

PeDRA PHACE-LUMBAR Challenge Grant

2026 Request for Applications

Overview

Applications are now open for PHACE/LUMBAR Syndrome Challenge Grants, which aim to support innovative, patient-centered research that advances clinical care for individuals with PHACE and LUMBAR syndromes.

PHACE syndrome is a neurocutaneous syndrome characterized by large segmental infantile hemangiomas of the face and scalp in association with congenital anomalies that may affect the posterior fossa of the brain, cerebral and cervical arteries, heart, and/or eyes. LUMBAR syndrome is the lower-body counterpart of PHACE, characterized by large segmental infantile hemangiomas of the lumbosacral, buttock or pelvic regions associated with urogenital, spinal, bony, anorectal, and/or renal abnormalities. Those affected experience a wide range of comorbidities with significant psychosocial impact. We invite proposals for clinical research that improves diagnostic approaches, enhances quality of life, and addresses key aspects of disease burden and management.

Applications may be submitted by either a single investigator or multiple investigators at multiple institutions. **A total of \$40,000 is available and may be awarded as one large-scale project or as multiple smaller awards, depending on the number and quality of applications received.** Equal consideration will be given to projects in either of the two award formats with decisions to be based upon merit and available funds.

Focus

Research should focus on PHACE and/or LUMBAR syndromes. Priority will be given to investigators who have *not* previously served as the senior investigator on an R01 NIH grant or equivalent, and to studies that include multidisciplinary teams with active roles for early-career investigators. Proposals that meaningfully integrate patient perspectives are strongly encouraged, particularly those that incorporate direct input from the PHACE Syndrome Community Research Advisory Board (PSC-RAB; see below).

The PSC-RAB is a volunteer advisory group made up of adult patients, caregivers, and PSC board members. It serves as a formal link between the patient community and physician–scientist investigators. The group reviews study proposals and provides structured, patient-informed feedback before study initiation. For approved studies, the RAB continues to offer feedback annually or biannually throughout the study period.

Investigators seeking PSC-RAB input should submit an Abstract and Layperson’s Summary to Moureen Wenik, Community Director of the PSC, at mwenik@phacesyndromecommunity.org. **Materials must be submitted at least four weeks before the application deadline.**

Application

Applications must be submitted online (<https://pedraresearch.org/pedra-phace-lumbar-challenge-grant/>) and will include the following:

1. Investigator(s), Institution, and Project Information
2. Abstract (*1500 character maximum*)
3. Layperson’s Summary (*1000 character maximum*)
4. Impact Statement (*1000 character maximum*) – to explain how the award would meaningfully impact the applicant’s personal and/or professional trajectory.
5. Cover Letter (*2-page maximum*)
6. 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
7. 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)
 8. Biosketches (*5-page maximum per biosketch*) – Provide NIH-style biosketches for the Principal Investigator and any Co-Investigators.
 9. 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.

Review

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

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

Eligibility

Applicants need not be trained in pediatric dermatology but must hold an MD, PhD, or equivalent degree 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 does not need to be conducted in the United States. Evidence of IRB, IACUC, or equivalent approval is required for all studies when applicable.

Award

Applicants may request up to a maximum of **\$40,000 for two years**. Smaller amount and/or duration proposals are also strongly encouraged. **Direct costs only**. For two-year projects, receipt of funding for the second year will be dependent upon satisfactory progress through the first year as demonstrated in an interim report. 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.

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

For additional information, please email research@pedraresearch.org.