

Frequently Asked Questions

Open calls for 2024 Allen Distinguished Investigator Letters of Intent

We seek Letters of Intent (LOIs) by noon Pacific Time February 14, 2024, for the two initiatives, 1) Organelle Communication and 2) Membrane Biophysics - Approaches. Selected LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals to be considered for an Allen Distinguished Investigator (ADI) award in 2024. Answers to frequently asked questions can be found below.

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Program questions

What is the Allen Distinguished Investigator program?

The Allen Distinguished Investigator (ADI) program supports early-stage research with the potential to reinvent entire fields. Grants range between (US)\$1 million and \$1.5 million over three-year terms to individuals and scientific teams. More than 100 Allen Distinguished Investigators have been awarded since 2010. [Read more about the ADIs on our website.](#)

What is the goal of the ADI 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 topics 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 eligible research organizations and pursuing independent research (e.g., faculty or similar positions) are eligible to apply. Collaborative teams are welcome; all team members must be associated with eligible research organizations. We encourage researchers from across career stages, who are members of underserved groups, and/or who have followed less-traditional career paths to apply.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Current Allen Institute employees, fellows, Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) members or advisors are not eligible to apply during their tenure at the Allen Institute. Individuals, including project PIs (Principal Investigators), co-investigators, and collaborators, receiving support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation are not eligible to be part of applications while their award is active. No-cost extension periods are part of active awards.

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 number of researchers on projects?

No. Although collaborations are welcome there is no preference to the number of researchers on a project. We recommend no more than three PIs.

What are the leadership guidelines for ADIs?

We ask that, if awarded, the leader commit a minimum of 20% effort to the ADI research activities. On projects with multiple PIs, the 20% effort is distributed amongst the leaders. We ask that the individual PI's levels of effort sum to at least 20%.

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.

Application questions

What contact information do you collect?

Contact information including the LOI title, names of PIs, potential collaborators, and institutions is collected via the submission portal (see 'Submission questions' below for more details).

Contact information is not shared with reviewers.

Can I change the template spacing and font style?

Only a little. We request that all project descriptions be in English on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper size, using Arial, 11-point font, single spaced, with 1-inch margins top, bottom, left, and right. Use readable (in relation to 8 ½ x 11-inch paper size) spacing and font style for references and figure caption, if relevant.

What is a "Cohort"?

The Cohort is the name of the call to which you are applying.

What information should I include in my project description?

Please refer to the call announcement for directions on what to include in your project description. We recommend that you use our template when preparing your project description. Links to the call announcements and template can be found on our open calls [webpage](#). Do not include identifying information relating to your LOI's PIs, potential collaborators, and institutions.

May I include a figure from a paper or presentation?

No. You may not include a figure that has been previously used in a preprint, publication, presentation, poster, or other public communication of your research.

May I include a new figure?

Yes. You may include up to one new figure made for your LOI at the end of the project description. Your figure may be single- or multi-panel. A figure would not count toward the page count. A caption is allowed accompanying your figure and will not count toward the page limit. We recommend that captions are 300 words or less in length.

May I include references?

Yes. You may include up to five references at the end of the project description. References would not count toward the 1-page limit.

May I include my PI biography?

No. Those asked to submit proposals will then supply PI biographies.

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.

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. More information on submitting your LOI can be found in the call announcement. Links to the submission portal and call announcements can be found on our open calls [webpage](#).

I received an email that the submission portal has been updated, will this affect my LOI submission?

No, the submission portal update will not affect your LOI submission. Our submission portal is undergoing routine updates during the submission window. We do not anticipate any issues to be caused by the portal update.

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?

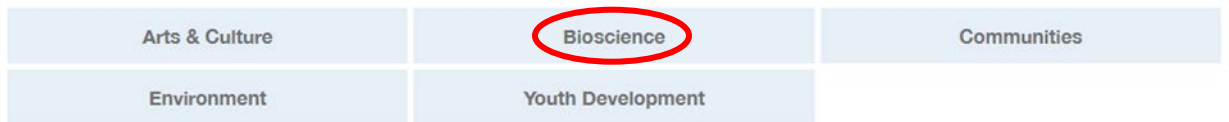
We recommend that you download the template provided and fully complete your LOI in this file. Once you have completed and saved your LOI, then follow these steps.

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).



Note: after portal updates you will see the following menu, please click on “Bioscience,” and all other steps remain the same.

Programs



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

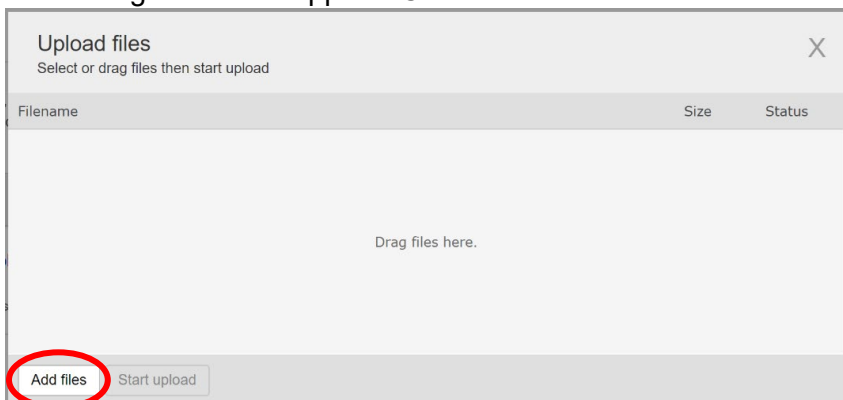
New Allen Distinguished Investigator (ADI) Letter of Intent

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

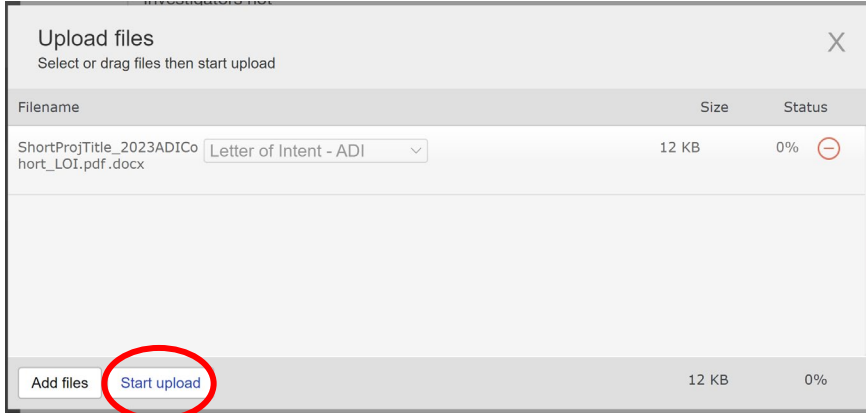
Letter of Intent - ADI



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 with the subject “Corrected ADI LOI” with your corrected LOI attached. We recommend that you use the same file name for your project description 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.

Review questions

What is the review process for the LOI?

LOI project descriptions may be confidentially reviewed in a double-blind method 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 do you mean by “double-blind”?

Identifying information related to PIs, potential collaborators, and institutions is not shared with reviewers; and reviewer identities and affiliations are not shared with submitters. Figures that have been previously used in a preprint, publication, presentation, poster, or other public communication are potentially identifiable and may not be included in LOI submissions.

What is the purpose of a double-blinded LOI review?

The LOI review is intended to select the most exciting and innovative project ideas that are best aligned with the Purpose of the call. To help reduce bias and focus the review on the ideas, we would not share researcher- or institution-identifying information with reviewers.

If I submit my project description without identifying information, how will you let me know my LOI’s outcome?

We collect contact information including the LOI title, names of PIs, potential collaborators, and institutions via the submission portal. Contact information is matched with project descriptions in our database, but not shared with reviewers. To facilitate the review process, please make sure LOI title submitted with your contact information is identical to the LOI title on your project description, and do not include identifying information such as names of PIs, collaborators, or institutions in project descriptions.

What is the timeline for the LOI review?

We anticipate that decisions on the LOIs will be made by April 5, 2024.

Will you provide reviewers comments/feedback on my LOI?

No. We do not provide feedback on LOIs.