



**CURESEARCH**  
FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER

**CureSearch Young Investigator  
International Award in Pediatric Cancer Drug  
Development**

***2026/27 Request for Applications***

***Accelerate the Search: Find the Cure***

*Driving research to improve the odds for those children  
most at risk.*

## 2026/27 Funding Cycle Timeline

<b>Request for Applications Opens</b>	March 2, 2026
<b>Letter of Intent Deadline</b>	April 14, 2026
<b>LOI Notification/Full Applications Invited</b>	May 11, 2026
<b>Full Applications Due</b>	July 16, 2026
<b>Earliest Award Notification*</b>	September 2026
<b>Earliest Project Start Date</b>	January 1, 2027

\*Awards will be made on a rolling basis, pending the availability of funds.

## YOUNG INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CureSearch for Children's Cancer supports the recruitment of promising early-career scientists to a research career in pediatric oncology. Early career investigators are the most vulnerable to the shortfalls in federal research funding. The CureSearch Young Investigator program helps early career scientists begin their research programs and provides a pathway to independence. Since 2012, CureSearch has invested over \$5.9M in Young Investigator awards to 32 grantees in research areas with high-risk and poor outcomes for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer: relapsed and high-risk ALL, AML, brain tumors, Ewing sarcoma, hepatoblastoma, neuroblastoma, lymphoma, rhabdoid tumors, rhabdomyosarcoma, malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor, head and neck cancer, germ cell tumor, and Wilms tumor.

CureSearch's mission is to drive innovative research into clinical impact to accelerate the delivery of novel therapeutics to pediatric cancer patients. A key component of this mission is to ultimately drive outstanding translational and preclinical research to clinical trials and beyond towards commercialization. The 2026/27 Young Investigator Program is designed to provide support and training for exceptional young investigators in pediatric oncology drug development. The award is intended for investigators who have completed post-doctoral training and are transitioning to a full-time academic position.

### 2026/27 Letter of Intent Checklist:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title Page Information ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Download Templates & Instructions ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Applicant/Principal Investigator Information ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization/Institution & Contacts ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstract & Keywords ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Impact ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Mentoring Plan ( <i>Completed in proposalCentral</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific Approach ( <i>Attachment</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cited Publications ( <i>Attachment</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biosketches for Key Personnel ( <i>Attachment</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter(s) of Support ( <i>Attachment</i> )

## ELIGIBILITY

Applicants will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- The applicant's previous productivity, research environment, and ongoing mentorship during the transition to independence.
- Extent to which the proposed research has potential for pediatric drug development. Research studies leading to target and drug discovery and preclinical testing of new therapies will be given priority. Proposals will be reviewed for scientific merit by CureSearch's Scientific Review Committee and prioritized according to the 2026/27 funding priorities noted in this RFA by the Scientific Advisory Council.
- Continued support for second- and third-year funding is contingent upon a non-competitive review and demonstration of satisfactory completion of proposed research objectives and meeting the following expectations:
  - Submission of progress reports and completion of stated milestones, unless modified based on the direction of research.
  - If applicable, attendance and participation in the annual CureSearch Summit, a travel stipend to be provided by CureSearch.
  - Participation in CureSearch volunteer leadership activities, including yearly scientific review.

Research shows that diverse teams working together and capitalizing on innovative ideas and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams. Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. The following racial and ethnic groups have been shown to be underrepresented in biomedical research: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a American, or American Indian or Alaska Native. In addition, it is recognized that underrepresentation can vary from setting to setting. CureSearch encourages applicants from diverse populations to enhance the participation of researchers identified as nationally underrepresented in the biomedical and clinical sciences.

## APPLICANT (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)

Applicants should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must have MD (or equivalent), PhD, MD-PhD with no more than six years beyond completion of post-doctoral training.
- Applicants must have an academic appointment at a medical institution in the United States, South America, European Union, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, China, or Australia at the Instructor or Assistant Professor level; transition into an appropriate position anticipated during the funding period, ideally within the first year, must be verified by a Letter of Institutional Support.
- Applicants may not hold an independent NIH "R" or "P" award at the time of application. Career development awards, including the NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award, are not considered independent "R"-level funding for the purposes of this eligibility requirement, thus applicants with a K99/R00 award are eligible to apply.

- Applicants may concurrently have an NIH “K” award.
- Applicants must have an academic mentor identified and the application must include a letter/statement from the mentor documenting his/her involvement in the proposed research.

## INSTITUTIONS

Open to nonprofit, academic institutions. Collaborative efforts with different disciplines, institutions, consortia, nationalities, or biotechnology and pharma companies are encouraged.

Applicant organizations may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct. CureSearch will not accept duplicate or highly overlapping applications under review at the same time. This means that CureSearch will not accept:

- A new application that is submitted before issuance of the summary statement from the review of an overlapping new or resubmission application.
- A resubmission application that is submitted before issuance of the summary statement from the review of the previous new application.
- An application that has substantial overlap with another application pending appeal of initial peer review.

## RESUBMISSION POLICY

Applicants may resubmit an application that advanced to the full proposal stage in a previous RFA cycle but was not selected for funding. The LOI must be marked as a resubmission within the Proposal Central site. If invited to submit a full application, applicants will be asked to include a cover letter that addresses reviewer comments and outlines specific revisions. Resubmissions will compete with new proposals for funding consideration.

## FUNDING INFORMATION AND GRANT TERM

YI awards are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of applications of high scientific merit and potential impact. Up to four awards are available, contingent on the availability of funds, and will be based on the merits of the research proposed, the applicant's previous productivity, ongoing mentorship during the transition, and the research environment.

The applicant will **receive \$75,000 per year for three years (inclusive of up to 10% indirect costs)**. Continued support for second- and third-year funding is contingent upon a non-competitive review and demonstration of satisfactory and timely completion of milestones.

Projects should be focused on pediatric oncology drug development. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects addressing areas of high unmet need in pediatric cancer research. Funding decisions will be based on scientific merit and the project's drug development potential.

## BUDGET GUIDELINES

- Personnel on the project are limited to a base salary at or below [the NIH Salary Cap](#), which is currently \$228,000 per year.
- Up to 10% indirect costs are allowed, and must be included within the total award amount (\$225K; \$75K per year).
- Equipment costs are limited to no more than 20% of total direct costs for equipment that is an integral part of the proposed project (if additional equipment costs are required, prior approval by CureSearch is required).
- National and international travel costs are allowable, limited to no more than \$5,000 per year of the award.
- Publication and meeting-related costs are allowable.
- Graduate and postdoctoral fellow tuition costs, visa costs, and professional membership dues are not allowable.

## REVIEW PROCESS

CureSearch employs a multi-step approach to application and reviews. This RFA invites the submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI), the success of which will result in an invitation to submit a full application. LOIs are first reviewed for eligibility, adherence to formatting requirements, and responsiveness to the research focus specified in this RFA. Applications that do not meet the aforementioned requirements will be withdrawn and will not undergo scientific review.

Each qualifying LOI is reviewed by a panel of international scientific experts appointed by CureSearch. Reviewers will assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application based on the defined review criteria described below. Only applicants with LOIs deemed most meritorious and aligned with the program's primary goals will be invited to submit full applications. Applicants will be notified of LOI review decisions via email. Applicants invited to submit a full application will be granted access to the full application site.

## LOI SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviews will be based on the inclusion of the following within the LOI:

<b>Scientific Approach and Feasibility</b>	Description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How the proposed study will impact pediatric cancer patients</li><li>• How the proposed specific aims fully answer the study hypothesis(es)</li><li>• How the scientific approach effectively addresses each specific aim</li></ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	Description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How the proposed efforts will lead to novel therapeutic strategies or significant improvements on patient outcomes from current existing therapies</li><li>• How the project challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by integrating novel concepts, technologies, approaches or methodologies and/or interventions into the proposed scientific and/or clinical research</li></ul>

# LETTER OF INTENT SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All LOIs must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and instructions of this RFA. **LOIs must be completed by April 14, 2026 at 11:59PM ET** and submitted via proposalCENTRAL at <https://proposalcentral.com>.

You must establish a user account to submit a grant application. If you have a user account with proposalCENTRAL, simply log in. To begin an LOI, select "Grant Opportunities." In the upper left-hand corner, select "Filter by Grant Maker" and select CureSearch for Children's Cancer in the drop-down menu. Find "CureSearch for Children's Cancer Young Investigator International Award in Pediatric Oncology Drug Development" and click the "apply now" link to create your LOI.

Complete all fields in the application and all templates that are provided. Upload all requested documents in PDF format. See the proposalCENTRAL FAQ section for more information.

If you have difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support by phone (800) 875-2562 or by email [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

## LETTER OF INTENT TEMPLATE

Download the Template from proposalCENTRAL and fill in the required sections. The LOI Section D: Scientific Approach, Feasibility, and Innovation is limited to 2 pages. Cited Publications and LOI supporting documents are not included in this page number limit. A budget is not required at the LOI stage.

## DOCUMENT FORMAT

Please adhere to the following formatting requirements:

- PDF file format
- Font size: 12 point
- Font type: Times New Roman
- Page Size: No larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches
- Margins: 0.5 inch in all directions
- The complete LOI Scientific Approach (Section D) must not exceed 2 pages in length

## SECTION A: TITLE, APPLICANT, & ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Applicants should enter the title of their proposal, applicant information, and organization information.

## SECTION B: ABSTRACTS (500-WORDS EACH) & KEYWORDS INFORMATION

Applicants should enter a scientific abstract, a lay summary, and select their major research interest and keywords from the lists provided.

## **SECTION C: PROJECT IMPACT (3-5 SENTENCES)**

Describe your project and your project's impact in 3-5 sentences. Include how the project would have significant potential to lead to a critical pathway to identify a breakthrough toward improving childhood cancer outcomes.

## **SECTION D: SCIENTIFIC APPROACH (2 PAGES)**

Clearly and concisely outline the hypothesis(es), specific aims, and approaches that will be taken to address each aim. In this section, address the following topics:

- **Innovation:** Describe how the proposed efforts will lead to novel therapeutic strategies or significant improvements on patient outcomes from existing therapies.
- **Specific Aims:** Describe how the proposed specific aims fully answer the study hypothesis(es).
- **Approach:** Describe how the scientific approach effectively addresses each specific aim.

## **SECTION E: ACADEMIC MENTORING PLAN (500 WORDS)**

A clear plan for career development including strategies for mentorship and future research funding must be articulated. As a primary goal of this award is to support the Young Investigator's training in pediatric cancer drug development, the mentorship team should include members with expertise in pediatric cancer and/or therapy development/assessment.

## **LETTER OF INTENT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

The following documentation is required for the LOI, and will not count toward the page limit:

- **CITED PUBLICATIONS:** References must be numbered. Cited publications are not included in the page limit. Please include in attachments.
- **BIOSKETCHES:** Complete and upload an NIH Biographical Sketch (maximum five pages each) for all key project personnel, beginning with the Principal Investigator. CureSearch defines "key project personnel" as any individual with an advanced degree who will play an instrumental role in the accomplishment of the research project.
- **LETTERS OF SUPPORT:** Include the following:
  - A letter of support from the applicant's mentor detailing:
    - Plans for ongoing interaction with the applicant throughout the award period
    - Strategies for guiding the applicant's professional and research development
    - Plans for the continued advancement of the project beyond the funding period
  - A letter of support from the Division or Department Chair detailing:
    - A commitment to the investigator
    - The availability of necessary protected research time

- The availability of adequate research facilities (including details of laboratory space for the investigator) to conduct the proposed research.

## **FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Applicants with LOIs deemed most meritorious and aligned with CureSearch's goals will be invited to submit full applications. Instructions on how to submit a full application will be provided at the time of the LOI decision.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

CureSearch treats all LOIs, full applications, and associated research information (collectively, the "Confidential Information") in confidence using no less than reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the grant review process and CureSearch assessments. All Confidential Information will be used by CureSearch and its scientific reviewers only internally for the purposes of reviews and assessments and will be shared only in accordance with its sharing policy stated herein.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Principal investigators, co-investigators, sub-contractors or collaborators submitting applications to the RFA will be excluded from serving on the scientific review committee. However, non-applicants who are invited to serve on the scientific review committee may still have a conflict of interest if 1) the application is from the reviewer's own institution regardless of whether or not the reviewer has had any involvement in preparing the application, 2) the reviewer, his/her immediate family, or close professional associate(s) has a financial interest or vested interest in the outcome of the proposed research, or 3) the reviewer has been involved in discussions regarding the application, is a provider of services, cell lines, reagents or other materials, or writer of a letter of support for the applicant. When a conflict of interest is deemed to be present, the reviewer will be ineligible to review the proposal and be asked to recuse themselves from the deliberations.

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **SHARING POLICY**

Being a public, philanthropic charity, research conducted with funds from CureSearch must be conducted in the public interest. CureSearch acknowledges that any discoveries and related regulatory approvals made by researchers through the funded research are the property of those conducting and responsible for the research and that unless otherwise agreed to by the parties; such researchers have the first opportunity to exploit the research commercially or otherwise. However, subject to intellectual property protection considerations, each applicant acknowledges that CureSearch has the right, after reasonable consultation to release a summary of findings of the research to the general public.

## **PUBLICATION**

It is also required that the results of the research will be published as rapidly as possible in the open scientific literature. Publications should be consistent with high standards of scientific excellence and rigor and include acknowledgment of the funding provided by CureSearch for Children's Cancer.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY/INVENTIONS**

The recipient of this Award or his/her institution shall own any invention. However, the recipient shall promptly notify CureSearch of any invention and associated patent filing resulting from the research. If the recipient or his/her institution grants any right to the invention to a third party for commercial application and receives any amounts from the invention, CureSearch shall be entitled to receive a share calculated by multiplying the amounts received by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of the Award, and the denominator of which is the direct cost incurred by the recipient and his/her institution in developing the invention, except in no event shall the CureSearch share exceed 30% of such amounts received.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDEES**

Progress Reports for CureSearch are due every six months. Progress report templates and instructions will be provided by CureSearch via proposalCentral, and reminders will be provided prior to due dates.

If held, Principal investigators are required to attend the annual CureSearch Summit. Grantees will have the opportunity to network with other investigators, industry, and other stakeholders, explore possible collaborative efforts and identify strategies/resources to advance projects toward clinical application and commercialization.

Principal investigators will work closely with CureSearch to translate complex science, findings, and outcomes for donors and constituents. This will be done by conducting interviews for videos, podcasts, webinars, newsletters, and/or other written updates.

Grantees are expected to account for the monies expended under the Award; any monies spent either not in accordance with the approved research project or prior to pre-approval of any material change in the project are not recoverable and may be cause for immediate termination of funding by CureSearch.

Grantees are expected to meet scheduled milestones and submit deliverables on time. Failure to meet milestones, furnish scheduled deliverables, including the aforementioned reports, or to comply with the terms of the grant may serve as a base for the termination of funding by CureSearch.

## QUESTIONS?

Contact information for all inquiries about application submission is provided below.

<b>Type of Inquiry</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>All programmatic inquiries (including questions related to eligibility, application requirements, etc.)</b>	<b>CureSearch</b> Email: <a href="mailto:researchgrants@curesearch.org">researchgrants@curesearch.org</a> Phone: +1-240-235-2215
<b>All technical inquiries related to the online application system, proposalCENTRAL</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:pcsupport@altum.com">pcsupport@altum.com</a> Phone: 1-800-875-2562