. Candidates must have an MD/DO and/or PhD degree and should be in the first seven years of their first academic appointment after having completed their fellowship or post-doctoral training (Assistant Professor or equivalent). Individuals who will begin such a position by July 2025 are eligible for this grant.
7. This year OCRA intends to prioritize funding for at least one clinician scientist for an Early Career Investigator Grant.
8. For MDs/DOs or MD/DO-PhDs with clinical responsibilities, at least 50% of the time must be dedicated to ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers research.
9. For applicants without clinical responsibilities, at least 75% of the time must be dedicated to ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers research.

10. Early Career Investigator Grants will not be granted to individuals who hold or have had similar early career investigator awards from other funding agencies or foundations.
11. There are no citizenship requirements for OCRA Grants, International applicants are welcome to apply.
12. Each applicant may submit only one LOI per grant cycle.
13. Grant recipients can only have 1 OCRA grant active at a time, if the grant recipient already has an active OCRA grant, the current grant must end before the new grant may begin.
14. If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants will be required to provide two letters of recommendation, including one from someone in a position to mentor the applicant. The mentor must be at the same institution as the candidate.

If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact us (see last page).

Terms of Grant

Support of up to \$150,000 USD per year (\$450,000USD total) will be granted to the institution of the Principal Investigator. Early Career Investigator Grants have an anticipated start date of February 1, 2026. Grant recipients will be required to submit activation deliverables and annual progress reports (narrative and financial) throughout the life of the grant. Any publications or presentations of work resulting from this grant should acknowledge support from OCRA. Grant recipients may only receive OCRA's Early Career Investigator Grant once.

Selection Process

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), which is comprised of distinguished members of the medical, research and patient advocacy community from across North America. The majority of LOIs will be triaged at this stage; only a fraction of those submitting LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals.

We recognize that preparing a full application requires a significant amount of time and energy for investigators, and we believe this process will ensure that only those applications most likely to be competitive will advance to the final round of selection. *Please note that due to the small size of the OCRA staff and Scientific Advisory Committee, we are not able to provide feedback to applicants on their LOIs or Full Proposals.*

Timeline

The submission deadline for LOIs is 5:00pm Eastern Time (NY) on March 26, 2025. Late submissions and extension requests are not permitted. All applicants will be notified of their status in mid-May 2025. Please be sure to add grants@ocrahope.org to your safe sender list in your email so you can get all emails from OCRA's grant system. For those selected to submit full proposals, full proposals will be due mid-June 2025.

Application Process

Letters of Intent must be submitted in English via the [SmartSimple](https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/) website (<https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/>) by 5:00pm ET on March 26, 2025, by the Principal Investigator. OCRA grants may only have 1 Principal Investigator listed, however, there is no limit to key personnel.

The SmartSimple website is easy to use and will lead you through the completion of the LOI. We recommend you log into the website soon and familiarize yourself with the website as well as the required parts of the LOI.

Beyond basic contact information about yourself, your mentor, and key personnel, LOIs must include the following:

1. **Scientific Abstract** – Provide a summary of the proposed research. The abstract should clearly outline your proposed research project and aims to allow the reviewers a clear understanding of your proposed project. The abstract should be presented in 6,000 characters or less (including spaces). Text only; figures, images, and graphs are not permitted.
2. **PI BioSketch** -- A current NIH biosketch for the PI is required. Please use the NIH Biosketch template available for download in SmartSimple and adhere to its instructions and space limitations. The PI's biosketch is uploaded in the PI biosketch Section.
3. **Mentor's Biosketch** - A current NIH biosketch for the mentor is required. Please use the NIH Biosketch template available for download in SmartSimple and adhere to its instructions and space limitations. The mentor's biosketch is uploaded in the mentor biosketch section.
4. **Key Personnel Biosketches** -- NIH biosketches should be provided for anyone you listed in SmartSimple as Key Personnel. All key personnel biosketches should be combined into one document and uploaded as a single PDF. Please use the biosketch template available for download in SmartSimple, and adhere to its instructions and space limitations.
5. **Budget** -- Requested total budget amount in USD for the entire grant. A detailed budget is not required during the LOI.

No figures, references, appendices, detailed budgets, or letters of recommendation or collaboration are required or accepted at this stage.

Answers to frequently asked questions about the application process are available online [here](https://ocrahope.org/research/for-grantees/grant-application-faq/) (<https://ocrahope.org/research/for-grantees/grant-application-faq/>).

Technical Support

If you are having technical problems with SmartSimple please email OCRA – grants@ocrahope.org. SmartSimple works best when using Google Chrome. Be sure your pop ups are not blocked on your web browser as some items will open a new window.

Questions about the substantive aspects of the application should be directed to Kristin McGowan (contact info below).

About OCRA

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA) is the oldest and largest ovarian and gynecologic cancer charity in the world. Since its founding in 1994, OCRA has grown into the leading non-government

funder of ovarian and related gynecologic cancer research. Through innovative education and advocacy efforts, compassionate support programs, and cross-industry collaboration, OCRA is driving progress and pushing the boundaries of what's possible to improve outcomes for patients and advance research in its quest for a cure. Visit ocrahope.org to learn more.

For inquiries or further information, please contact:

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