



V Scholar Cancer Research Grant

2026 Request for Applications

The V Foundation for Cancer Research was founded in 1993 by ESPN and renowned basketball coach, Jim Valvano. Our mission is to fund all-star cancer researchers and game changing cancer research that accelerates Victory Over Cancer®. We've allocated nearly \$400M in grants for cancer research across the nation and in Canada, solidifying our position as a leading advocate for cutting-edge cancer research. We fund **innovative, high-risk, high-reward research** through a variety of grant mechanisms and calls for applications.

Purpose of Award:

The V Foundation is dedicated to supporting careers of future leaders of cancer research. This Request for Applications (RFA) is specifically for the V Scholar grant and is restricted to **pediatric** cancer research that is exploratory or translational in focus. Research on ANY pediatric cancer type will be funded. Research areas not included in this scope are epidemiology, behavioral science, and health services research.

V Scholar Grant Objectives:

This award supports tenure-track faculty early in their cancer research career by funding projects that are **either** laboratory-based fundamental research **or** translational research. Emphasis for this grant mechanism is on supporting exceptional early career investigators at the Assistant Professor stage to be better positioned to leverage large RO1 or similar sustaining grants.

Biostatistics:

A biostatistical or bioinformatics plan is required for all proposals in order to be considered for funding.

Grant Specifics:

- A four-year, \$800,000 grant, paid in \$200,000 annual installments. No indirect costs allowed.
- The V Foundation follows NIH Guidelines regarding salary caps. Institutions are welcome to supplement a grant recipient's salary with institutional funds if desired.

Institution Eligibility:

The V Foundation has a closed RFA process and only research institutions that received this invitation may submit a nominee for consideration. Other affiliates of the institution that did not receive the email are not eligible to nominate an applicant. **Do not distribute outside of your institution.**

Applicant Eligibility:

Inclusion: Nominee must meet all the following criteria by the nomination due date:

- Nominated by their Cancer Center Director or similar high ranking research official.
- Employed at the invited non-profit research institution (e.g., 501c3, Section 170).
- Either a US Citizen or US permanent legal resident. Does not apply to invited Canadian institutions.
- 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.
- Clinical scientists are eligible if the research institution demonstrates that it will fully support the research applicant (e.g., dedicated lab space, committed research time, start-up funds).

- Must be in a full-time tenure track or tenured faculty position (for e.g., must be eligible to apply for PI status on an RO1 at your institution). Non-promotable adjunct, affiliated, temporary, part-time, or acting faculty positions are not eligible for Principal Investigator nomination.
- V Scholar applicants must have been appointed to their first full-time tenure track Assistant Professor position **no more than 5 years** prior to the nomination due date, and not yet promoted to Associate Professor.
 - Extensions to the 5-year limit may be given on a case-by-case basis to nominees who took parental leave (or other types of leave) during this window. Contact grants@v.org with the following to obtain approval BEFORE submitting the nomination form:
 - Appointment start date
 - Length of leave
 - Institutional tenure clock stoppages/extensions, if applicable

Exclusion: By the Nomination Due Date, nominee must:

- NOT be a previous or current V Foundation V Scholar awardee.
- NOT have accepted or received notification of an RO1 award or RO1 equivalent award.
- 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 and/or institutional funds.
- 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 and/or institutional funds.

Note: The V Scholar award is intended to support research to leverage these larger awards; so, the nominee should not have already received such awards.

Next Steps:

Letter of Recommendation (LOR): An LOR is required with each nomination form. It must be written by the Cancer Center Director or a senior official at a similar level if needed. The nominee will also upload it to their application. The review committee will evaluate the LOR which should include:

- A description of the process used to identify your nominee and why the nominee was chosen.
- The institutional resources that will be available to the nominee (examples might include research and office space, teaching release, mental health support, etc.).
- An overview of the mentoring plan that will be available to the nominee.
- Communication of complex ideas is an important skill for all researchers to learn. If the nature of the research is basic and/or translational science, how will science communication with various audiences be incorporated into their training? If the nature of the research is translational and/or clinical (bench to bedside with patient contact), describe how patient advocacy/communication will be incorporated into their training.
- The name, title and contact information of the person writing the LOR.

Nomination Form:

- Complete the attached V Scholar Nomination Form for your sole nominee.
- Nomination Form must include the signature of the primary researcher and the Cancer Center Director or similar high ranking research official.
- Send one email to nominations@v.org with your organization's completed V Scholar nomination form, Financial Worksheet, and LOR (**all 3 are required** or your nominee will be ineligible).
- Allow 5 business days from the time of receipt for our team to review, verify, and process your nomination. The nominee will then be invited via email to complete the online application.

Important Dates:

Nomination Due Date: March 2026

Application Due Date: April 2026

Earliest Award Start Date: July 2026