

ALF 2026 POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) DEADLINE: September 18, 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 16, 2026

AWARD PERIOD: February 1, 2027 – February 1, 2028

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award is to support the development of promising research trainees and their basic or translational research on liver biology and disease. The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award encourages the career development of individuals with research potential who are in the post-doctoral phase of their career and require additional research training and experience. The award provides a supplementary stipend directly to trainees, with the goal of supporting them with living expenses and allowing them to focus on their liver research and their transition to a career in independent research.

Postdoctoral trainees who hold MD, PhD or MD/PhD degrees and are training in liver research are encouraged to apply. The award will supplement federal or non-federal fellowship stipends or other types of salary support. This award supports projects in basic, translational, or clinical research.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD AT-A-GLANCE

Career Level: Postdoctoral Trainees

Award Type: Supplementary Stipend

Research Type: Basic, Translational, or Clinical Research

Funding amount: \$20,000 for 1 year

Letter of Intent Deadline: September 18, 2026

Application Deadline: October 16, 2026

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award, the applicant must:

- 1) Be employed by a public or private non-profit institution accredited in the United States and engaged in health care and health-related research.
- 2) Hold an MD and/or PhD (or equivalent degree) by the start date of this award.
- 3) Be a postdoctoral or clinical research fellow who has completed their most recent doctoral degree or medical residency within the past five (5) years at the start of the award.
 - a) ALF is sensitive to personal matters that impact career trajectories. An appropriately documented Academic or personal leaves of absence (e.g., parental leave, medical leave, absence to care for a parent/spouse/child/dependent, etc.) or other exceptional circumstances that significantly affected the applicant's academic career trajectory will not be counted toward the above five-year eligibility criteria. Applicants in this situation must reach out to ALF staff at least two weeks before the application deadline to ask for an exemption.
 - b) Applicants who are outside of the eligibility time frame because of other exceptional

circumstances may also request to be considered for an exemption.

- c) Applicants requesting an exemption must reach out to ALF staff via email (research@liverfoundation.org) at least three weeks before the application deadline to ask for an exemption. Exemptions will be provided on a case-by-case basis and must be included in the application package if granted.
- 4) Be sponsored by a research mentor.
- 5) Be able to guarantee at least 25% protected research time actually spent on the proposed project for the duration of the award. The percent research time is the actual amount of time the applicant will work on the project, not a funding percent effort.
- 6) A single applicant may only receive one postdoctoral award every other year.

ALF supports research from investigators of all backgrounds. Applicants from groups underrepresented in the biomedical research workforce are encouraged to apply, including, but not limited to, individuals from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in health-related sciences, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

AWARD DETAILS

An award of \$20,000 will be provided over one year as a supplement to federal or non-federal postdoctoral fellowship stipends or other types of salary support. Funding is provided as a stipend directly to the recipient, not the institution, and the stipend should not reduce the current stipend/salary provided by the institution. The stipend is intended to support recipients with living expenses, not to support direct expenses for the research project or institution's indirect costs. It is expected that funds will be available to the recipient in order to carry out the proposed research and cover all expenses necessary for the successful completion of the project.

Award terms:

- Recipients must acknowledge the award in all publications (abstracts, manuscripts, or other documents) resulting from research performed during the tenure of this award. A copy of the publication should be provided to ALF.
- Awards cannot be transferred to another institution without prior written approval from the American Liver Foundation.
- Recipients are directly responsible to the sponsoring institution.
- A maximum of one award will be made per mentor per year.
- A single applicant may only receive one postdoctoral award every other year.
- American Liver Foundation must be notified immediately if the applicant receives another research award during the application process or during the award period.
- Award recipients agree that their photograph and a brief summary of their research project will be featured in a press release and posted on the American Liver Foundation website and social media channels.

RESEARCH PROJECT SCOPE

Candidates can propose basic, translational, or clinical research projects on liver biology, liver disease(s), or any other topic that will advance the liver research field.

The proposed research project does not have to be a new area of research and can be part of research projects that the candidate is already working on. **The project scope should allow the proposed research to be successfully completed within one year**, which is the duration of the award period. However, because the award is provided as a stipend supporting the recipient rather

than research expenses, the proposed project does not need to be feasible within a \$20,000 budget.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

A Letter of Intent (LOI) **must** be submitted to apply for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award. A preliminary abstract is required for submission. The LOI purpose is to allow ALF staff to estimate the number of and plan for the review of submitted applications.

The Letter of Intent must be submitted in ProposalCentral. See below for instructions on how to complete your LOI in ProposalCentral and submit the completed LOI no later than **September 18, 2026**.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Submission Deadline

The deadline for the Letter of Intent is September 18, 2026.

The deadline for the Application is October 16, 2026. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

Instructions for Submission in ProposalCentral

Be sure to adhere to word limits and provide all requested materials as indicated in these guidelines. Applications that do not meet the requirements, in content or format, will not be reviewed.

- 1) Your application must be submitted through ProposalCentral.
- 2) Account Setup: Click [here](#) to create an account in ProposalCentral or sign in if you already have one. Please note that the Applicant's Mentor also needs a ProposalCentral account as signatures from both Applicant and Mentor are required for submission.
- 3) We strongly suggest that you add ProposalCentral Customer Support's email address (pcsupport@altum.com) as a contact or "trusted sender" as all emails related to your application will come directly from ProposalCentral.
- 4) Professional Profile: Applicants will need to create at least one Professional Profile and select the appropriate profile as Principal Investigator in the Proposal "Applicant/PI" section.
- 5) Starting your Application:
 - a) Navigate to the "Grants Opportunities" tab, enter "American Liver Foundation" in the Search field, find "American Liver Foundation Travel Award" in the Program column, and click on "Apply Now" to start your application.
 - b) After you have created an application, navigate to the "Proposals" tab to access the proposal, click on the Edit button, and follow instructions in each Proposal Section to complete your application.
 - c) Do NOT click on "Apply Now" more than once as it will create multiple applications in the Proposal Tabs and they cannot be merged.
- 6) A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted after you create your Proposal and enter your application dashboard. Your LOI will be reviewed, and if approved, you will be invited to submit a full proposal.
- 7) Complete mandatory fields in all Proposal sections and provide all required documents in the Attachment section (see below for details).
- 8) Obtain requested signatures and click the "Submit" button to submit your application.
- 9) You will receive an email from ProposalCentral (pcsupport@altum.com) confirming that your application was successfully submitted. Please make a note of the Application ID Number

included in the confirmation email as it may be needed to reference your application during the application process. Check your spam folder if you did not receive the confirmation email.

Required Documents

Provide all required documents in the Attachment section:

- 1) **Applicant Biosketch:** A biographical sketch for the Applicant is required. Follow instructions for the NIH [Biographical Sketch Common Form](#) to create a Biosketch in SciENcv, export the completed Biosketch in PDF format, and upload the PDF file in your ProposalCentral Proposal. **Limit five pages.**
- 2) **Exemption Letter** (if applicable): Include the exemption letter provided by ALF if an exemption to the five-year rule was granted was granted (see Eligibility section for details).
- 3) **Mentor Biosketch**
 - a) A biographical sketch for the **Mentor** is required. Follow instructions for the NIH [Biographical Sketch Common Form](#) to create a Biosketch in SciENcv, export the completed Biosketch in PDF format, and upload the PDF file in your ProposalCentral Proposal. **Limit five pages.**
 - b) If the Applicant has two Co-Mentors, provide a Biosketch for **both Co-Mentors**.
- 4) **Mentor Other Support**
 - a) Provide a list of all other active and pending institutional, federal and non-federal support for the **Mentor**. Follow instructions for the NIH [Current and Pending \(Other\) Support \(CPOS\) Common Form](#) to create a CPOS Form in SciENcv, export the completed form in PDF format, and upload the PDF file in your ProposalCentral Proposal. **Limit five pages.**
 - b) If the Applicant has two Co-Mentors, provide a CPOS form for **both Co-Mentors**.
- 5) **Research Plan** (please refer to section “RESEARCH PROJECT SCOPE” for important guidance on the project’s scope)
 - a) The research plan must be prepared and assembled **in the following order**: Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Preliminary Results, Research Design and Methods, and References.
 - b) **Limit five pages, not including references.**
 - c) Results of unpublished observations may be summarized using text, tables or figures and must be included in the five-page limit.
 - d) **References:** No specific format requested. **Limit 30 references.** Please note that the Research Plan References must be uploaded as a separate PDF document in ProposalCentral.
 - e) Include a header with your name (last name, first name) and a footer with page numbers on each page of the research plan (including references). Page numbers should start at 1 on the first page of the Research Plan.
- 6) **Research Facilities:** The research environment should be described, including, as applicable, laboratory space, access to patients’ materials or data, animals, core facilities, consultants and technical (including computer) resources, etc. **Limit one page.**
- 7) **Applicant’s Statement:** Describe the expected benefits of this award for your research career, the impact your mentor will have on your research development, and your academic goals. Please also highlight your previous studies and any contributions to knowledge in this field. **Limit one page.**
- 8) **Letter of Support from Mentor** – A letter of support from the applicant’s mentor is required. It must confirm that the applicant will have at least 25% of protected research time actually spent on the proposed project for the duration of the award and that the mentor will be available to

provide advice and guidance to the applicant for the duration of the award. **Limit one page.**

- 9) **Collaborations Statement (optional):** If the project involves collaborations, the **Applicant** can provide a statement that describes the nature of the collaborations (i.e., who they are collaborating with, how/what the collaborators are contributing to the project, and why it is essential to the project). **Limit one page. Letters of collaboration/support from collaborators are not allowed.**

Support

If you have any **issues using ProposalCentral**, check the “Help” tab at the top of the screen for helpful tutorials and FAQs. Contact ProposalCentral Customer Support (Mon-Fri 8:30am - 5:00pm ET) if you need additional help with the system (e.g., setting up your account, etc.): in the “Help” tab, select “[Contact Us](#)” for phone or email or “[Customer Service](#)” for a web support form.

If you have questions about the **application content**, contact American Liver Foundation at research@liverfoundation.org.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be evaluated based upon their background, their commitment to a research career, the scientific merit of their research project, the environment in which they will conduct this project, and the commitment of their research mentor.

Applications will be reviewed based on the written materials submitted. **Incomplete applications and applications that fail to adhere strictly to the instructions (including the submission deadline and page limitations) will not be reviewed.** All decisions are final.

PROGRESS REPORTS

A scientific progress report and a progress report in lay language must be provided within 60 days of completion of the award.

RESEARCH AWARD GLOSSARY

Basic Research: Research focused on fundamental scientific investigations and usually conducted in controlled laboratory settings, with the primary goal of understanding basic biology or disease mechanisms. It aims to expand knowledge, discover new principles, and understand underlying mechanisms without specific applications towards processes or products in mind. However, the results of basic research form the foundation for translational and clinical research. This category can involve animal studies, cell culture and other in vitro studies, “omics” research, and studies using human biospecimens or human data that cannot be linked to a specific individual.

Clinical Research: Patient-oriented research with the primary goal of directly impacting the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or outcome of liver disease in patients. Clinical research often involves direct contact with human subjects and aims to assess the safety, efficacy, and effectiveness of medical interventions, treatments, or diagnostics to inform clinical practice and improve patient care. Clinical trials are a common form of clinical research, and it can also include interventional, observational, epidemiological, or behavioral studies, outcomes research, and health services research studies.

Grant Administrator: The staff member who oversees new grant agreements and grant payments; ensures that grants comply with relevant laws and regulations; guarantees that all required reports are submitted; and administers the grant after the award.

Mentor: Faculty member or other experienced researcher who provides guidance, direction and support to the applicant. This person should have a vested interest in the career development and research experience of the applicant.

Translational Research: Research that bridges the gap between basic research and clinical research, with the goal of translating observations from the laboratory, clinic, and community into potential interventions that improve health. Translational research can include converting basic research discoveries into practical medical interventions, therapies, or diagnostics that can then be tested in clinical research studies. For example, if basic research identifies a gene that could play a role in a certain disease, translational research could identify ways to target this gene and test their efficacy in the laboratory before moving to human testing. Translational research also investigates how results of successful clinical research studies can be translated into best practices and implemented by physicians in clinical care.