

Frequently Asked Questions

Open call for 2023 Allen Discovery Center for Neuroimmune Interactions Letters of Intent

We seek Letters of Intent (LOIs) for a 2023 Allen Discovery Center (ADC) for Neuroimmune Interactions initiative between 12 noon Pacific Time on June 22 and 12 noon Pacific Time on July 7, 2022. Selected LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals to be considered for an ADC award in 2023. Details about the call and a link to the LOI submission portal can be found on our [website](#).

LOIs will be accepted from 12 noon Pacific Time on June 22 until 12 noon Pacific Time on July 7, 2022.

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Program questions

What is the Allen Discovery Center program?

The Allen Discovery Centers are leadership-driven, compass-guided research centers, often created in partnership with major research organizations and universities. The Allen Discovery Center program offers a unique funding level and mechanism, allowing for a larger-scale impact on the field. These Centers are long-term investments, typically providing \$10 million for the first four years. The Centers may be evaluated for a potential second four-year funding phase based on research progress, future research plans, and attainment of \$10 million in “matched” or leveraged funding (for a potential total scope of activity of \$30 million over eight years). The Centers embody our commitment to launching and fostering development of entire new fields in biology—with infinite potential to impact human knowledge and health. Read more about the ADCs on our [website](#).

What is the goal of the ADC program?

The program seeks to have a lasting impact on the direction of research, aiming to serve as a catalyst upon which future research is founded. This program seeks to enable scientists to take risks with new ideas and approaches, and strongly believes in interdisciplinary approaches that allow scientists to look beyond their own disciplines, and to explore approaches with colleagues

in other disciplines in order to bring new perspectives to challenging problems where traditional approaches within a discipline may be ‘stuck.’ The program is especially interested in approaches that are unlikely to receive funding from traditional government sources, including methodological and technological advances that are often necessary complements to scientific advance and often difficult to fund through traditional sources. This program encourages and supports researchers including novel methodological, theoretical, and technological elements in their proposals.

Topic questions

Is my idea eligible?

The Frontiers Group’s policy does not allow us to comment on ideas or drafts in advance of the submission deadline.

May I submit an LOI on a similar topic?

No. LOIs are only considered for the topic stated. However, the approach you take need not be traditional. We encourage creative and ambitious approaches.

Is there a preferred subtopic or approach beyond what is described in the LOI?

No. Preferences are not given based on any scenario. LOIs that best fit the call’s stated Purpose will be selected.

Eligibility questions

Who is eligible to apply?

US or international scientists associated with nonprofit research organizations are eligible to apply. Leaders must possess at least seven years of independent research experience (e.g., level of associate professor or similar positions). PIs may not currently hold significant leadership positions in other centers or similar efforts. Current Allen Institute employees or advisors are not eligible to apply during their tenure at the Allen Institute. Collaborative teams are welcome; all team members must be associated with eligible research organizations. We encourage researchers who are members of underserved groups and/or who have followed less-traditional career paths as well as teams that include members from across career stages to apply.

Is the opportunity open to international researchers?

Yes. Both US and international researchers may apply through institutions that conduct charitable activities.

What institutions are eligible?

Nonprofit institutions with current 501(c)(3) Public Charity status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), government entities, IRS-recognized tribes, and other organizations that conduct charitable activities are eligible. Applicants may not be private foundations as defined in Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Is there a recommended organizational structure to an Allen Discovery Center?

No. There is no preference for the team’s composition and organizational structure. An Allen Discovery Center brings together a diverse range of expertise, skills, and resources that are uniquely qualified to address the goals of the Center. We expect that the Center will have either a single or shared leadership structure with additional 8–12 staff of varying levels comprising an agile, action-oriented team. To be successful, it is vital that the Center operates collaboratively, productively, creatively, and harmoniously.

What are the leadership guidelines for ADCs?

We ask that, if awarded, the leader commit a minimum of 50% effort to the Center leadership and research activities. If the Center organizational structure has shared leadership, the expectation would be a commitment of 40% effort for the primary and a minimum of 25–30% effort for the other, given that acceptable descriptions of the shared leadership roles and an articulation of how such an organizational structure would work in practice are provided. If other organizational structures are being considered, please contact the Frontiers Group for further discussion.

Are multi-institution projects allowed?

Yes. The Frontiers Group will accept one application for multi-institution projects provided that, if awarded, one institution acts as the lead and receives and manages all grant monies. Although sub-awards do not require our consent, each sub-award must be made in compliance with the requirements of the grant agreement including our policy of no indirect costs.

Submission questions

How many LOIs may I submit?

You may participate as a PI on up to two LOI submissions total per call.

Does it cost money to submit an LOI?

No. There is no cost to submit an LOI.

How can I submit my LOI?

You may submit your LOI through the call’s submission portal during the submission period. More information on submitting your LOI can be found in the call announcement. Links to the submission portal and call announcement can be found on our [website](#).

How can I submit my LOI after the portal closes?

The call’s submission portal closes at the submission deadline. We accept late submissions only in exceptional cases. We recommend that you submit your LOI early to avoid missing the deadline.

What information should I include in my project description?

The project description should provide an overview of the project that you are submitting for consideration. We recommend that you include information such as the relevance or timeliness of your proposed project; the potential impact of your project; and how your approach is particularly suited to complete your proposed project. The project description should also include a leadership statement. Please refer to the call announcement and template for directions on what to include in and how to format your project description. We recommend that you use our template when preparing your project description.

What information should I include in my leadership statement?

The Allen Discovery Centers are leadership-driven, compass-guided research centers. Leaders of Allen Discovery Centers should have the initiative, passion, and vision to lead a highly functional, integrated, and creative team. Additionally, beyond the collaborative research and interactions within the team, the Center should seek to engage and drive the larger research community. We recommend using this section to describe your role, values, purpose, and beliefs about how you will lead others. The recommended length for the leadership statement is 300–500 words. Please include one leadership statement per LOI, regardless of the number of PIs.

May I include references?

Yes. You may include up to 10 references following the project description and leadership statement. References would not count toward the 2-page limit.

May I include a figure?

Yes. You may include up to two figures following the project description and leadership statement. Your figure may be single- or multi-panel. Figures would not count toward the page count. Captions are allowed accompanying your figures and will not count toward the page limit. We recommend that captions are 300 words or less in length.

What information should I include in my career narrative?

Please feel free to tell us anything that you would like reviewers to know about yourself. We recommend that you provide a holistic description of your scientific activities to-date. The narrative may include your career milestones; key scientific discoveries; awards; teaching, mentoring and outreach activities; community building and inclusivity efforts; significant moments in your career growth; career challenges; and/or other information about why you are particularly suited to undertake your LOI project. No specific information is required. The page limit for a career narrative is 1 page. Please include one career narrative for each PI. We recommend that you use our template when preparing your career narrative, and refer to the call announcement and template for further directions on what to include in and how to format this section.

Is a budget narrative or budget outline required for the LOI?

No. No budgetary information is required. The research to be described is expected to fall within the range noted in the LOI, and those asked to submit proposals will then supply detailed budgetary information.

Does the LOI require institutional approval?

No. Institutional approval is not required for the LOI.

Review questions

What is the review process for the LOI?

LOI project descriptions are confidentially reviewed by a panel of experts tailored for the topic, and this panel will make recommendations to The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group, a division of the Allen Institute, which acts as the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation's agent and subject matter expert, provides counsel, and supports the administration of the awards. The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation has the final decision on the award. Please refer to the LOI announcement for the number of LOIs that will be invited to submit full proposals for consideration.

Who will review my LOI?

Reviewer identities as well as correspondence, evaluations and deliberations are kept confidential. This policy enables advisors and evaluators to provide their honest impressions independent of outside influence. Past awardees may be asked to act as future evaluators and advisors.

What is the timeline for the LOI review?

We anticipate that decisions on the LOIs will be made by October 3, 2022.

Will you provide reviewers comments/feedback on my LOI?

No. We do not provide feedback on LOIs.