



PEDIATRIC ALOPECIA AREATA CHALLENGE GRANT 2026 Request for Proposals

Overview

Alopecia areata (AA) is a common autoimmune skin disease that causes hair loss on the scalp, face, and sometimes on other areas of the body, affecting as many as 160 million people worldwide. Nearly half of patients experience their first episode of alopecia areata before age 20, highlighting the impact of the disease in children and adolescents. Recent clinical data indicate that treatment efficacy decreases with length of time living with severe disease, suggesting that early disease management is needed to prevent a lifetime without hair. Pediatric alopecia areata remains a critical target for research and therapeutic development. Currently, there is only one FDA-approved treatment for adolescents ages 12 and older, limiting effective treatment options for most pediatric patients. The burdens on AA patients and their families are significant and many key research questions remain unanswered.

To address this need, the National Alopecia Areata Foundation (NAAF) and the Pediatric Dermatology Research Alliance (PeDRA) are collaborating to support research investigations focused on pediatric alopecia areata with the **Pediatric Alopecia Areata Challenge Grant**. Through this grant, NAAF and PeDRA intend to accelerate research that improves the lives of pediatric alopecia areata patients and their families.

Focus

This Challenge Grant is intended to stimulate scientists to establish or sustain research programs focused on pediatric alopecia areata. Investigators **with any innovative research idea** are encouraged to apply, with priority consideration given to proposals that address one or more of the following areas of interest:

- Investigations of targets or pathways that will advance understanding of the pathophysiology of pediatric AA
- Investigations of epidemiology or the natural history of pediatric AA
- Development of patient reported outcome measures specific to pediatric AA
- Elucidation of the burden of pediatric alopecia areata on patients and families including the psychosocial impact
- Advances in treatment or tools for treatment decision-making by patients and families

Priority consideration will be given to projects led by early-to-mid career principal investigators collaborating with senior mentors and projects that address high-priority research questions.

Number of Awards

One (1) Challenge Grant is available for the 2026 funding cycle. This is a one-year non-renewable grant, with the earliest possible start date of February 1, 2027.

Eligibility

Applicants need not be trained in pediatric dermatology but must hold the degree of MD and/or PhD (or equivalent) and be eligible to apply for grants under the guidelines of their host institution. Principal Investigators need not be United States citizens and the research need not be conducted in the United States. Evidence of IRB or IACUC (or equivalent) approval is required for all studies when relevant. Recipients of past or current NAAF and/or PeDRA grants are eligible to apply.

Application

Applications must be submitted online (https://pedraresearch.org/paacg_application/) and must include the following:

1. Principal Investigator, Institution, and Project Information
2. Abstract (1500 character maximum)
3. Layperson's Summary (1000 character maximum)
4. Cover Letter (2-page maximum)

5. Project Proposal (*5-page maximum, not including references*) must include:
 - a. Specific Aims (*one page*)
 - b. Background and Rationale
 - c. Project Description
 - i. Methods and study/experimental design
 - ii. Primary and secondary outcome measures (*if applicable*)
 - iii. Statistical analysis
 - d. Potential pitfalls
6. Budget (*2-page maximum*) – Provide a detailed budget and brief justification that includes an explanation of any actual or anticipated overlapping funds and plans for support beyond the award period (if applicable)
7. Biosketches (*5-page maximum per biosketch*) – Provide NIH-style biosketches for the Principal Investigator and any Co-Investigators.
8. Letter(s) of support – (*Optional*) While not required, letters of support are recommended from Co-Investigators, key collaborators, and the chairperson of the Principal Investigator’s department.

Applications must be written in 11pt Arial font or larger with at least one-half inch margins.

Review

Applications will be reviewed by a team of peer reviewers based on the following:

1. Importance of Research
2. Rigor and Feasibility
3. Expertise and Resources
4. Strength of budget

Award

Applicants may request up to **\$75,000 for one year. Direct costs only.** Applicants may request salary support as part of their budget and are encouraged to use budget to compensate support staff necessary for the efficient completion of the proposed research. Refer to [PeDRA’s Grant Guidelines](#) for more information on requesting salary support.

Important Dates

Application deadline:	11:59 PM PT, Thursday, September 17, 2026
Awards made:	no later than December 11, 2026
Earliest start date:	February 1, 2027

Questions

Email research@pedraresearch.org or research@naaf.org for additional information or with any questions on the Challenge Grant, application, or review process.