

Vanderbilt-wide Limited Submission Opportunity
2026 V Foundation Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Grant: Recognizing
Excellence from Unique Perspectives

Applications due January 14, 2026

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

Vanderbilt (VU + VUMC, collaboratively) may submit **one nominee** (either [Translational](#) OR [V Scholar](#)) for the V Foundation 2026 Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Grant.

The V Foundation recognizes that varied perspectives fuel innovation in cancer research. The objective of this award is to support exceptional, creative researchers who have navigated unique challenges to establish their careers. All scientists have personal journeys shaped by their unique experiences and perspectives, which bring valuable and potentially overlooked insights to cancer research. Applicants will be asked to describe how their unique experiences have influenced their career paths and research focus.

NOTE: A biostatistical or bioinformatics plan is required for all proposals. Proposals without this element will not be considered for funding.

Translational Grant

- Provides **\$800,000** in four annual installments of \$200,000. Indirect costs up to a maximum of 10% within the total award are permitted.
- Supports “bench to bedside” research, whose endpoint should be the planning or initiation of a new clinical trial or conducting an investigator-initiated trial with laboratory correlates that test hypotheses
- Research should apply in some direct way to human beings within 3 years from the end of the grant
- If biomarker research is undertaken, a validation set or independent clinical trial is essential. Proposals must include a plan for biomarker validation, if applicable.
- Research areas not included in this scope are epidemiology, behavioral science, and health services research.
- By February 9, 2026, nominee must meet the following criteria:
 - Hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Assistant Professor (or Assistant Professor-equivalent) level or above. Non-promotable, adjunct, affiliated, temporary, part-time, or acting faculty positions are not eligible for PI nomination.
 - Be a U.S. Citizen or have a legal permit (temporary or permanent) to work in the US

V Scholar

- Provides **\$800,000** in four annual installments of \$200,000. **No indirect costs allowed.**
- Supports tenure-track faculty in the early stages of their cancer research careers by funding laboratory-based fundamental research or translational projects in any area of adult cancer research, with the goal of positioning them to successfully compete for larger, sustaining grants such as R01s.
- By February 9, 2026, nominee must meet the following criteria:
 - Hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position as an assistant professor (e.g., must be eligible to apply for PI status on an R01 at your institution). Non-promutable, adjunct, affiliated, temporary, part-time or acting faculty positions are not eligible for the Scholar award.
 - Have been appointed to their first full-time assistant professor position **within the last 5 years**, and not yet been promoted to Associate Professor. *Note: Extensions may be given on a case-by-case basis.*
 - **Clinical scientists are eligible** if their Department can demonstrate that it will fully support the research applicant (e.g., dedicated lab space, start-up funds, dedicated research time).
 - Possess at least 2 years post-doctoral (MD or PhD) fellowship training. For MDs, a minimum of one year is acceptable if only one year is required for their specialty.
 - Applicant must be a US Citizen or permanent legal resident in the US
 - Applicant must **NOT** be a previous or current V Scholar Award recipient.
 - Applicants must **NOT** have accepted or received notification of an R01 or R01 equivalent award by this nomination due date.
 - Applicants must **NOT** have accepted or received award notification of any peer-reviewed, non-mentored *single grant* that totals or exceeds \$750k in total direct funding at ANY point in their professional career. This calculation should exclude indirect costs.
 - Applicants must **NOT** have accepted or received award notification of any peer-reviewed, non-mentored funding that exceeds \$1M in *aggregated* (total) direct funding at ANY point in their professional career. This calculation should exclude indirect costs.

View the [2026 V Scholar Eligibility: Are they Eligible](#) handout for additional guidance

Internal Selection Process:

Anyone interested in being considered as Vanderbilt's nominee for this opportunity must submit the following (as a single PDF) to LSO@vanderbilt.edu by **11:59 p.m. on January 14, 2026**. Late applications will not be considered.

1. Brief (2 page maximum) research plan including summary budget;
2. Statement of support from department chair/center director;

- a. Please include an overview of institutional resources and support available to you (e.g., research and office space, teaching release, mental health support, etc.).
- b. An explanation of why the nominee is an outstanding candidate for the Breaking Barriers Award as described.
- c. A summary of how the nominee will be trained to communicate complex ideas:
 - i. For basic and/or translational research, explain how science communication with broad audiences will be incorporated.
 - ii. For translational and/or clinical research (bench to bedside with patient contact), describe how patient advocacy and communication will be incorporated.

3. NIH Biosketch or 5-page CV
4. **For V Scholar only:** Financial Worksheet (download template [here](#)) a. Please fill out the Grant Awards table and any “Notes and Remarks.” Other information and signatures not required for internal selection process.

Submissions should reference “2026 V Foundation Breaking Barriers Grant” in the subject line of the email.

A short nomination form and letter of recommendation for Vanderbilt’s selected candidate will be submitted to the V Foundation in February. The candidate will then receive an invitation to submit a full application to the sponsor.

Email LSO@vanderbilt.edu with any questions about the program, foundation, or internal review process.