

Applications for ASTCT's 2024 New Investigator Awards Now Open

Submit your application by September 28, 2023 for consideration

ASTCT's New Investigator Awards (NIAs) are designed to encourage clinical and/or laboratory research by young investigators in the field of blood and marrow transplantation. Awardees will receive \$50,000 per year for a total of two years, starting July 1, 2024, to assist with research costs and/or salary support. To learn more about the award, eligibility, judging criteria, and to apply, click [here](#).

The deadline for receipt of applications is 11:59 p.m. CDT (GMT -5) on Thursday, September 28, 2023. Applications should be submitted electronically as to the ASTCT NIA Application portal [linked here](#).

2023 NEW INVESTIGATOR AWARDS

Purpose

The ASTCT New Investigator Awards (NIAs) are designed to encourage clinical and/or laboratory research by young investigators in the field of blood and marrow transplantation and/or cell therapy. The award provides \$50,000 per year for 2 years in support of research costs and/or salary. The award may NOT be used for institutional overhead or indirect costs.

Eligibility

- By the award start date of July 1, 2024, the applicant must have completed at least two years of postdoctoral training (not counting residency training for MDs). For applicants who are full-time junior faculty (Instructor, Assistant Professor, or equivalent) at an academic institution, that appointment or promotion must have occurred on or after July 18, 2021 (i.e., no more than three years before the award start date of July 1, 2024). ***This date should be very clear in the application and the applicant's NIH-style biosketch. Failure to meet this requirement will result in disqualification of the application.***
- Applicants may submit only one application per cycle.
- Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to be an ASTCT member (this is not part of the evaluation criteria for scoring). **The mentor/sponsor of the applicant MUST be an ASTCT member**, however. The sponsor serves as a mentor for the applicant's proposed research as well as career development.

ASTCT's New Investigator Awards are designed to encourage clinical and/or basic/translational laboratory research by young investigators in the field of blood and marrow transplantation.

For clinical research, the areas of interest could include but are not limited to

1. Improvements in the safety and efficacy of BMT.
2. Long-term outcomes following BMT, including cellular therapy
3. Examination of disparities in outcomes and factors that contribute to or mitigate those outcomes disparities.
4. Clinical trials to examine novel agents, pharmaceuticals, biologics, immunotherapies, or lifestyle changes to prevent adverse outcomes after BMT. Adverse outcomes could include disease progression/relapse, GvHD, or post-BMT complications.

For basic/translational laboratory research, the topics of investigation could include but are not limited to mechanistic studies of the following:

1. Basic science studies of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation biology
2. Mechanisms underlying GvHD and novel prevention and/or treatment approaches.
3. Basic or translational studies that address relapse post-transplant.
4. Other cell-based therapies, e.g., engineered TCR, CAR-T cell, antigen-presenting cells, or NK celltherapies.
5. Basic or translational studies of novel pharmacologies for prevention and/or treatment of BMT complications.

ASTCT commits to award at least six New Investigator Awards to start on July 1, 2024, comprising 3 in the basic/translational laboratory research domain and 3 in the clinical research domain.

URM NIA Award

A seventh award will be made based on meritorious priority score to an applicant who self-identifies as an underrepresented minority (URM), as defined by the NIH (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander).

NOTE:

1. **Applicants who self-identify as URMs are *not only* eligible for this 7th NIA, *but also* remain eligible for any of the other 6 awards as described above.**
2. **Applicants who do NOT identify as URMs, but who have proposed research that focuses on URM subjects/patients, are NOT eligible for this 7th NIA designated for an URM applicant.** Such applicants remain eligible for any of the other 6 NIAs.

Application Submission

Applicants are required to submit the

- New Investigator Award application using the on-line application and submission process. **The deadline for receipt of applications is 11:59 p.m. CDT (GMT -5) on Thursday, September 28, 2023.**
- Curriculum vitae that adheres to the current NIH Biographical Sketch format.
- List of Other Support that also adheres to the current NIH format
- Research proposal describing the proposed research, which ***must not exceed 5 pages***, including ***legible*** tables, figures, and legends. Applicants should be mindful of not squeezing so much into these 5 pages that legibility, especially of figures and legends, is compromised for the reviewers.
- Personal Statement Written by the Applicant
 - Interest in transplantation and cellular therapy
 - Prior experience and accomplishments in the transplantation and cellular therapy field
 - Address how this award would impact your career and ability to work in the field of stemcell transplantation and/or cell therapies, as well as to remain engaged with ASTCT.
 - Should NOT exceed one page, and this is not considered part of the 5 page limit for the actual application.
- Mentor Letter – A mentor’s letter of recommendation (maximum 2 pages) is already required for the ASTCT NIA Application. New for this cycle is that the mentor’s letter should specifically include the following:

- Emphasize his/her mentoring experience with some specifics.
- Explain the commitment of the mentor AND the applicant to the BMT and/or cell therapy field.
- Summarize the mentor's current funding.
- Outline a mentoring plan for the applicant.

Judging and Evaluation Criteria

The review committee is chaired by two members of ASTCT, appointed by the ASTCT President with approval by the ASTCT Executive Committee. These co-chairs then appoint standing and ad hoc review committee members who have the requisite expertise to review the topics covered by the applications.

- New Investigator Award applications will be evaluated for (a) scientific merit within the field of blood and marrow transplantation and/or cell therapy, (b) significance and anticipated overall impact of the potential findings, (c) institutional environment, (d) the mentoring record of the sponsor/mentor, and (e) the potential contribution of the proposed research to the field of blood and marrow transplantation and/or cell therapy.
- Each submitted application is assigned to three independent reviewers. Averaged preliminary scores determine the order of review, and only those applications in the top 50% of preliminary scores are likely to be discussed by the entire committee. Any reviewer may request that an application with preliminary score in the bottom 50% be discussed anyway. The final score of each discussed application is based on the scores from the entire review committee, after the three assigned reviewers present their critiques and the entire committee has an opportunity to discuss the application. All applicants, regardless of URM status, remain competitive for the 6 ASTCT NIAs not specifically designated for an URM applicant.
- As these are "new" investigator awards, less emphasis is placed on preliminary data.
- Applicants with other significant new investigator funding from peer-reviewed and/or extramural sources, including funding for projects with different scopes and aims, may be viewed as less competitive by the review committee. Institutional startup funds for junior faculty need ***not*** be disclosed, as these are neither peer-reviewed nor extramural.
- Significant scientific or budgetary overlap is usually not allowed with other funded projects of the applicant or mentor. Successful awardees are expected to bring budgetary overlap issues to the attention of ASTCT, however, as each case will be reviewed and decided on its own merit and circumstances.

We regret that due to the additional work that would be required of reviewers and the Chairs, as well as the short turnaround times involved, applicants will not receive written critiques after review.

Timing

- Applicants will be notified of their award status (awardee, alternate, or not fundable) by December 1, 2023.
- The review committee always selects and rank orders alternates, as successful awardees sometimes receive and accept grants from other sources for the same or similar project. **Substantial scientific or budgetary overlap is not allowed**, which then may free up a previously designated NIA.
- The awards will be publicly announced at the 2024 Tandem Meetings of ASTCT and CIBMTR, February 21-14, 2024 in San Antonio, TX. ASTCT hopes that awardees will attend this meeting to

accept their award in person. Attendance at the Tandem Meetings is not a requirement for receiving a New Investigator Award, however, because ASTCT is unable to provide financial support for awardees' travel and attendance.