

2026 BBRF YOUNG INVESTIGATOR GRANT

Application Guidelines

Application Acceptance Period: February 4, 2026 – March 4, 2026

Apply at: www.bbrfoundation.org/YI

The **Brain & Behavior Research Foundation** is the largest non-government, donor-supported organization that distributes funds for psychiatric brain and behavior disorder research. **The Foundation's BBRF Young Investigator Grant (YI)** program offers **up to \$35,000 a year for up to two (2) years** to enable promising investigators to either extend their research fellowship training or to begin careers as independent research faculty.

The program is intended to facilitate innovative research and supports basic, translational, and/or clinical investigators. All research must be relevant to our understanding, treatment and prevention of serious psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar, mood and anxiety disorders, or early onset brain and behavior disorders.

In addition to supporting the full ranges of relevant neurobiological and psychobiological basic science, we also support clinical science, which can include careful studies using qualitative research approaches or research generating preliminary data to explore a new hypothesis generated by clinical experience or large sample studies.

The BBRF Young Investigator Grant is not sufficient to support expensive large sample patient-based studies, but it may be possible to attach a study to a project already under way or for which other funding has become available. Some examples of preliminary clinical studies include:

1. Support for an add-on study that would probe a potential mechanism or circuit underlying a new treatment in the context of drug discovery.
2. Determining if a computer-based cognitive or other remediation enhances effectiveness of cognitive agents.
3. Proof of principle study to see if efficacy is detected with a new treatment.
4. Testing a novel hypothesis within an already established data set.

These examples do not define the Foundation's specific goals but illustrate feasibility of expensive clinical research in the context of the BBRF Grants Program.

The Foundation is committed to spending all contributions for direct support of research. BBRF operating expenses are covered by separate Foundation grants. Administrative cost of review is small as reviewers are members of the Foundation's Scientific Council and volunteer their time to evaluate applications; therefore, **no feedback can be provided to applicants.**

GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Applicants must have a doctoral level degree (e.g., *M.D. with [minimum PGY-IV training, Ph.D., Psy.D., Pharm.D., etc.]*) and already be employed in research training or a faculty research position. The YI Grant is intended to support advanced post-doctoral fellows, instructors and assistant professors (or equivalent). Anyone who has served, or is serving, as a principal investigator (PI) on a NIH R01 grant or the equivalent (e.g., VA Merit Review grant) is not eligible. Investigators at the rank of associate professor or equivalent are also not eligible.
2. Applicants must have an on-site mentor or senior collaborator who is an established investigator in areas relevant to psychiatric disorders. The mentor/sponsor role is usually extensive for fellowship extension (mentor), and more senior colleague/advisor (sponsor) for an applicant prepared to initiate independent science.
3. Applicants may only apply **three times for an initial BBRF Young Investigator Grant.**

4. **Applicants are eligible for a maximum of two BBRF Young Investigator Grants.** Prior grantees who are currently advanced post-doctoral, instructor or assistant professor can apply for a second grant. However, grants cannot overlap in time, **only one application for a second BBRF YI Grant is permitted**, and substantial productivity on the first grant must be documented and the applicant must show how a second grant will facilitate competition for a NIH R01 grant or equivalent.
5. Only one principal investigator is allowed per application.
6. Funding is for one or two years and is up to \$35,000 per year. **The Foundation does not pay institutional overhead on the BBRF Young Investigator Grant Program.**
7. The Foundation allows considerable flexibility in the use of funds: equipment, stipends, etc., are all acceptable if the support is in the service of the BBRF Young Investigator Grant research project.
8. Applications must be submitted by **Wednesday, March 4, 2026, no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern.**

Grant approval notifications will be mailed in September 2026. It is the Foundation's policy to provide no feedback on applications, other than funding notification. The earliest grant start date is January 15, 2027.

BBRF welcomes diversity with BBRF grant applications including gender, race, ethnicity, and culture of the applicant, and geographic location for their proposed work.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Applications must be submitted online via www.bbrfoundation.org/YI. Applicants must first complete the online form and then upload the application in **a single PDF document**.
 - Each section must be on a separate page. Please follow the order of the application as follows and adhere to the maximum number of pages allowed for each section indicated in parentheses.
 - Label each section and include applicant's name in upper right corner of each page.
 - Please follow NIH format guidelines: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia fonts with a font size of 11 or larger with minimum of ½ inch margins.
- (a) **Face Sheet (3 pages - Please refer to the last 3 pages)** – Included on the face sheet please list all Scientific Council Member conflicts. A list can be found on the website [here](#).
 - (b) **Abstract (less than 500 words)** – a summary of the research project written in lay terms. If the proposal is funded, this material may be used in the Foundation's announcements.
 - (c) **Applicant C.V. (5 pages)** – **NIH biosketch** OR the biography portion of the curriculum vitae only, with current grant support listed.
 - (d) **Proposal (2 pages with no appendices)** – a letter from the applicant outlining training and/or project goals that will be accomplished within the grant period. One representative project should be described in sufficient detail to elucidate hypothesis, significance, sample size, feasibility, and central methodology. Figures, tables, diagrams, et.al., must be included within the 2-page limit.

- (e) **Research Training/Career Plans (½ page)** – brief description of present or recently completed research training, and applicant's future career plans. This grant is intended for fellowship **extension** or early faculty support.
- (f) **Budget (1 page/itemized table format in US \$)** – a budget description specifying the amount requested with a brief justification and indicating whether applicant is applying for a one- or two-year grant. Requests must not exceed \$35,000 per year. The budget statement should define the unique contribution of this grant to applicant's research activities and note the impact of this grant on other institutional support available to applicant. **Specific assurance that receipt of this grant will not result in duplication of funding or reduction of support from the host institution is required.** *The Foundation does not pay institutional overhead on the BBRF Young Investigator Grant Program.* The applicant's research funding must be listed, and should include any support pending, as well.
- (g) **Mentor/Sponsor Letter (1 page per mentor)** – a letter from an on-site* mentor stating how the grant will enhance applicant's training or facilitate transition to an independent investigator. (**If you do not have an on-site mentor, please contact Suzanne Haber ([send email](#)) or Judy Ford ([send email](#)).*) A second letter from an additional mentor may be included if the mentor provides an area of expertise not otherwise available. If a second mentor letter must be included, it must explain the second mentor's unique role in the project and not simply be a letter of support. An applicant's sponsor letter for more advanced applicants needs to specify departmental/institutional support for the applicant including percent time research protected.
- (h) **Mentor C.V. – NIH biosketch OR the biography portion of the curriculum vitae only. (5 pages per mentor)**
- (i) **References (1 page, optional)** – a listing of up to ten bibliographical references may be included.
- (j) **Collaborator Letter (1 page, optional)** – letter of commitment from essential project collaborators (**not** letter of reference), addressed to the applicant, briefly explaining the specific contribution, and confirming a willingness to collaborate.
- (k) **Institutional Assurance Letter (1 page)** – which includes the **applicant's institutional signature (i.e., Grants & Contracts/Sponsored Research Office)**, thereby signifying the institution's acceptance and acknowledgment of these guidelines.
- (l) **Applicants applying for a SECOND Young Investigator Grant ONLY:**
1. **Concurrent YI Grants are not allowed**
 2. **Final Progress Report (1 page)** – The applicant must submit a final progress report of the following:
 - a. Use half a page to justify the second submission.
 - b. If the second application is in a different scientific direction from the first, details are required for how it advances the investigator towards independence.
 - c. State clearly how this second application refines your approach.
 - d. Indicate why the previously funded period did not complete the research and/or what went wrong with the first project such that a new one should be considered.

** IRB/IACUC approval for human and animal subjects must be verified at the time of the Grant (do not include IRB/IACUC with application), as well as institutional acceptance of the Foundation's Grant Agreement.

** In fairness to all applicants, supplemental material (i.e., appendices) will **NOT** be considered in the review process. Applications not following the guidelines will be administratively rejected.

** Funds will be granted to universities, institutions or medical research centers operating in the United States, Canada, or any foreign country. All international applicants are welcome to apply. Researchers need not be U.S. citizens.

For inquiries, please email: grants@bbrfoundation.org.



APPLICANT INFORMATION (Please fill out all relevant information below):

Principal Investigator
(Full Name):

Position Title
(ex: Postdoctoral,
Assistant Professor or
equivalent):

Institution:

For M.D. Applicants
(year residency was
completed):

For Ph.D. Applicants
(year degree was
awarded):

**For M.D./Ph.D. applicants please provide both years in the above designated areas.*

CONFLICTS: Please identify all BBRF Scientific Council Members who will be in conflict with your application (i.e. your mentor, collaborators, same institution.) Completed list of members can be found [HERE](#):

List of Scientific
Council Member

[Conflicts:](#)

***If no conflicts please**
list n/a:

Mentor/Institution
(Please list primary
mentor name first):

Number of peer-
reviewed publications
(Total/first authored/
last authored):

Project Title:

BRAIN & BEHAVIOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION - 2026 YI FACE SHEET (Continued)

APPLICATION INFORMATION (Please fill out all relevant information below):

MISSION STATEMENT: The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation is committed to alleviating the suffering caused by mental illness by awarding grants that will lead to advances and breakthroughs in scientific research. We invest in the most innovative ideas in neuroscience and psychiatric research to better understand the causes and develop new ways to treat brain and behavior disorders.

AREA OF STUDY: The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation supports research to advance knowledge on aspects of psychopathology associated with Schizophrenia, Depression and closely related disorders. Aspects of psychopathology such as anxiety, cognition, motor, avolition, anhedonia, suicide, and other psychopathology are welcome when associated with disorders of interest to the Foundation.

PRIMARY Area of Study: Please select from the response list that best fits your submitted application (Required)	Addiction ADHD Anxiety Disorders Bipolar Disorder Borderline Personality Disorder Depression Eating Disorders OCD PTSD Schizophrenia Suicide	SECONDARY Area of Study: Please select from the response list that best fits your submitted application	Addiction ADHD Anxiety Disorders Bipolar Disorder Borderline Personality Disorder Depression Eating Disorders OCD PTSD Schizophrenia Suicide
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Research Method (Please check all the apply):	Behavior Circuits Molecular Neurostimulation Pharmacology Physiology Systems	Imaging (Please check all that apply):	PET MRS MRI EEG fMRI Structural
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Please select one that best describes your research:	Basic Clinical	Please select one that best describes your research:	Humans Non-humans Both
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BRAIN & BEHAVIOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION - 2026 YI FACE SHEET (Continued)

AREA OF STUDY: *If the focus of your application appears outside our mission,* please indicate how the proposed research will impact our understanding the illnesses listed above. Some disorders such as Autism, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease are supported by BBRF only if primary psychiatric disorders are included in the research design. Please clarify and explain how your project and, if appropriate, the study population fit the Foundation's mission. **Trans-diagnostic designs involving several disorders are welcome.

(250-word limit):

DISTANCE TRAVELED (OPTIONAL): The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation is interested in advancing the careers and science for those of different backgrounds. The Foundation welcomes diversity with Grant Applications including gender, race, ethnicity, and culture of the applicant and geographic location for their proposed work.

In **50 words or less** please identify your personal story regarding any experience and/or adverse conditions.