



Autism Science Foundation

searching. solving. sharing.

Request for Applications: 2026 Suzanne Wright Memorial Research Accelerator Grants

RFA Released: April 21, 2026
Applications Due: July 6, 2026

Introduction

The Autism Science Foundation invites applications for its Suzanne Wright Memorial Research Accelerator Grants. These grants are designed to **expand the scope, goals, or timeline, or add additional outcomes, speed the progress, address a specific obstacle in scientific discovery or increase the efficiency or improve final product dissemination of active autism research grants in all areas of autism research.**

This mechanism is also meant to allow creative use of existing data that has not previously been analyzed to ask a question relevant to autism research. The funding should not be used to fully support a project, but to leverage existing resources to accelerate the discovery of research findings. Projects that do not fit the goal of the mechanism or that do not adhere to the proposal preparation instructions will be returned without review.

Awards

The Autism Science Foundation will make a number of Awards determined by its available financial resources. The term of the award cannot exceed the IRB approval period on the underlying or primary grant.

Grants of up to \$7,500 US dollars are available to enhance, expand and enrich grants currently funded by other sources (including ASF). Staff salary may be covered by this award. All projects must have prior IRB approval. No portion of these funds shall be used to cover indirect university costs.

Be creative in your use of these funds. Check our website for examples of the types of projects we fund with these grants. We will accept accelerator grants in any area of research.

Eligibility

Applicants eligible for this grant include:

- Postdoctoral fellows who are at least one full year (12 months) into their postdoc by the time of application. (Note: postdoctoral fellows will be required to have a letter of recommendation submitted on their behalf).
- Individuals who hold the title of assistant professor or higher.
- Those with a title of staff scientist or above, who are not tenured, should email Alycia Halladay (ahalladay@autismsciencefoundation.org) to inquire about eligibility.

ASF funds internationally. U.S. citizens enrolled in universities inside or outside of the United States are eligible to apply. Non-U.S. citizens enrolled in universities based inside or outside of the U.S. are also eligible to apply. However, the applicant should have the

proper existing paperwork needed to work within or outside the United States.

Proposal Preparation

Proposals should be written in 12-point Arial font with 1.5 spacing and margins of 0.5 inch or greater. The applicant's last name must appear on all pages of the application. All pages must be submitted as a single .pdf file.

Page 1: Cover Page

- Project title
- Full name, current and permanent email address, degree held, position/title, demographic information (race/ethnicity), and affiliation of the PI of the accelerator grant

Page 2: Information on Parent Grant and Use of Funds

- Top of page should be titled "Information on Parent Grant and Use of Funds"
- The current grant name, scope of current funding, grant number, funding source and abstract for the parent grant
- Indicate the PI of the parent grant and your relationship to the project. As examples: are you listed as personnel, are you accessing data from the grant, are you recontacting families from the grant?

Pages 3-9: Research proposal, budget and references

- Top of page should be titled "Research Proposal"
- Use 12 point Arial font, with 1.5 spacing and margins of 0.5 inch or greater.
- No longer than 6 pages - up to 5 pages for the research proposal plus a maximum of one page for references
- The proposal should
 - clearly state the existing research question;
 - what problem or question will be addressed with accelerator funds;
 - how the proposed study builds upon, expands, or enhances a currently funded research project; and
 - what knowledge will be generated as a result of the accelerator funding, or what obstacle the funding will help address.
- Restate in 2-3 sentences how the accelerator funds will enrich and accelerate the current or primary project. Bold and italicize these sentences.
- Indicate the exact dollar amount you are applying for and justify how the funds will be spent to enhance, accelerate or build upon the parent grant.

Pages 10-13: Biosketch and letter

- Include the NIH biosketch for the proposed PI of the accelerator grant.
- Please note, if the PI of the accelerator is not the PI of the parent grant, you are required to include a letter of commitment from the PI of the parent grant if data, biomaterials, resources or access to information from the parent grant.

Letter Preparation

Letters are required only in these two circumstances:

- If the PI of the accelerator is *NOT* the PI of the parent grant, you are required to have a **letter of commitment** from the PI of the parent grant acknowledging the use of data or resources or granting access to the PI of the accelerator grant.
- Postdoctoral fellows applying for an accelerator grant must submit a **letter of recommendation, preferably from the fellow's mentor. If you are a postdoctoral fellow who is using another dataset, you need both a letter from the PI of the parent grant and a letter of recommendation from the mentor.**

Tenured academic appointees and others should *NOT* submit letters of recommendation, only letters of commitment, if necessary.

Proposal & Letter Submission

Proposals should be submitted by email as one .pdf document with the subject line: *Last Name/Institution/Accelerator* to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org.

Example: Martin/Tulane/Accelerator

Letters of commitment/recommendation should be **submitted directly by the parent grant PI or recommender to ASF** by email to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org.

Please ask your PI or recommender to use the subject line: *Applicant Last Name/Institution/Letter Type*

Example: Martin/Tulane/Letter of Recommendation

Example: Martin/Tulane/Letter of Commitment

Successful electronic submission will be confirmed by email notification to the sender.

Applications are due July 6, 2026 by 5:00PM ET. This deadline applies to both the proposal and any applicable letter(s) of commitment or recommendation. It is your responsibility to inform the recommender or PI of this deadline. Any proposals or letters received after this deadline will not be reviewed.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal complies with the conditions prescribed in the RFA. Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to return without review any proposal found not to comply with the conditions prescribed on the RFA, or any proposal that is not responsive to its research goals or exceeds its funding limits or available resources, at any time during the application and review process.

The Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to make changes to this RFA at any time. Changes will be posted on the website. We advise applicants to check this link frequently: <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/apply-for-a-research-accelerator-grant/>

Award Notification and Start Dates

Award notifications will be made no later by September of 2026. We expect your grants office will have signed off on the contract and the project to begin no later than December 1, 2026. **We highly suggest applying for approval of an IRB or IACUC amendment prior to August of 2026.** We will not extend the start date due to IRB delays. In addition, if the grants office has significant delays in signing off on the contract, or there are significant IRB delays because paperwork was not submitted expeditiously, we have the right to rescind the offer. If your grants office needs a sample template to review, it can be found here: <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/grantee-resources/>

Payment of Awards

Upon notification of award, we will require a copy of the underlying project's IRB approval letter. Upon receipt of the IRB letter by ASF, we will issue a contract to the investigator's sponsoring institution and make a single payment of the full amount. **Please note, sponsoring institutions must accept the contract as presented and may not request any changes.** The goal of this mechanism is to accelerate existing projects; in furtherance of that goal we try to disburse funds as quickly as possible. ASF will not engage in contract negotiations. We strongly suggest sending the sample contract to your grants office to ensure the institution will be able to agree to the terms. A sample contract can be found at <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Sample-Accelerator-Contract.pdf>

Awardees must submit a brief written report to the Autism Science Foundation at the conclusion of the award, documenting the status of the research funded and detailing the use of funds. The format for this form will be provided by ASF. All forms can be found at <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/grantee-resources/>

Questions about proposal submission, proposal content and review, or applicant eligibility should be addressed to Alycia Halladay, Chief Science Officer, Autism Science Foundation. (ahalladay@autismsciencefoundation.org)