



AMERICAN HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY (AHNS)
AND
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY FOUNDATION (AAO-HNSF)



2026 AHNS/AAO-HNSF TRANSLATIONAL INNOVATOR
AWARD GRANT POLICIES

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this award is to support contemporary basic or clinical research focused on neoplastic disease by full time academic head and neck surgeons; to promote novel translational research preferably with biomarker ideas.

B. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants for this award **must** be:

1. Otolaryngologist—Head and Neck surgeons, who are active members of the AAO-HNS.
OR:
Surgeons who are in head and neck fellowships or have completed a head and neck surgery fellowship and are active or candidate members of the AHNS. PLEASE NOTE: Medical oncologists and radiation oncologists are not eligible to apply for this award.
2. Citizens of the United States, noncitizen nationals, or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residency at the time of application;
3. Full-time academic surgeons in faculty positions at the rank of instructor or assistant professor
4. Hold a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree or equivalent (DO, MBBS) from an accredited institution;
5. Have demonstrated the capacity or potential for a highly productive independent research career with an emphasis in head and neck surgical oncology;
6. Are members or candidate members of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and the American Head and Neck Society; and
7. Have completed residency or fellowship training no longer than seven (7) years prior to submitting an application.

Former AHNS or Foundation research grant recipients are eligible to compete for this grant. However, candidates who have served or are currently serving as Principal Investigators on NIH research grants or who have successfully applied for another research career development award (NIH K Award or other >\$100,000 direct cost award) are ineligible. Candidates may not hold research grants from NIH, AAO-HNSF, or the American College of Surgeons (ACS) concurrently with this award. **Applications submitted by ineligible PIs will NOT be reviewed.**

C. CONDITIONS

Research supported by this award should be specifically directed toward the pathogenesis, pathophysiology, diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of head and neck neoplastic disease, and may be either basic or clinical/translational in approach. While not specifically required, proposals which aim to introduce new knowledge and methodology from other disciplines to research in head and neck disease, or which demonstrate collaborative effort with members of other related disciplines are encouraged. Projects must be designed so as to yield useful information within the period of award, but priority will be given to projects that are also innovative with promise to develop into new long-range or expanded research programs capable of attracting funding from other sources. The applicant institution must demonstrate in the application a firm commitment to the development of the candidate as a productive, independent investigator in head and neck surgical oncology research and to the pursuit of the research career development plan described in the application. The candidate must describe a career development program that will maximize the use of relevant research and educational resources available in the sponsoring institution. Candidates are expected to devote at least 25% effort per year (based on a 40-hour work week) to the research supported by this award. This can be done as 25% of the effort in each of the two years or 20% in one year and 30% in the next. The application must be accompanied by a letter of support from the Chair of the candidate's academic department verifying that the applicant will be permitted to devote the required amount of time to the conduct and timely completion of the proposed research project, and that reasonable departmental resources will be made available to facilitate the work. Applicants must be members or candidate members of the AHNS and AAO-HNS. AHNS candidate members must be sponsored by an AHNS Fellow in good standing, who must submit a letter of support as well.

D. TERMS



AMERICAN HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY (AHNS)
AND
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY FOUNDATION (AAO-HNSF)



2026 AHNS/AAO-HNSF TRANSLATIONAL INNOVATOR
AWARD GRANT POLICIES

1. **Amount:** \$100,000 maximum
2. **Period:** 24 months, non-renewable
3. **Use of Funds:** A detailed budget and budget justification constitute part of the application and will be evaluated as part of the review process. Allowable expenses include Principal Investigator salary and benefits, consultant fees (e.g. statistician); salary support for research assistants or other technical personnel; computer software or hardware; purchase and maintenance of experimental animals; laboratory supplies and services; and expenses related to publication of results directly related to the supported project, exclusive of reprint costs. Equipment and supplies purchased with this Award become the property of the recipient institution. Salary and benefits for secretarial or administrative assistants may not be supported by this award. The AHNS and the AAO-HNS Foundation prefer not to pay institutional (indirect) costs for this very modest award; if the institution is unwilling to waive such costs, however, they are limited to no more than 10% of the Total Direct Costs (sum of amounts requested for personnel, consultant costs, equipment, supplies, patient care costs, and other expenses).
4. **Review:** Applications will be reviewed by members of the AAO-HNSF CORE Study Section (AHNS Research Committee representatives serve on the Study Section). Recommendations for funding must be approved by the AHNS Research Committee, the AHNS Council, and the AAO-HNSF.
5. **Notification:** Letters of notification will be sent by June. Please *do not* call the AAO-HNSF office prior to that time to inquire about results.
6. **Start Date:** The recipient of the AHNS/AAO-HNSF Translational Innovator Award will be announced publicly at the AAO-HNS Foundation Annual Meeting immediately following the award. The award may be activated as early as July 1, but no later than January 1 of the following year.

E. CAREER DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The AHNS/AAO-HNSF Translational Innovator Award is a career development award. In addition to the Research Strategy which includes a) *Significance*, b) *Innovation*, and c) *Approach* components of the Research Strategy, Career Development Award applicants must include an Educational Plan containing:

- a) Candidate's Background
- b) Career Goals and Objectives
- c) Career Development/Training Activities During Award Period
- d) Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research

More information is provided in the Research Strategy instructions, which will be accessible after approval of Letter of Intent.

F. FORMAT

Applications are in a similar format to the National Institutes of Health. All applications must be completed and submitted online through ProposalCentral at <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>. Visit <http://www.entnet.org/core> to begin the application process.

G. SIGNATURES

The AHNS/AAO-HNSF Translational Innovator Award is legally awarded to the institution with which the Principal Investigator is affiliated, not to the investigator or his/her Division or Department. For this reason, it is very important that applicants comply with their home institution's policies on pre-submission processing of grant applications. This can take time, so it is wise to plan ahead, allowing adequate time for processing and approvals. Applicants are advised to consult their institution's offices of research administration or sponsored projects for information on processing requirements for an application prior to its submission.



**AMERICAN HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY (AHNS)
AND
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY FOUNDATION (AAO-HNSF)**



**2026 AHNS/AAO-HNSF TRANSLATIONAL INNOVATOR
AWARD GRANT POLICIES**

H. APPROVALS

If the proposed research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals at any time, the project must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). This approval should be obtained prior to submission and submitted with the application. If such approval is unavoidably delayed, enter "pending" instead of the approval date and upload the documentation that you have submitted to your institution seeking approval so the Study Section can see that the appropriate steps are in process to obtain the approval. Grant applications which are not supported by evidence of the appropriate IRB or IACUC approvals will not receive funding until such approval letters are submitted. In no case may the project start be delayed beyond January 1 of the year following the award. Any changes in the proposed work required by an IRB or IACUC to secure approval must be submitted to the AHNS with the follow-up certification, prior to review or after the work is in progress.

I. LETTER OF INTENT

All applicants must submit a Letter of Intent online no later than 11:59pm, Eastern Standard Time, December 15, 2025. The letter of intent includes the title of the project, the principal investigator, and an abstract of the work. This will facilitate planning review requirements. See the ProposalCentral website (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>) to begin the letter of intent process.

J. RECEIPT DATE

Allow yourself enough time to have the appropriate individuals review your application. Once your application is complete, print your cover page and have all of the necessary individuals sign. Keep in mind that it may take a few days to obtain all of the necessary signatures. The CORE grants program is paperless, so no hard copies of the signature page are to be mailed. Once all signatures have been obtained, you should scan the document and upload the .pdf to the system and retain the original for your files if needed. Once the signature page has been uploaded, run the checks within the system and click 'SUBMIT.' You will receive a confirmation email indicating that your proposal has officially been submitted.

ALL materials must be submitted online by 11:59pm, Eastern Standard Time, January 15, 2026.

K. FOLLOW-UP

In carrying out its stewardship of research programs, the AAO-HNSF or AHNS may request information essential to an assessment of the effectiveness of this program. Accordingly, the recipient is hereby notified that s/he may be contacted after the completion of the award for periodic updates on various aspects of employment history, publications, support from research grants or contracts, honors and awards, professional activities, and other information helpful in evaluating the impact of the program. Award is conditional on the receipt of applications of sufficient scientific merit.

L. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The grantee must submit an interim progress report to the Foundation at the end of the first year of the award. The Grantee is also required to submit a final progress report thirty (30) days after the close of the project period, and a financial status report within ninety (90) days after the close of the grant period. While no verbal presentations or publications are required to result from this Award, any which do shall acknowledge the contribution of AHNS/AAO-HNSF Translational Innovator Award. Recipients of the Award may be invited to present the results of their work at meetings of the American Head and Neck Society and/or American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation. The Award recipient is encouraged to use the results of the research program as pilot for the development of an application for a Clinical Investigator Award or research project grant (R01) from National Institutes of Health. Any publication resulting from this research should acknowledge the AHNS and AAO-HNSF as sponsor s of the grant.

CONTACT

If you have questions about this funding opportunity announcement, please contact Loren Hamilton (loren@ahns.info) at the American Head and Neck Society (AHNS) or the CORE Grants Team (coregrants@entnet.org)