



Request for Letters of Intent

Collaborative Research Development Grant – *Microsoft AI for Good Lab*

2027 Grantees

Purpose

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance is requesting Letters of Intent for the 2027 Collaborative Research Development Grant in partnership with Microsoft AI for Good Lab (CRDG-AI). The purpose of this grantmaking program is to provide funds for ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers research projects using AI or machine learning that may involve several investigators within one institution or collaborations between groups in multiple institutions. Interdisciplinary collaborations are encouraged.

For this opportunity, OCRA is partnering with [Microsoft AI for Good Lab](#), a philanthropic program at Microsoft, which offers access to advanced Microsoft Azure cloud computing. Investigators funded through this grant opportunity have access to support from Microsoft in the form of Azure computing credits. This in-kind support from Microsoft will be in addition to the financial support from OCRA. For FAQs regarding this partnership between Microsoft and OCRA, please look under the Collaborative Research Development Grant section of the FAQs found here:

<https://ocrahope.org/research/information-for-researchers/apply-for-a-grant/>

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

1. Team Composition Requirements

This is a collaborative grant and therefore requires a team of researchers.

- a. One investigator must be designated as the Principal Investigator (PI).
- b. Teams may be compiled of researchers from the same institution or multiple institutions.
- c. The PI and all lead investigators must hold full-time faculty or equivalent appointments at an accredited university, medical school, public health school, or non-profit research institution and may not be in training positions.
- d. At least one key investigator must be a physician with expertise in ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers.
- e. There are no citizenship requirements for OCRA Grants; international applicants are welcome to apply.
- f. International collaborations are welcome.

2. Proposed Project Requirements:

- a. Projects must focus on ovarian cancer or demonstrate clear, direct relevance to ovarian cancer, including work in related gynecologic cancers.
- b. Strong preference will be given to innovative projects with high potential impact in areas such as screening and early detection, etiology and prevention, therapeutics, cancer biology and genetics. Research in health services, quality of life, and epidemiology is also encouraged.

- c. Projects must include a clearly defined and substantive artificial intelligence (AI) and/or machine learning component as a central element of the research.
 - d. The CRDG-AI grant requires a partnership with Microsoft, investigators who do not wish to partner with Microsoft AI Good Lab should apply through the other Collaborative Research Development Grant application, which is also available on SmartSimple.
- 3. Institutional Eligibility and Applicant Limits:**
- a. Funding is limited to accredited academic institutions (e.g., universities and colleges) and other eligible research institutions, provided they are non-profit, including research hospitals, research institutes, and recognized scientific research facilities. OCRA does not provide funding to for-profit entities, consulting companies, non-research organizations, or non-profits that are not conducting the research themselves.
 - b. An individual may serve as Principal Investigator (PI) on only one Letter of Intent (LOI) per grant cycle. This limit applies across all grant opportunities within the same cycle. Individuals may participate in additional LOIs but only in a non-PI role.
 - c. A PI may hold only one active OCRA grant at a time. If a PI has an active OCRA grant, it must conclude before a new grant may begin.
- 4. Review Considerations:**
- a. Applications will be evaluated based on scientific merit, originality, innovation, and relevance to ovarian cancer and/or related gynecologic cancers.
 - b. Reviewers will also assess the likelihood that this funding will enable investigators to build or strengthen a research team capable of conducting high-impact research and successfully competing for future external funding.
 - c. Reviewers will place significant emphasis on the strength, rigor, and centrality of the AI and/or machine learning component, including how effectively the proposed project integrates these methodologies and utilizes the Azure computing credits provided through Microsoft AI for Good Lab to advance the scientific aims.

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

Terms of Grant

- Support of up to \$300,000 USD annually for three years (\$900,000 USD total) will be granted to the institution of the Principal Investigator.
- CRDG-AI grants will have a start date of January 1, 2027.
- Grant recipients will be required to submit activation deliverables and annual progress reports (narrative and financial) throughout the life of the grant.
- It is expected that the project will result in peer-reviewed publication(s). Any publications or presentations of work resulting from this grant should acknowledge support from OCRA.
- *Successful applicants will contract directly with Microsoft for the in-kind support of Azure credits.*

Selection Process

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by 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. Last year, only ~14% of LOIs were invited to the full proposal stage.

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

- **LOI Deadline: 5:00pm Eastern Time (NY) on March 25, 2026.**
- Late submissions and extension requests are not permitted.
- All applicants will be notified of their status in mid-May 2026.
- For those selected to submit full proposals, full proposals will be due mid-June 2026.

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.

Application Process

LOIs must be submitted in English via SmartSimple: <https://ocra.us-1.smartsimple.com/> by **5:00 PM ET on March 25, 2026.**

The LOI must be submitted through the Principal Investigator's (PI's) SmartSimple account. The individual logged into SmartSimple when the LOI is created will automatically be designated as the PI.

Applicants are encouraged to log into SmartSimple early to review system requirements.

Required Components:

1. Scientific Abstract

Provide a summary of the proposed research project. The abstract should clearly outline your proposed research project & aims, an overview of the research team, and resources for the project. The abstract should be presented in 6,000 characters or less (including spaces). Text only; figures, images, and graphs are not permitted.

2. BioSketches

Biosketches are required for the PI, all listed investigators, and key personnel. Researchers may either use the biosketch template available in SmartSimple (a previously NIH-approved template), or create a biosketch using NIH SciENCv (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciency/>) and select the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form option. *If an individual does not have an eRA Commons username, this field may be left blank on the template available in SmartSimple.*

- a. **Principal Investigator (PI):** A current biosketch for the PI (must be the submitting applicant).
- b. **Other Key Personnel:** Biosketches for all other listed key personnel & investigators, combined into one PDF.

3. Budget

Indicate the estimated total funding amount requested, up to \$900,000 USD, inclusive of indirect costs. A detailed budget is not required at the LOI stage. There are no budget questions at the LOI stage related to the Microsoft in-kind Azure computing credits.

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 largest global organization dedicated to combating ovarian and all gynecologic cancer. Since its founding in 1994, OCRA has invested \$140 million in scientific breakthroughs, and supports 95,000 people annually through its programs, which are free to all participants. As the only dedicated voice for ovarian and gynecologic cancer on Capitol Hill, OCRA has helped to secure \$3.8 billion in federal research and education funding. Learn more at ocrahope.org.

For inquiries or further information, please contact:

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