



A Breath of Hope
LUNG FOUNDATION

ANNOUNCING

A Breath of Hope's 2023 Lung Cancer Research Awards

(Two \$150,000 awards for early-career investigators)

Peg's Fight for Life Award & Julie Swedberg's YOLO Award

(Read Peg and Julie's stories: abreathofhope.org/research)

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation

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Request for letters of intent opens August 7, 2023, and closes September 15, 2023. Extended to October 19. Full RFP below.

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation works to improve the five-year lung cancer survival rate by funding innovative translational research in the U.S., educating Americans for earlier detection, providing high quality patient education to overcome literacy barriers (youandlungcancer.com), and supporting patients and families with support services.

History: *A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation* (ABOHLF) was founded in 2008 by a group of Minnesota lung cancer patients and their caregivers after they organized a race to raise awareness about the world's deadliest cancer - lung cancer. Each of the founders, whether they smoked or not, were shocked to learn that this disease carries a societal stigma that leaves families coping with blame, shame, misinformation, and inadequate research funding levels. ABOHLF has now invested more than two and a half million dollars in its national research program and has funded research projects focused on topics such as improved early detection, oncogene-driven lung cancer, therapy-resistance, and many projects that lead to new therapies. ABOHLF serves thousands of U.S. lung cancer patients each year with rides to treatment, support groups, and patient education.

Nonprofit EIN #: 30-0475578

Accountability: *A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation* meets or exceeds all accountability standards through the Charities Review Council of Minnesota and was found to be fully compliant in its annual audits.

Purpose of Award

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation (ABOHLF) will provide funding to two investigators in the form of a \$150,000 award paid every six months for two years. The award is designed to support salaries and other costs related to retaining research talent in the field of lung cancer. Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer killing approximately 130,000 Americans each year, yet research funding support remains disproportionately low per cancer death. Consequently, progress is limited, and talented scientists often move to other, better-funded research fields. Through ABOHLF early-career investigator awards, ABOH ensures that excellent research continues to be funded and the chosen research institutions have the resources needed to retain promising scientists committed to reducing the U.S. lung cancer mortality rate.

Funding Available in 2023

The total award amount for the 2023 awards is \$300,000 or \$150,000 per award. Each award will be paid out over a two-year period in increments of \$37,500 following each submitted six-month progress report. The number of grants available in this 2023 RFP cycle is two.

- *ABOHLF allows up to 10% in indirect costs.* These costs are part of the total award of \$150,000. Indirect costs include costs such as departmental accounting and clerical support, network support, equipment depreciation, building and facilities operation and maintenance, library, general and sponsored projects administration.

Eligibility & Letter of Inquiry Form deadline: September 15, 2023, **extended to October 19, 2023**

Invitations for Full Proposals sent by ABOHLF: October 3, 2023, **extended to November 3, 2023**

Full Proposals submitted by invited applicants' deadline: November 10, 2023, **extended to November 28, 2023**

Announcement of Winning proposal: December 15, 2023, **extended to January 12, 2024**

First payment: March 1, 2024

Eligibility Criteria

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation (ABOHLF), in collaboration with its panel of experts in the field of oncology, will evaluate the merit of research proposals submitted in response to the request for proposals announcement (RFP) from applicants who meet the following eligibility requirements.

RFP ELIGIBILITY includes the following criteria:

- Must be employed by a U.S. research institution (proof of Visa required)

- If the project involves people or animals, you must have received approval from your institution's review board before the funds are disbursed.
- **Early-stage investigator (ESI).** You are within 10 years of either of the following:
 - Terminal research degree (Must hold a doctoral degree MD, PhD, DO, DrPH, or equivalent)
 - Medical residency or equivalent

Preferred topics: Specifically, proposals that address one of the following are required. **Topic areas include, but are not limited to the following ideas:**

- Early detection – innovation and new techniques to predict or diagnose lung cancer in early stages.
- Innovative strategies to broaden the populations that are eligible for lung cancer screening.
- Understanding small cell histological transformation in EGFR-mutated lung cancer.
- Strategies to overcome resistance to immunotherapy in EGFR and other mutation-driven NSCLC.
- Predictive and prognostic markers to identify responders and non-responders in NSCLC.
- Understanding genetic heterogeneity in mutation-driven NSCLC patients.

Eligibility summary: The early-career principal investigators of proposals must have one of the following credentials within the past ten years: M.D., M.D. /Ph.D., PhD, D.O., DrPH or MS in a faculty appointment in a U.S Research Institution. Researchers must be able to demonstrate protected time for cancer research through their letter from the institution.

The maximum period of performance is two years. The maximum allowable funding for each award for the entire period of performance is \$150,000.

I. TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

2023 RFP Timeline:

- **August 7, 2023:** Announcement – Request for letter of inquiry (LOI)
- **September 15, 2023: Deadline for LOI submission – online forms reviewed by ABOHLF research committee**
- October 3, 2023: Up to 20 investigators invited to submit full proposal
- **November 10, 2023: Deadline for full proposal submission from invited candidates**
- **November 10-30, 2023:** National Scientific Advisory Committee scores proposals to identify finalists
- **Week of December 4, 2023:** ABOH Research Committee conducts phone interviews with finalists (and their mentors if preferred by candidate)
- **December 15, 2023:** Winner notified/ABOH Announcements
- **February 1, 2024:** First of four payments of \$37,500 is mailed to the winner's institution, assuming institution has signed and returned ABOH grant contract. Payments are made to the

institution every six months following the receipt of progress reports from the PI. August 2024, February 2025, August 2025.

II. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Complete Eligibility & LOI form by clicking link found at www.abreathofhope.org/research

A one-page letter of intent is required by September 15, 2023. *Up to 20* finalists will receive an invitation to apply by **Nov. 10, 2023**, and an online link to the full application will then be shared. **The LOI must include PI credentials, name of mentor from institution, personal statement, and specific aim.**

Full proposals must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CST November 10, 2023. Late submissions will not be considered. Applicants are encouraged to submit early because technical assistance will not be available past the close of the business day 11/10/2023 CST. **In case of technical difficulties, proposals are accepted by email as well as through the online form. ABOH Email address: research@abreathofhope.org.**

Application Components:

1. **Contact Information:** Applicant and institution information, including phone and email.
2. **Project Information:** This section includes the following information about the proposed project:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Research focus area(s)
 - c. Assurances for use of human and/or animal subjects in the research proposal
 - d. Abstract – a brief abstract of the research proposal must be entered (<350 words)
3. **Specific Aims:** List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology. The specific aims should state concisely and realistically what the research intends to accomplish and/or what hypothesis is to be tested and should list measurable objectives for the proposed project.
4. **Personal Statement Questions:** Please answer briefly as the following questions in the text box areas on the online application. Each question has a maximum limit of 350 words.
 - a. What is the applicant's career plan, including short- and long-term goals around lung cancer research?
 - b. How would receiving this award affect the applicant's career in lung cancer research?
 - c. What is the percentage of time the applicant spends on research activities?
 - d. What is the applicant's role versus the mentor's role in the proposed research study?
 - e. What additional resources are available to support the applicant and the project?
 - f. What are the other sources of salary support?

- g. Who will collect and analyze the data?
 - h. What is the clinical potential of this research project?
 - i. Was this research proposal submitted and/or will be submitted to other funding agencies/organizations?
 - j. What additional responsibilities does the applicant have responsibility for during the two-year fellowship timeframe? Please list all non-research activities.
5. **Applicant's NIH Biosketch:** Should include past, current and pending funding for their research. The biosketch must have no more than four pages.
6. **Research Strategy:** The research strategy should be limited to six (6) typewritten, single-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and 11-point Arial font type. ALL pertinent tables, pictures, and graphs MUST be included within the 6-page limit: The Research Strategy must contain the following information:
- a. **Significance and Background:**
 - i. Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
 - ii. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or critical practice in one or more broad fields.
 - iii. Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will change if the proposed aims are achieved.
 - b. **Innovation:**
 - i. Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
 - ii. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approached or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
 - iii. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
 - c. **Approach and Feasibility:**
 - i. Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
 - ii. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
 - iii. If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.

- iv. Please include appropriate detail and/or documentation in the Supporting Documentation section to assure a reviewer that your project is feasible in the timeframe of the grant. Examples include: a letter confirming you will have access to an experimental therapy or an approval letter from CTEP or a cooperative group.
- v. Clearly state the applicant's role in the project (i.e. writing of protocol, performing the assays, etc.).
- vi. When human subjects are involved, the precautions to ensure patient safety and confidentiality and the relevance or implications for patient care should be explained.
- vii. List and describe the facilities and resources available to conduct the study, including a description of industry support for any clinical trials.
- d. **Statistical Analysis:** A statistical consideration section is required for all applications. This section should include the primary objective/hypothesis and primary endpoint of the study, justification of the proposed study sample size, procedures for data analysis, and appropriate statistical considerations. Any laboratory-based in vitro research aims should also include the primary objective/hypothesis and primary endpoint of the study, procedures for data analysis, and appropriate statistical details that describe the summary measures that will be used to meet the objectives of the study. It is highly recommended that you consult with a biostatistician before you submit your application.
- e. **Cited References.** A list of cited references in the Research Strategy should be added and does not account for six-page limits.
- 7. **Institutional Letter of Support.** A letter from the Department Chair or Dean at the sponsoring institution where the applicant's research project will be conducted must be provided. This letter must include a statement of institutional support that will enable the applicant to perform the proposed research. If the mentor is the Department Chair, the Institutional Letter of Support must come from the Dean.
- 8. **Clinical Protocol** (optional). If your project involves a clinical protocol, you are highly encouraged to add a copy of the protocol.
- 9. **Prior Publications** (optional) – Up to two prior publications may be included. The applicant must be a co-author on these publications.
- 10. **Supporting Documentation** (optional). This section may be used to upload any necessary additional information required to properly review the application (i.e. a letter from a drug company that they will provide the investigational drug, a letter of collaboration from another laboratory providing expertise for this project, etc.). Applicants are encouraged to provide a letter of support for any investigational agents.

11. **Project Timeline.** Enter major milestones for your project, the expected completion date, and if there is an associated deliverable. A deliverable is something that can be included in a progress report, such as a publication or an approval letter. You are not required to have deliverables. However, the timeline should make it clear what outcomes will be achieved during the grant award period.
12. **Budget and Justification.** The award funds will be directed to the sponsoring institution and should be used towards salary support, personnel, supplies, and other necessary expenses (excluding equipment) for the pursuit of the recipient's research project. The budget must be directly entered into the ABOHLF budget form found at the end of this RFP. Budget justification for the entire project period must be entered for each line item requested in the "Notes" section.
13. **Letter of Support from a Mentor** – Optional, but preferred for early career investigators (in their first ten years following their final degree). This letter should include the following information:
 - a. Training plan for the applicant, including intended structure of the mentor/investigator interaction during the proposed investigation;
 - b. Confirmation that the applicant is *within the first ten years of a full-time*, faculty appointment;
 - c. A critical review of both the applicant and the research proposal;
 - d. The role(s) or anticipated role(s) the applicant holds (will hold) at the institution;
 - e. The level of institutional commitment to the applicant's research program as an independent clinical investigator; and
 - f. Assurance that the applicant's sponsoring institution will provide adequate facilities and support for performance of the proposed work.
14. **Institutional Approval.** The Authorized Official representing the institution of the applicant must approve the completed application (both the project proposal and the budget) before submission. This official is normally from the institution's Office of Sponsored Research and can be submitted as a letter of approval.
15. **Human Participants Certification.** If applicable, the applicant must provide verification of project approval from the institution's ethical review board, or notification to ABOHLF if approval is pending.

Additional Information:

- **Use of fellowship funds** - The ABOH Research Fellowship is designed to be used for salary costs and approved fringe costs for the principle researcher.
- **Change of employment** - ABOHLF will have final approval rights of any change of sponsoring institution. Request to continue receiving funding must be submitted in writing to research@abreathofhope.org.

- **Progress Reports** – Two progress reports (one for lay audience to be shared publicly; one for research committee to be held in confidence) are due two weeks before each fellowship payment is mailed with one final report at end of cycle. **Due dates:**
 - By July 15, 2024
 - By Jan. 15, 2025
 - By July 15, 2025
 - Final report due by January 2026.
- **Leave of absence** - A written request must be submitted to *A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation* (ABOHLF) Research Committee and permission shall be granted at the discretion of ABOHLF. If permission is not granted, unused funds will be returned to ABOHLF.
- **Patient and Intellectual property** – The sponsoring institution agrees to notify ABOHLF at research@abreathofhope.org in the case of patent applications or decisions to seek legal protection for intellectual property. ABOHLF will keep all information confidential. Any expenses related to patents shall fall on the sponsoring institution. The patent policies of the sponsoring institution shall guide all discoveries or intellectual properties that result from support of fellowship recipient.
- **Confidentiality** – Other than lay reports produced by PI's, All *A Breath of Hope Research Fellowship* applications, progress reports and scoring are held confidential by ABOHLF. Submitted proposals become the property of ABOHLF and will not be returned.
- **Disclaimer** - *A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation* does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, age or any other factors that are irrelevant to the quality of the research project being accomplished by applicants.

For questions about the 2023 research awards, please contact Nancy Torrison at ABOHLF:
research@abreathofhope.org or 952-807-6111