

University of Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Developmental Project Announcement

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) will fund up to two developmental projects in the 2026-2027 academic year, **pending availability of funds**, to support basic, translational or clinical research. Projects that address heterogeneity in the AD continuum, the major theme of the Penn ADRC, will be strongly considered. Heterogeneity refers to features such as age of onset, clinical phenotypes, genetics, exposome, rate of progression, care needs for patients and families, and the impacts of co-morbidities and co-pathologies. Importantly, AD is frequently associated with pathologies traditionally considered as "non-AD" because they are often associated with other neurodegenerative conditions (e.g. alpha-synuclein and TDP-43). Consideration will also be given for projects not focused on this theme but that are novel, focus on an area of research underrepresented in the ADRC or at Penn, and are transdisciplinary and expand the breadth of collaborations. **Clinical trials are NOT permitted. If you are not sure whether your proposed research is a clinical trial, please check with us before applying.**

Each developmental project will be funded for up to \$75,000/year for direct costs. Developmental projects may request funding for one or two years; however, the second year of funding will be awarded after a competitive review process of progress in year one. **In addition, since the Penn ADRC is up for renewal, all funding will also be contingent upon a successful renewal of the Penn ADRC.** The following are excluded from developmental project funding and cannot be included in the budget: tuition costs, costs associated with dissertation research, equipment and instruments.

Priority for these awards will be given to junior investigators, generally Assistant Professor faculty, but consideration will also be given to Instructors and postdoctoral fellows. Mid-career or senior investigators will be considered if the project describes a change in their career direction into the ADRC space. The Principal Investigator (PI) for these developmental projects may reside in any of Penn's 12 schools. Applicants must ensure that the PI for the project commits a percent effort to the project, as reflected in the budget.

An additional goal of the developmental project program is to foster engagement with the Penn ADRC and its faculty. Please include a brief paragraph in your proposal that addresses how your project, if funded, would accomplish this.

The goal of these grants is to assist investigators in obtaining preliminary data to serve as the basis of a grant application to the NIH or another public or private agency. Funding decisions are based on scientific merit and the likelihood the project will lead to additional independent funding to continue the research beyond the end date of the developmental project. Investigators are eligible only once for a developmental project.

Developmental project applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the vast resources available through the Penn and national ADRC network. Information on obtaining biospecimens from the Penn ADRC and data from the Penn Integrated Neurodegenerative Disease Database (INDD) can be found on the ADRC website: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/adcc/>. Data collected from all NIA-funded ADRCs across the United States (US) can be accessed through the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC) and their website is: <https://www.alz.washington.edu/>. Biological materials, such as DNA, plasma, serum, RNA, CSF, cell lines and brain tissue from ADRCs and other centers across the US can be requested through the National Centralized Repository for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (NCRAD): <https://ncrad.iu.edu/index.html>.

Application Process:

Applications should be formatted in the style of a NIH PHS 398 application. However, a title page should be substituted for the NIH face page. The **one-page title page** should include: 1) grant title, 2) name and affiliation(s) of PI, 3) contact information for PI including email address, telephone number and address and 4) an abstract of the proposed project using language that an educated lay audience can understand.

Specific Aims and Research Strategy (items #5 and #6 below) **combined must not exceed 3 pages.**

Organization of the application:

- 1) Title Page (see instructions above)
- 2) Budget
- 3) Biosketch
- 4) Other Support
- 5) Specific Aims
- 6) Research Strategy (Significance, Innovation, Approach)
- 7) Literature Cited

If applicable, include the following:

- 8) Human Subjects Information (if applicable and protocol may be pending)
- 9) Vertebrate Animals Sections (if applicable and protocol may be pending)
- 10) Letters of Support (if applicable)
- 11) Consultants (if applicable)
- 12) Consortium Contractual Arrangements (if applicable)

Developmental project awardees must provide a brief progress report 6-7 months after the start date to provide updates and any unexpected barriers. A brief report is also required by the due date for the next round of annual ADRC developmental project proposals, if a second year of funding was requested. A brief final report, as well as annual updates regarding publications and funded grants stemming from the developmental project award, is required after the project end date. In addition, awardees will be asked to present their work, after completion, in the form of a presentation at Neurodegenerative Disease Grand Rounds, held bi-weekly.

For more information, contact Kathy Jedrziwski, ADRC Director for Administration, at jedrzmk@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.

Applications Due: February 2, 2026; anticipated date of award, **pending availability of funds**: July 1, 2026.

Submit, by email, a PDF of the full proposal to: Kathy Jedrziwski, jedrzmk@pennmedicine.upenn.edu. Please note that your application is for the Penn Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Developmental Project Program.