

Vanderbilt-wide Limited Submission Opportunity 2026 Brain Research Foundation - Seed Grant Program

Applications due September 11, 2025

Vanderbilt (VU + VUMC): *This is a joint competition for VU and VUMC investigators. All investigators should follow these instructions.*

Overview:

Vanderbilt (VU and VUMC, collaboratively) may nominate **one** candidate for the [2026 Brain Research Foundation Seed Grant Program](#). This award provides **\$100,000 (direct costs) over two years** to support new research projects in the field of neuroscience that will likely lead to extramural funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or other outside funding sources. The objective of the BRF Seed Grant Program is to support **new and innovative neuroscience projects**, especially those of junior faculty, who are working in new research directions. BRF Seed Grant awards are not intended to supplement existing grants. Funds must be utilized within the grant period.

Eligibility:

- PI must be a full-time Assistant or Associate Professor working in the area of studies of brain function. This includes molecular and clinical neuroscience as well as studies of neural, sensory, motor, cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning in health and disease.
 - **Assistant Professor** – Junior faculty with a new research project that will generate pilot data that will lead to R01 funding or a comparable outside grant will be first priority. Must provide abstract and specific aims for current grants and indicate if there is any overlap.
 - **Associate Professor** – Faculty who are pursuing new research directions. Must explain how the project is a new research direction. A new technique is not considered a new direction unless it pertains to a different area of study. Must provide abstract and specific aims for current grant(s) and indicate if there is any overlap.
- **The grant proposal must detail a new research project that is not funded by other sources.** This grant is **not to be used as bridge funding.**
- *Research assistant professors, research associate professors, and Full Professors are not eligible. All applicants should verify their eligibility in advance by consulting the 2026 Seed Grant Guidelines on the [foundation website](#).*

See the [full guidelines](#) for more information.

Internal Application Process:

Anyone interested in being considered as Vanderbilt's potential nominee must submit the following (in PDF format) to LSO@vanderbilt.edu by **5:00 p.m. on September 11, 2025**.

1. Brief research plan including summary budget (2 page max including budget);
 - Include closing paragraph that explains how this research will develop (next steps)
 - Refer to the Funding Specifics in the [2026 Seed Grant Guidelines](#) for allowable costs
2. Letter of support from department chair/center director;
 - Letter must additionally acknowledge that this grant does not allow indirect costs.**
This statement can be used/modified within the letter: "The Department recognizes

that this grant does not allow indirect costs and will commit to covering any associated indirect costs per applicable school/institutional policy.”

3. NIH Biosketch (5 page max)

- Biosketch should contain “other support page”
- Due to limited space, you can supply a link to your full list of publications

**Process for cost-sharing typically coordinated at the departmental level and approved by department chair and/or dean. Please consult LSO@vanderbilt.edu for further guidance.

Submissions should reference the program name in the subject line of the email.

Vanderbilt’s nominee will submit a required LOI to the Foundation by October 23, 2025 at 4:00pm CST.

Any questions about this opportunity or the LSO process may be directed to LSO@vanderbilt.edu.