

Vanderbilt-wide Limited Submission Opportunity 2026 Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award

Applications due August 5, 2025

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

Vanderbilt (VU and VUMC collaboratively) may nominate **one** candidate for the [Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award](#) Program. The foundation supports early-career biomedical scholars doing pioneering research. This award provides up to **\$550,000 over five years** for young investigators involved in research in the cure and treatment of diseases in the fields of **cancer, immunology, and neuroscience**.

The foundation seeks candidates that show persuasive evidence of distinguished achievement or extraordinary promise in research in one of the relevant fields. The program embraces innovative research with **above-average risk and groundbreaking possibilities**. Rita Allen Foundation Scholars are distinguished by their bold approaches to basic scientific questions that address problems of global concern, as well as their potential for learning, leadership and collaboration.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Candidates should be independent investigators in the early stages (preferably in the first 3 years) of a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- Candidates must have received committed startup funds and lab space from their respective institutions.
- Scholars may not accept an award from the Beckman Young Investigator Program, Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences, Searle Scholars Program or Vallee Scholars Program that would take effect beginning in year one of the RAF award.
- The Foundation discourages repeat nominations of candidates not chosen in previous years.
- U.S. citizenship is not a requirement

Visit the foundation's [program website](#) for full eligibility and application guidelines.

Internal Application Process:

Anyone interested in being considered as Vanderbilt's nominee must submit the following (in a single PDF) to LSO@vanderbilt.edu by **5 p.m. on August 5, 2025**.

1. Brief research plan including summary budget; 2 pages max, references may be included on a separate page
 - a. Budget guidelines: Up to 50% may be used for Scholar compensation. No indirect costs are allowed.
2. Statement of support from department chair/center director;

- a. Letter must also acknowledge that this grant does not allow indirect costs.** This statement can be used/modified: "The Department recognizes that this grant does not allow indirect costs and will commit to covering any associated indirect costs per applicable institutional policy."
 - b. Including a brief description of committed start-up funds and lab space is recommended.
3. NIH Biosketch or Brief CV (5 page max)

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

Application Timeline

The selected Vanderbilt nominee will submit a letter of inquiry to the Foundation by the September 3, 2025 deadline, and a full application is due to the sponsor by October 15, 2025.

**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.

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