

Vanderbilt-wide Limited Submission Opportunity 2026 Brain Research Foundation Scientific Innovations Award

Applications due May 1, 2025

Vanderbilt (VU + VUMC): *This is a joint competition for VU and VUMC investigators. All investigators should follow these instructions.*

Overview:

Vanderbilt (VU + VUMC, collaboratively) may nominate **one associate or full professor** to submit a Letter of Intent for the [2026 Brain Research Foundation Scientific Innovations Award \(SIA\)](#). The [SIA program](#) provides \$150,000 (direct costs) over two years for innovative science in both **basic and clinical neuroscience**. This funding mechanism is designed to support creative, exploratory, cutting-edge research in well-established research laboratories, under the direction of established investigators.

The SIA supports projects that may be **too innovative and speculative for traditional funding sources** but still have a high likelihood of producing important findings. It is expected that investigations supported by these grants will yield high impact findings and result in major grant applications and significant publications in high impact journals. Please note that **indirect costs are prohibited**.

Eligibility:

- Nominee must be a full-time associate professor or full professor working in the area of studies of brain function in health and disease. Assistant professors, research associate professors, and professors emeriti are ineligible.
- Current major NIH or other peer-reviewed funding is preferred. Evidence of such funding in the past three years is essential.
- Studies should be related to either normal human brain development or specifically identified disease states. This includes molecular and clinical neuroscience as well as studies of neural, sensory, motor, cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning in health and disease.
- The grant proposal **must detail a new research project that is not funded by other sources**. This grant is not to be used as bridge funding.
- PI is ineligible if they have BRF funding that will overlap this grant period. Scientists who have previously received a BRF Scientific Innovations Award may not receive the award for a second time until five years have elapsed since the beginning date of the prior award.

- Only one PI may apply per application. (Applicant may include the name of a Co-PI within or from another institution, but no additional supporting materials for the Co-PI are required.)

Internal Application Process:

Anyone interested in being considered as Vanderbilt's nominee must submit the following (in PDF format) to LSO@vanderbilt.edu by **5 p.m. on May 1, 2025:**

1. Brief summary of program project/research plan (2 page maximum). Please include a closing paragraph that explains how this research will develop (next steps) and provide a brief summary budget.
 - a. References may be included on a separate page
2. Letter of support from department chair/center director
 - a. Letters must also acknowledge that this grant does not allow indirect costs. This statement can be used/modified within the letter: "The Department recognizes that this grant does not allow indirect costs and will commit to covering any associated indirect costs per applicable institutional/school policy." Consult LSO@vanderbilt.edu for further guidance.
3. NIH Biosketch (5 page maximum; should include list of support)

Submissions should reference the program name in the subject line of the email. Vanderbilt's nominee will submit a required LOI to the Foundation by June 3, 2025. See the [SIA Guidelines](#) for more information.

If you have any questions about the sponsor or the application process, please contact LSO@vanderbilt.edu.