

SEED GRANT PROGRAM

Overview & Application Guidelines

Last updated February 4, 2026

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The AES Seed Grant Program provides support to established investigators to:

- Pursue new and innovative directions in epilepsy research
- Introduce new research methods – especially cutting-edge techniques - to their research programs.
- Develop new collaborations, especially with researchers outside of traditional epilepsy

These awards are designed to enable preliminary investigations that will lay the groundwork for subsequent grants from government, industry, or other funding sources for research to advance the understanding, treatment, and prevention of epilepsy.

Seed grants provide up to \$20,000 for one year for direct costs only. They may not be renewed. Examples of allowable costs include salary support for investigators or research coordinators, research project supplies and expenses related to information and technology exchange, such as travel for postdoctoral fellows between collaborating laboratories. The number of awards made each year is contingent on available funds.

APPLICATION DEADLINES AND AWARD DATES

- February 11, 2026: Application submission opens through ProposalCentral
- April 8, 2026 at 5PM ET: Full proposals due
- By May 31, 2026: Awardees notified
- June 15, 2026: Earliest award start date.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: All applications must meet the following eligibility criteria. In rare cases, exceptions may be made for an award fully funded by a partner organization. Contact grants@aesnet.org with any questions.

1. Applications may come from individual investigators or from two or more collaborating investigators. The principal investigator (PI) or at least one of the principal investigators in a multiple-PI seed grant must be: 1) an AES member; 2) an established investigator with at least an Associate Professor or equivalent level appointment; **and** 3) an epilepsy-focused academic investigator. An assistant professor(s) may serve as a collaborator or Co-PI on the project provided that the application is submitted by the established professor and the award is contracted at least in part for use by the established PI.
2. The proposed research must be in a new direction that could not be initiated without Seed funding support. Proposals are welcome across the spectrum of epilepsy research, including basic, translational, clinical, and outcomes-related research.

3. If a project involves collaboration between two or more investigators, preference will be given to collaborations that are new, including investigators at different institutions or involving different disciplines or fields of research.
4. Although collaborations between academic and industry investigators will be considered, the grant must be awarded to an academic institution, and the academic investigator should be the principal investigator. Preference will be given to collaborations between academic investigators.
5. Applications that propose only infrastructure development with no primary research or data collection will not be considered.
6. Preference will be given to applications for research to be conducted at U.S. institutions. Depending on available funds, applications may be considered from investigators outside the U.S. who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria.
7. Preference will be given to investigators who have not recently received a grant from AES.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

AES is proud to partner with other non-profit organizations to augment funding for epilepsy researchers. [Funding partners listed here](#) may choose to support top-scored research proposals that align with the mission of their organization. If you grant permission during your application process, your application and its materials may be confidentially shared with these and other non-profit partners to be considered for full or partial support.

OTHER POLICIES

Seed Grant Terms and Conditions are available for download through ProposalCentral and contain information on AES's policies related to use of human subjects, use of animal subjects, and other conditions of the award.

SEED GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications must be submitted through ProposalCentral (<https://ProposalCentral.altum.com/>).

- Applicants who do not yet have an account with ProposalCentral will need to register as a new user and provide the requested professional profile information before proceeding.
- Once logged in as a user, go to the Grant Opportunities tab, and filter the list to display American Epilepsy Society Awards.
- Locate AES Seed Grant Program and click on Apply Now to begin an application. Required components of the proposal include the following sections to be completed as online forms or submitted as individual proposal attachments in PDF format. Additional instructions will be available on screen in ProposalCentral and within downloadable templates for proposal attachments. No applications, nor any parts of or updates to the application, will be accepted if submitted after the deadline or if sent directly to AES offices by electronic or U.S. mail.

1. Title Page:

- a. Enter the title of your proposal (max 75 characters)
- b. Total Amount Requested: Enter the total amount requested, not to exceed \$20,000.

2. Download Templates and Instructions:

All proposal attachment templates, and this application guideline document can be downloaded here from ProposalCentral.

- ### **3. Enable Other Users to Access This Proposal:**
- This screen allows you to give other users access to your grant application, if necessary, such signing official or financial officers at your institution. Please inquire internally at your institution to understand who, if anyone, should be able to access your proposal.

NOTE: If your budget will be split across more than one institution (ie, funds will need to be sent from AES to more than one institution), it would be helpful to add a contact from the other institution.

- ### **4. Applicant/PI:**
- Applicant information is pre-loaded from the applicant's Professional Profile. Doublecheck that the information is complete and correct. If it is not, click Edit Professional Profile to update.

5. Institution and Contacts:

- a. Institutional information is pre-loaded from the applicant's Institutional Profile. Double-check that the information is complete and correct. If it is not, click Edit Institutional Profile to update.

- 6. Collaborating Investigators:** Provide the names and institutions of collaborating investigators, other than the applicant, on this page.
- 7. Proposal Narrative Overview:** Type up to 3,000 characters that provide a general overview of the content of your proposal as described in the narrative.
- 8. Budget Summary:** Enter Proposed Start and End Dates for your budget. Additionally, enter 2,000 characters to justify your budget totals by category.
- 9. Organization Assurances:** Use this section to indicate use of human subjects, human tissue, or vertebrate animals, and to confirm institutional assurances. All assurances should be provided at the time of the application if available, and documentation must be provided before funding can begin for awarded proposals. See Award Policies above for more information.
- 10. Proposal Attachments:** Upload any required and optional attachments for your proposal.
 - a. Project Abstract (Proposal Narrative):** 3 pages maximum. Please include the following information in the narrative:
 - i. Description of the proposed research. The workplan must be appropriate for the budget and timeframe of a Seed grant.
 - ii. The significance of the line of research being initiated by the proposed work. If appropriate, please identify how the line of research will target priorities within epilepsy research identified by the Epilepsy Benchmarks or the Institute of Medicine Public Health research recommendations.
 - iii. Overview of the research and technical expertise of the participating laboratories/clinical research sites.
 - iv. Statement describing how the proposed research represents a new direction and why Seed support is essential for its initiation.
 - v. Future plans for research beyond the one-year term of the Seed grant
 - vi. Budget for the requested funding (in U.S. dollars)
 - b. Biosketch:** Provide using NIH-style format appropriate to applicant career stage. If co-PIs are proposed, include a biosketch for each investigator. Template available if needed.
 - c. Letter of Support (optional):** If your proposal's budget requests that the funds will go to more than one institution, you will need to upload a letter of support from the other institution. It is also strongly encouraged to include a letter of support from any

collaborator even if funds will not be sent to their institution. Please upload any such letters in this section.

11. Validate: Click the VALIDATE button to check for any missing REQUIRED information or files. All missing required information will be listed on the screen. Please correct any missing information before submitting your application.

12. Signature Pages: The Applicant/PI and the Signing Official must e-sign the application prior to submission in order for the application to pass validation. All signatories must log in to ProposalCentral to sign the application. Signatures needed are:

- a. Applicant/PI: Please type your full name and hit sign. This will trigger an email to your designated Signing Official asking them to log in and sign.
- b. Signing Official: The Signing Official you listed in Section 5 (Institution and Contacts) will be listed here. After you complete your e-signature, the Signing Official will receive an email asking them to log in and complete their e-signature. They need a ProposalCentral account in order to complete their signature, and can access the application through the “Proposals” tab. The Signing Official’s signature is required for you to submit your application.

13. Submit: You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. Any missing information will be listed on the screen. If your submission is successful, you will receive a confirmation message on the screen and a confirmation will be sent to the applicant.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you encounter technical difficulties with ProposalCentral, please contact their help desk at pcsupport@altum.com or 1-800-875-2562 (toll-free US & Canada). If questions arise about your application and the review process, contact Michelle Norton at grants@aesnet.org

Terms and Conditions of Award

American Epilepsy Society Seed Grant

Acceptance Form: A signed and completed acceptance form must be returned to AES by the date indicated in your award notification email. Award payments will be mailed to your institution's address indicated on the acceptance form. Please specify the name and address of the individual (if any) to whose attention payment should be mailed. No funds can be paid until the acceptance form is completed and returned.

The start-date of your award is indicated in your notification email and acceptance form. You may indicate on your acceptance form if you request a delay of up to 3 months. If you require a more extended delay, please notify AES in writing to request an extension.

Use of Human Subjects/Tissues in Research: When human subjects or tissues are to be used in a research project, it is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that the project receives approval from his/her Institutional Review Board. A copy of that Board's current approval notice and a copy of the patient informed consent form should be submitted with the application if they are available. If not submitted with an application selected for an award, these documents must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the start-date of the award.

Use of Animals in Research: When animals and/or animal tissues will be used, it is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that the project receives approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. If available, a copy of these documents should be submitted with the application. If not submitted with an application selected for an award, these documents must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the start-date of the award.

Use of funds: Funds can only be used as stipulated in the program guidelines and for the purposes as budgeted in the awarded application. Seed Grants may provide up to \$20,000 for one year and they may not be renewed. Seed Grants may be used for direct costs only because these limited funds are designed to help investigators initiate new projects that can then compete for the larger grants sufficient to cover the full costs of research. Examples of allowable costs include research project supplies and expenses related to information and technology exchange, such as travel for postdoctoral fellows between collaborating laboratories. An applicant may not apply for, use, or accept funds for a research project or part of a project already supported by funds from another public or private source. Accordingly, full disclosure of all available and pending funds for research support must be made in the grant application. If funds from other sources become available to support the proposed research during the review or awarded term of a Seed Grant, the applicant/recipient must inform AES in writing so that a decision can be made about continuation of the award.

Change in status: It is your responsibility to notify AES in writing if your status at the institution changes during your award period, or if there are any significant changes in the project as approved. Any proposed revisions in the project budget or project timeframe must be submitted to and approved by AES before being implemented.

Requests to extend award term: Requests to extend the term of an award must be submitted to AES in writing for approval as follows:

- 1) For grants that support research costs, grantees may request up to a 12-month no cost extension (NCE) to complete research within the scope of the awarded grant. A written request must be submitted to AES at least 30 days prior to the end of the award. It must provide an explanation for the delay in progress, plans for completing the project within the extended period, and a summary of the funds expended and the intended use of unexpended funds. Unexpended funds at the end of a project term are not justification for a NCE.
- 2) For fellowships that provide salary support, formal requests for an extension of the award term will be considered when the training period is interrupted or delayed due to extenuating circumstances, such as
 - a. Extended leave of absence (beyond 15 days sick leave or parental leave)
 - b. Interruption in research training related to a significant career development opportunity (e.g., a teaching appointment that carries obligation greater than two months)

Written requests must be submitted to AES at least 30 days prior to the end of the award and should provide an explanation of the need for an extension, plans for completing the research training within the extended period, and a budget summary for the use of unobligated funds. Unexpended funds at the end of a project term are not justification for a NCE. *Fellows must remain at the original institution throughout the revised award term unless a transfer has also been requested and approved in writing.*

Patent and Copyright Policy: The recipient may develop inventions, products, publications, processes, know-how, formulae, and the like, from the research funded by the grant or award, whether or not capable of protection under copyright, trade secret or patent protections (the “Research Products”). Neither the AES nor any Contributing Partners will have rights in or to the Research Products that are conceived or reduced to practice in the performance of the grant or fellowship, regardless of whether the invention is patented or copyrighted.

Manuscripts: All manuscripts (including meeting abstracts and research articles) that result from this research project are to be submitted to the AES once accepted for publication. Publications should acknowledge AES support with the phrase: Supported by a grant from the American Epilepsy Society. If a funding partner is acknowledged on the acceptance form, publications should acknowledge the support of both organizations (e.g. Supported by a grant from the American Epilepsy Society and [insert funder names]).

Final reports: Submission of final scientific and financial reports is a requirement of this award.

- Final Scientific Report, using the provided template in ProposalCentral, is due 90 days after the end of the project term. The recipient grants AES the right to disseminate the information

provided for questions that are specifically indicated as “for promotional materials.”

Information provided on other questions of the report will be kept confidential.

- Final Financial Report is due 90 days after the end of the project term. **Unexpended funds in excess of \$100 remaining at the end of the award term must be returned to AES.**

Final reports must be submitted through ProposalCentral. Recipients will receive automated notices prior to the due date with instructions to access templates for these reports.

Long-term success: The AES periodically evaluates whether its investment in different funding programs has been meaningful for the research community. Every few years, grantees may be asked to provide brief information on research project seeded with this grant. AES also encourages all grantees to contact grants@aesnet.org when milestones in the research project are achieved, such as publications, patents, or follow-on research grants. We want to celebrate the success of our grantees!

Questions? Suggestions? Contact grants@aesnet.org