

# Frequently Asked Questions

Open call for 2024 Allen Discovery Center for Neurobiology in Changing Environments  
Letters of Intent

We seek Letters of Intent (LOIs) for a 2024 Allen Discovery Center (ADC) for Neurobiology in Changing Environments by 12 noon Pacific Time on September 20, 2023. Selected LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals to be considered for an ADC award in 2024. Details about the call and a link to the LOI submission portal can be found on our website. Frequently asked questions for this call can be found below.

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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). 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 leaders, 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 be listed as Center leader 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. 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 do I log in to the submission portal?***

1. Click the submission portal link from the landing page.
2. Register by filling out the contact information requested. *Note: your email will become your username to log in and an email will be sent to this address to verify your account.*
3. You will receive an email from "The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation" to verify your account.
4. Click the verification link within the email.
5. Set your password, and log in.

### ***How do I submit my Letter of Intent?***

We recommend that you download the template provided and fully complete your LOI in this file. Once you have completed and saved your LOI as a PDF file, then follow these steps.

1. Once logged in, you will see, "Welcome to the Grantee Portal!"

2. Please scroll to the bottom and click The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group logo (as shown here).



3. On the next page, click the button shown here:

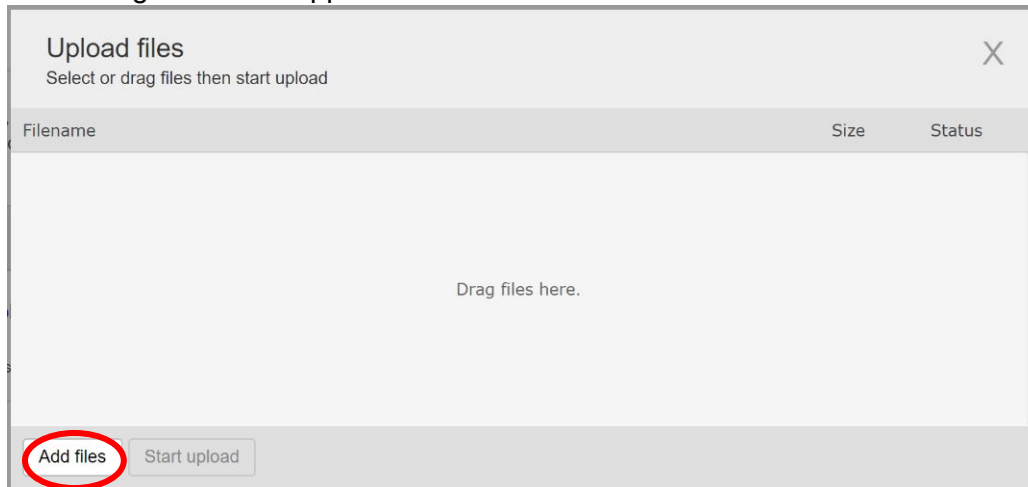
New Allen Discovery Center (ADC) Letter of Intent

4. The application form will now appear.
5. Choose your topic from the drop-down menu.
6. Type in your Project Title.
7. Confirm your contact information.
8. Please add any contact information for additional Leaders.
9. Upload your Letter of Intent with the first (+).

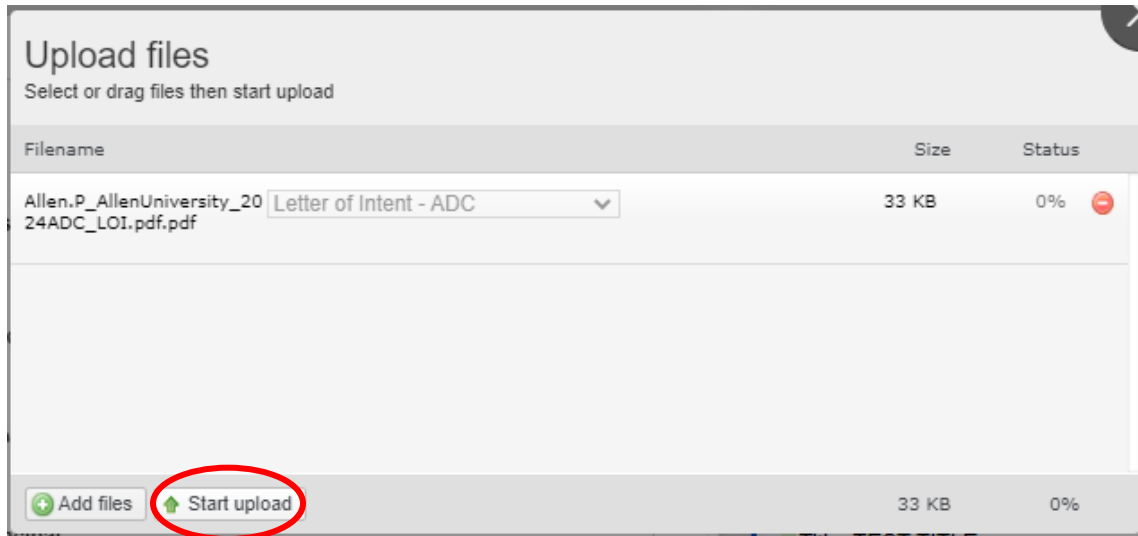
Letter of Intent - ADC



This dialogue box will appear. Click “Add files.”



Once you have selected your file, it will appear in the dialog box, then click “Start upload.”



Once the file is uploaded, you may close the dialog box.

10. Optional: Add any “Recommended Reviewers” or any “Not Recommended Reviewers.”
11. Click Save and Close.
12. Once closed, **the option to submit will appear in the bottom left**, click “Submit.”
13. Click “OK” on pop up box.
14. Your LOI has been submitted and you will receive an email stating that you have successfully submitted.

### ***How can I correct a submitted LOI?***

You may email [frontiers@alleninstitute.org](mailto:frontiers@alleninstitute.org) with the subject “Corrected ADC LOI” with your corrected LOI attached. We recommend that you use the same file name for your PDF with a version number at the end (e.g., revised file name ends in ‘\_v2.pdf’). We will use the most recent submission before the deadline and delete your earlier submission(s).

### ***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 leaders.

***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 Center leader. 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 that fit the call's stated Purpose 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 December 6, 2023.

***Will you provide reviewers comments/feedback on my LOI?***

No. We do not provide feedback on LOIs.