



ANNOUNCING 2026 AWARD

Peg's Fight for Life Early Career Research Award \$150,000

Request for Letters of Intent opens May 13, 2026, and closes June 30, 2026.

Full RFP below.

A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation
1101 E 78th Street, Suite 102
Bloomington, MN 55420
research@abreathofhope.org
www.abreathofhope.org

Mission: A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation improves lives by advancing lung cancer research, education and support.

History: A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation (ABOH) was founded in 2008 by a group of Minnesota lung cancer patients and their caregivers after they organized a race to raise funds and awareness about the world's deadliest cancer - lung cancer. The founders were shocked by the societal stigma that leaves families coping with blame, shame, misinformation, and disproportionate funding of research. ABOH has now invested more than \$3 million dollars in its research program, including many funded U.S. projects focused on improving early detection and late-stage treatments, and has drawn more than 2 million visits from 130 countries to its award-winning online patient education resource found at www.YouandLungCancer.org.

Nonprofit EIN #: 30-0475578

Accountability: A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation meets or exceeds all accountability standards through the Charities Review Council and was found to be fully compliant in its 2025 audit.

Purpose of Award: A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation (ABOH) will provide funding to the winning clinical investigator's institution in the form of a \$150,000 award paid in increments of \$37,500 every six months for two years. The award is designed to support salaries and other costs related to retaining research talent in the field of lung cancer.

Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer killing nearly 125,000 Americans each year, yet research funding support remains disproportionately low per cancer death. Consequently, progress is limited, and talented scientists often move to other, better-funded research fields. Through ABOH Early Career awards, we ensure that chosen research institutions have the resources needed to retain promising scientists committed to reducing lung cancer mortality.

Eligibility Criteria

ABOH, in collaboration with its panel of lung cancer research experts, will evaluate the merit of proposals submitted in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Applicants must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Early-career investigators within the first ten years of their initial faculty appointment; a mentor is required
- Doctoral degree (MD, PhD, DO, DrPH, or equivalent)
- Employment at a U.S. research institution (proof of valid visa required, if applicable)
- Institutional review board (IRB/IACUC) approval must be obtained before funds are disbursed for any project involving human participants or animals

Eligibility Summary: The principal investigators of proposals must hold one of the following credentials while serving in a faculty appointment at a U.S. research institution: MD, MD/PhD, PhD, DO, or DrPH. Researchers must be able to demonstrate protected time for cancer research through their letter of support from the institution. The maximum period of performance is two years. The maximum allowable funding for the entire period of performance is \$150,000.

The Peg's Fight for Life Award will provide a total of \$150,000 in funding for the 2026 early-career award. Funds will be disbursed in four installments of \$37,500, each released following the submission and approval of a six-month progress report, according to the schedule below. One grant will be awarded in this RFP cycle, with additional awards to be announced at future dates as determined by ABOH.

ABOH allows up to 15% in indirect costs. These costs are part of the total award of \$150,000. Indirect costs include costs such as departmental accounting and clerical support, network support, equipment depreciation, building and facilities operation and maintenance, library, general and sponsored projects administration.

- **Letter of Inquiry Form** deadline: June 30, 2026
- **Invitations to Submit Full Proposals** sent to 15 or Less Finalists: July 14, 2026
- **Full Proposals due from invited applicants - deadline:** August 25, 2026
- **Announcement of Winning proposal:** November 16, 2026

Preferred Topics: Proposals that address major questions addressing common mutated lung cancers is required. The EGFR biomarker is a high priority in this award. Topic areas include but are not limited to the following ideas:

- Strategies to overcome resistance to immunotherapy in EGFR mutated lung cancer
- Understanding mechanisms of *acquired resistance* to existing EGFR-targeted therapies, which involve studying other related biomarkers and signaling pathways
- Predictive and prognostic markers to identify responders and non-responders
- Approaches to overcome acquired resistance to targeted therapies
- Novel/innovative approaches to treating mutation-driven NSCLC
- Understanding mechanisms of resistance to immunotherapy in EGFR mutated lung cancer
- Improving prognostic value and predictive value for genetic heterogeneity across multiple mutation-positive NSCLC patients
- Identifying disease-causing variants in oncogenes for NSCLC patients that may benefit with targeted therapies

Timeline for Submission and Review:

- May 13, 2026: Announcement – Request for letter of inquiry (LOI)
- June 30, 2026: Deadline for LOI submission – online forms to be reviewed by local ABOH research committee
- July 14, 2026: Up to 15 investigators invited to submit full proposal
- August 25, 2026: Deadline for full proposal submission
- August 25 - October 5, 2026: National Scientific Advisory Committee scores proposals

- October 6 - 19, 2026: ABOH Research Committee reviews scores, conducts phone interviews with finalists and their mentor, identifies winner
- Week of October 19, 2026: Winner notified
- November 16, 2026: Winner announced upon receipt of signed grant contract from institution
- November 30, 2026: First payment of \$37,500 mailed to institution as soon as ABOH receives the signed and returned ABOH grant contract

Submission Process: LOI form due by June 30, 2026 – LOI form link can be found at abreathofhope.org/research or <https://form.jotform.com/260114336397153>

Full proposals for invited finalists must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CST August 25, 2026. Late submissions will not be considered. Applicants are encouraged to submit early because technical assistance will not be available past the end of the business day. In case of technical difficulties, full proposals with all attachments are accepted by email as well as through the online form. ABOH Email address: research@abreathofhope.org.

Full proposal components:

1. Contact Information: Applicant and institution information, including phone and email.
2. Project Information: This section includes the following information about the proposed project:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Research focus area(s)
 - c. Assurances for use of human and/or animal subjects in the research proposal
 - d. Abstract – a brief abstract of the research proposal must be entered
3. Specific Aims: List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology. The specific aims should state concisely and realistically what the research intends to accomplish and/or what hypothesis is to be tested and should list measurable objectives for the proposed project.

4. Personal Statement Questions: Please answer briefly the following questions in the text box areas on the online application. Each question has a maximum limit of 350 words.

- a. What is the applicant's career plan, including short- and long-term goals around lung cancer research?
- b. How would receiving this award affect the applicant's career in lung cancer research?
- c. What is the percentage of time the applicant spends on research activities?
- d. What is the applicant's role versus the mentor's role in the proposed research study?
- e. What additional resources are available to support the applicant and the project?
- f. What are the other sources of salary support?
- g. Who will collect and analyze the data?
- h. What is the clinical potential of this research project?
- i. Was this research proposal submitted and/or will be submitted to other funding agencies/organizations?
- j. What additional responsibilities does the applicant have responsibility for during the two-year fellowship timeframe? Please list all non-research activities.

5. Applicant's NIH Biosketch: Should include past, current and pending funding for their research. The biosketch must have no more than four pages.

6. Research Strategy: The research strategy should be limited to six (6) typewritten, single-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and 11-point Arial font type. ALL pertinent tables, pictures, and graphs MUST be included within the 6-page limit: The Research Strategy must contain the following information:

- a. Significance and Background:
 - i. Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
 - ii. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or critical practice in one or more broad fields.

iii. Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will change if the proposed aims are achieved. b.

b. Innovation:

- i. Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- ii. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- iii. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

c. Approach and Feasibility:

- i. Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
- ii. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- iii. If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- iv. Please include appropriate detail and/or documentation in the Supporting Documentation section to assure a reviewer that your project is feasible in the timeframe of the grant. Examples include: a letter confirming you will have access to an experimental therapy or an approval letter from CTEP or a cooperative group.
- v. Clearly state the applicant's role in the project (i.e. writing of protocol, performing the assays, etc.).
- vi. When human subjects are involved, the precautions to ensure patient safety and confidentiality and the relevance or implications for patient care should be explained.
- vii. List and describe the facilities and resources available to conduct the study, including a description of industry support for any clinical trials.

d. **Statistical Analysis:** A statistical consideration section is required for all applications. This section should include the primary objective/hypothesis and primary endpoint of the study, justification of the proposed sample size, procedures for data analysis, and appropriate statistical considerations. Any laboratory-based in vitro research aims should also include the primary objective/hypothesis and primary endpoint of the study, procedures for data analysis, and appropriate statistical details that describe the summary measures that will be used to meet the objectives of the study. It is highly recommended that you consult a biostatistician before you submit your application.

e. **Cited References:** A list of cited references in the Research Strategy should be added and does not account for six-page limits.

7. **Institutional Letter of Support:** A letter from the Department Chair or Dean at the sponsoring institution where the applicant's research project will be conducted must be provided. This letter must include a statement of institutional support that will enable the applicant to conduct the proposed research. If the mentor is the Department Chair, the Institutional Letter of Support must come from the Dean.

8. **Clinical Protocol (optional).** If your project involves a clinical protocol, you are highly encouraged to add a copy of the protocol.

9. **Prior Publications (optional)** – Up to two prior publications may be included. The applicant must be a co-author on these publications.

10. **Supporting Documentation (optional).** This section may be used to upload any necessary additional information required to properly review the application (i.e. a letter from a drug company that they will provide the investigational drug, a letter of collaboration from another laboratory providing expertise for this project, etc.). Applicants are encouraged to provide a letter of support for any investigation agent.

11. **Project Timeline.** Enter major milestones for your project, the expected completion date, and if there is an associated deliverable. A deliverable is something that can be included in a progress report, such as a publication or an approval letter. You are not required to have deliverables. However, the timeline should make it clear what outcomes will be achieved during the grant award period.

12. **Budget and Justification.** The award funds will be directed to the sponsoring institution and should be used towards salary support, personnel, supplies, and other necessary expenses (excluding equipment) for the pursuit of the recipient's research project. The budget must be directly entered into the ABOHLF budget form found at the

end of this RFP. Budget justification for the entire project period must be entered for each line item requested in the “Notes” section.

13. Letter of Support from a Mentor – required for all submissions and should include the following information:

- a. Training plan for the applicant, including intended structure of the mentor/investigator interaction during the proposed investigation;
- b. Confirmation that the applicant is within the first ten years of full-time faculty appointments;
- c. A critical review of both the applicant’s and the research proposal;
- d. The role(s) or anticipated role(s) the applicant holds (will hold) at the institution; e. The level of institutional commitment to the applicant’s research program as an independent clinical investigator; and
- f. Assurance that the applicant’s sponsoring institution will provide adequate facilities and support for performance of the proposed work.

14. Institutional Approval. The Authorized Official representing the institution of the applicant must approve the completed application (both the project proposal and the budget) before submission. This official is normally from the institution’s Office of Sponsored Research and can be submitted as a letter of approval.

15. Human Participants Certification. If applicable, the applicant must provide verification of project approval from the institution’s ethical review board, or notification to ABOH if approval is pending.

Additional Information:

Use of award funds - The ABOH Early Career Research awards are designed to be used for salary costs and approved fringe costs for the principal researcher.

Change of employment - ABOH will have final approval rights of any change of sponsoring institution. Request to continue receiving funding must be submitted in writing to research@abreathofhope.org.

Progress Reports – Two progress reports (one for lay audience to be shared publicly; one for research committee to be held in confidence) are due two weeks before each award payment is mailed with one final report at end of cycle.

- Due dates:
 - By April 15, 2027

- By October 15, 2027
- By April 15, 2028
- Final progress report due by end of 2028.
- Payments of \$37,500 are made on the following dates assuming progress reports are received at research@abreathofhope.org - 2 weeks before each check is mailed:
 - November 2026 upon receipt of grant contract
 - May 1, 2027
 - November 1, 2027
 - May 1, 2028

Leave of absence - A written request to pause the project must be submitted to A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation (ABOH) Research Committee and permission shall be granted at the discretion of ABOH. If permission is not granted, unused funds will be returned to ABOH.

Patient and Intellectual property – The sponsoring institution agrees to notify ABOH at research@abreathofhope.org in the case of patent applications or decisions to seek legal protection for intellectual property. ABOH will keep all information confidential. Any expenses related to patents shall fall on the sponsoring institution. The patent policies of the sponsoring institution shall guide all discoveries or intellectual properties that result from support of fellowship recipient.

Confidentiality – Other than lay reports produced by PI's, all A Breath of Hope Research Award applications, progress reports and scoring are held confidential by ABOH. Submitted proposals become the property of ABOH and will not be returned.

Disclaimer - A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, age or any other factors that are irrelevant to the quality of the research project being accomplished by applicants.

For questions about the award RFP and process, contact Teri Cannon, Executive Director of A Breath of Hope Lung Cancer Foundation or Research Committee at research@abreathofhope.org or 952-405-9201.