



ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation Grant Application Instructions

Introduction

The Foundation is named in honor of Jonathan Rhoads, MD, for his outstanding and renowned contributions to science in the fields of clinical nutrition, nutrition support, and surgery. Through its regular granting cycle, the Foundation funds exceptional scientific research projects submitted by early-career investigators of clinical nutrition and metabolic support in alignment with the priorities outlined in the [ASPEN Research Agenda](#).

Future research should include both basic science-oriented investigations aimed at improving our understanding of the science of nutrient regulation in different disease states, as well as clinical and translational research to determine how the practice of nutrition support can continue to be refined and individualized to optimize clinical outcomes.

Grants

The Foundation will offer grants in the following amounts for the 2025 grant year:

- \$25,000 - May be renewable for one year.
- \$10,000 - Not renewable.
- \$5,000 - Not renewable.

The Foundation would like to thank the supporters that make grant funding possible:

- Abbott Nutrition
- Baxter Healthcare
- Nestlé Nutrition Institute which funds the Maurice Shils Grant
- Reckitt / Mead Johnson Nutrition
- Individual Foundation Donors which fund the C. Richard Fleming Grant, Daniel H. Teitelbaum Grant, and the \$5,000 Quality Improvement Project Grant.

Multiple grant applications/submissions will *only* be accepted if the research projects are different. If an applicant submits more than one project, funding will be limited to a maximum of one award.

Eligibility

The Foundation will give preference to individuals who are active in developing a career in nutrition research.

Early Career

Applicants to the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation must be Early Career Investigators. The definition of Early Career Investigator is modeled after [NIH's guidelines for New Investigators](#). The Foundation's requirements are listed below.

For an applicant to be considered an Early Career Investigator and be eligible for a Foundation grant, the applicant must;

- be within 10 years of completing a terminal research degree, medical residency, or end of post-graduate clinical training (or the equivalent). Applicants who are still in training (e.g., in graduate school [Masters, PharmD, PhD, etc.], post-doctoral training, fellowship) are also eligible to apply;
- be at or below the rank of Assistant Professor or at the rank of Associate Professor for < 2 years at the time of application submission; and

- commit at least 20% of their time to research in a professional institute that conducts nutrition research.

Individuals outside the United States are eligible to apply for Foundation grants

The Foundation Board of Directors recognizes that there may be extenuating circumstances in which an individual may have completed their terminal degree greater than ten years ago, however, is just beginning an active nutrition research career. Individuals in this category must submit a letter to request approval to apply for a Foundation grant along with a copy of a current CV no later than May 1st of the grant deadline year to aprils@nutritioncare.org. Requests will be reviewed by the Foundation's Grant Review Committee and the individual will be notified as to whether approval to submit a grant application is granted.

Large grants (\$25K)

These grants are targeted to support early-stage career investigators with a PhD, MD or PharmD that have more advanced academic training, including senior postdoctoral fellows and those with academic faculty appointments at the Instructor or Assistant Professor level. Desirable candidates will have a record of accomplishment and commitment to a research career in the form of peer-reviewed publications during and after their training period. In addition, candidates are encouraged to provide a career development plan that includes a strong mentoring team and stated commitment of technical and institutional facilities resources to support the applicants research project. The goal of these grants is to provide support for pilot or preliminary studies that generate key proof of concept research findings that lead to larger grants from federal agencies, foundations, and corporate sponsors.

Small Grants (\$10K or under)

The smaller grants may be most useful to support data collection and analysis for small projects including those that are part of a Masters, PharmD, or PhD program, or to support the generation of preliminary data for a new line of investigation. This funding amount would be most beneficial for those who seek to fund smaller projects and who may not have other options for funding.

NEW! During the 2025 grant year, the Foundation will award one \$5000 grant to support a quality improvement project. Applications for this grant must be specific to quality improvement projects. Grants on all other research topics/areas should be submitted under the large or small grant categories.

Corporate

Corporate employees are eligible to receive grants if the research project is not part of their normal duties and they have at least a part-time academic appointment or are associated with a professional institute that conducts nutrition research. Early-career criteria apply.

ASPEN Membership

ASPEN membership is required for submission of the grant application. If you are not a member, go to <http://www.nutritioncare.org/membership/> and join. Contact April Sokalsky, Coordinator, Education and Research, with any questions regarding eligibility at aprils@nutritioncare.org

The Foundation will require a history of membership starting with the applications for the 2026 research grants.

- Applicants for 2026 grants: must be an ASPEN member for at least one year prior to applying for a grant
- Applicants for 2027 grants: must be an ASPEN member for at least two years prior to applying for a grant

Topics

The Foundation is seeking applications that support topics and research initiatives described in [ASPEN's Research Agenda](#). Applicants will be required to discuss how their project relates to the

research agenda.

Terms of Support

Performance Period:

The term of performance is January 1 of the award year through December 31 of the award year.

Please consider your proposal, the time required to obtain ethics board approvals, and the ability to complete the project in the identified performance period of one year before applying.

If the applicable institutional assurance approval letter from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is not received prior to March 1 of the award year, the grant award may be rescinded.

Grant Duration:

Support may be provided for up to two years for the grants in the amount of \$25,000. Although funds for a second year are not guaranteed, the investigator may apply for a second year of funding. See reporting requirements below for 2nd year funding.

Allowable expenses:

Funds for an ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation Grant **may** be used for any of the following:

1. Investigator salary
2. Technician salary
3. Equipment and supplies
4. Animals
5. Clinical research costs
6. Other expenses directly related to the conduct of the proposed research
7. Up to \$1000 in funds may be allocated for a one-year grant to offset costs affiliated with travel to ASPEN's Nutrition Science & Practice Conference to meet grant requirements.

Funds for an ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation Grant **MAY NOT** be used for any of the following:

1. Comparison of commercial products
2. Indirect costs or overhead
3. Costs of patient care
4. Constructing or renovating facilities
5. Furniture or office equipment
6. Secretarial services
7. Honoraria or membership dues
8. Textbooks or periodicals
9. Repair or service contract costs on institutional equipment
10. Entertainment
11. Travel other than that listed in allowable expenses

Other Funding Sources:

Grantee or the grantee's grant administration department is required to notify the Foundation if funding for grant-supported items is received.

If during the period of support by the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation, the investigator obtains funding of equal or greater dollar amount from a source outside the investigator's institution (such as the National Institutes of Health, Veterans Administration or a philanthropic group) for a similar/overlapping research project, the Foundation grant will be terminated at the start of funding by the other agency. However, supplemental funds for budget items not covered by the Foundation Grant will be allowed.

Reporting and Other Grant Requirements

Award Ceremony:

Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to attend the ASPEN Nutrition Science & Practice Conference to receive recognition at the Foundation's Celebration of Nutrition Research Reception and the Rhoads Research Lecture and Awards Ceremony. Attendance at the conference also provides recipients access to a network of individuals in the field.

Funds Administration: These grants are given in support of the submitting researcher; however, the appropriate fiscal department of the investigator's institution will administer funds provided by the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation. Any unused funds should be returned to the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation by the final manuscript submission deadline.

Funding Schedule:

Grants of \$25,000 and above will receive ½ of the awarded funds in December preceding the January performance period start. The second funds installment will be released upon approval of the interim progress report, due in August and paid in September of the grant year. Grants of \$10,000 or less will be paid in full in December preceding the January performance period start. Any unused funds should be returned to the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation by the final manuscript submission deadline. Please note, the release of the first installment of funds is contingent upon documented approvals to conduct the research through the grantee's institution (i.e., IRB).

Progress Reports:

NOTE: A grant reporting timeline chart is appended to these instructions.

- All recipients of grants are required to submit a progress report, including a narrative summary and expense report covering the period January 01 to June 30, no later than August of their first grant year to receive payment of the second half of the grant funding. See additional instructions below for applying for a second year of funding for larger grants.
- All grant recipients are additionally required to submit a final progress report and financial statement by March 31 or 3 months after the closing date of their funding period.
- If awarded, please refer to the official award letter from the Foundation for specific progress report deadlines.

No Cost Extensions:

If completion of the research project and attainment of final study results are delayed, a one-time 12-month no-cost extension to the original grant terms may be requested. The Foundation considers requests for no-cost extensions based on merit and the submission of a no cost extension form. Please contact April Sokalsky at aprils@nutritioncare.org for this form.

Additional no-cost extensions or requests for extensions beyond 12 months will not be considered. In the event that additional time is needed beyond the one-time 12-month no-cost extension, the initial grant must be closed out with remaining funds returned to the Foundation and the applicant must submit a new research project grant application to the Foundation by the deadline of the next grant cycle.

Publication of Research Findings stemming from grant-funded work

- Grant recipients will advise the Foundation of ANY abstract, manuscript, or presentation generated from outcomes of their Foundation funded research.
- All presentations and publications must acknowledge financial support by the Rhoads Research Foundation. *"This work was supported by the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation."*

Within 12 months of the ending date of the performance period, the grantee is required to:

- Submit an abstract for consideration by the ASPEN Abstract Review Committee for potential presentation at the ASPEN Nutrition Science & Practice Conference

- Submit research findings as a manuscript to be considered for publication in *JPEN* or *NCP* (as applicable).
- If the applicant can substantiate in writing that his/her research findings would better impact patient care by publication in another journal, the Foundation may choose to approve it.

Second year funding application: DUE BY THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

Second year funding for large grants (\$25K) is not guaranteed. Competing continuation applications for smaller (\$10K) grants will not be accepted.

To obtain a second year of funding for grants in the amount of \$25,000, the first progress report and financial statement* must be submitted prior to the August due date to meet the application deadline. Additionally, a letter of intent that includes a purpose statement for the 2nd year and a proposed budget, plus an investigator's institutional certification that the investigator can continue the project and has the means to do so, is actively doing research, and is receiving no other support related to the same project budget items is required. The letter of intent should be no longer than one page, single-spaced. The letter of intent, the institutional certification, the applicant's first progress report & financial statement, and a copy of the original grant application will be submitted to the Foundation Grant Review Committee for competitive review to determine if a second year of funding will be granted. The Foundation will automatically provide a copy of the original grant application to the Grant Review Committee on your behalf regardless of application submission method.

**Financial statement information is available via the online grant portal, or available upon request from aprils@nutritioncare.org.*

Resubmission Application: DUE BY THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

A resubmission is an unfunded grant application that has been modified following initial review and resubmitted for consideration. For a resubmission you may need to make significant changes compared to the original grant application submission. This section will include a brief summary of substantial additions, deletions, and/or changes to the grant application; and any responses to the issues and criticism raised in the comments or recommendations from Grant Review Summary provided after the original submission.

Application Review Process

All applications will be reviewed and ranked by the Foundation Grant Review Committee. The designation of reviewers will be the responsibility of the Committee Chair. An external review committee may be empaneled at the discretion of the Committee.

Lack of alignment of the proposed project to the sciences of nutrition support and metabolic care, as prioritized in the [ASPEN Research Agenda](#) may exclude the grant application from consideration.

The grant review follows NIH guidelines and includes the following elements:

- Significance
- Investigators
- Innovation
- Approach
- Environment

Additional criteria considered but not scored: Approval of the Institution's IRB or Animal Use Board (as applicable), Inclusion of women, children, and minorities (as applicable), biohazard (as applicable), and budget. NOTE: IRB's may be submitted after the application, but the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation encourages the applicant to begin the institutional approval process prior to or by the application submission deadline. Please note the status of institutional assurances in your application and provide any institutional documentation relating to your IRB/IACUC's status. The Foundation will not issue any grant funds until an active IRB (or other approvals as applicable) is received.

Application Instructions

The application consists of the following sections: General Information, Letters of Support, Project Narrative/Abstract, Research Strategy, Key Personnel, Budget, Institutional Assurances, Applicant/Institutional Commitment, and Payment.

Letters of Support and Certifications:

- Applicants must submit a letter of support from their mentor or supervisor describing how they will be involved in the development of the applicant's research project and career development. The letter from the mentor should outline the mentor's commitment to mentor the applicant, outline resources available, etc (Not required for \$5,000 Quality Improvement Project Grant).
- In addition, a letter of support from the department head or section chief at the institution confirming commitment to the project should be submitted.
- If the project involves human subjects, a letter pledging support in recruiting patients from the primary care provider and the institutional review board overseeing human studies is required prior to the release of funds.
- For junior faculty and applicants who do not hold faculty positions, three letters of reference are required. One must be from the applicant's collaborator/mentor including the mentor's biographical sketch.
- Such letters are critically important and should reflect the originality of the investigator's research and potential for independent investigation. Applicants are to request letters of reference well in advance of the application submission.

Project Narrative:

This very brief statement is included to provide the Foundation with a description that could be used to notify the lay public about the grant, if awarded. This project narrative should be no longer than 2-3 sentences.

Abstract of Research Plan:

This includes the long-term objectives and specific aims of the proposal and a concise description of the research design and methods for achieving these goals.

Research Plan/Strategy:

The research plan should be divided into the following parts:

- Part A. Specific aims & **relevance to the [ASPEN Research Agenda](#)***
- Part B. Significance and Innovation
- Part C. Preliminary studies, as applicable
- Part D. Experimental design and methods
- Part E. References
- Part F. PI personal aims and mentoring team (limited to one page)
- Part G. Appendix (Optional)

Further Instructions for Research Plan/Strategy:

- Items A - D (Specific Aims, Significance and Innovation, Preliminary Studies, and Experimental Design and Methods) **may not exceed a total of 10 pages.**
- Part F. -Principal Investigator: Personal Aims and Mentoring Team
 - It is the intent of the Foundation to assist nutrition investigators by providing preliminary funding for promising new research.

- Applicants should detail their specific role in the project and how others will be involved in support of the research.
 - The PI should describe the mentoring team and how this team will facilitate new training experiences/skills development to support their research career.
 - The PI should describe their research career goals and how the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation funding will assist them in achieving those goals.
 - In addition, candidates are encouraged to provide a career development plan that includes a strong mentoring team and stated commitment of technical and institutional facilities resources to support the applicant's research project.
- Part G. - Appendix. The appendix may include original, glossy photographs or color images of gels, micrographs, etc. if a photocopy (may be reduced in size) is also included within the page limits of the research plan. No publications or other printed material, except for pre-printed questionnaires or surveys, may be included in the appendix.
 - Page limitations and set up parameters:
The page limitations for the parts of the Research Plan are the maximum acceptable, and conciseness of description is desirable. Margins should not be less than 1 inch on all sides. The font must be standard 10-12 points. Font used for Figures, Charts, Tables and Figure Legends may be smaller, but must be clear and readily legible.
Applications not meeting these requirements will be returned or will be subject to deferral.

Key Personnel:

If an interprofessional team is used be sure to list each person's name, degree, position title, address, ASPEN member status, and their role on the project. Also, provide a Biographical Sketch for the principal investigator and key personnel. If your project mentor is not included in your key personnel, you will be asked to provide their biographical sketch separately within the online application.

Budget:

The budget for the proposal must be well defined, justified, and realistic to complete the work proposed. For Other Support and Applicant's Funding History, complete per the application. If none, indicate that the applicant has not received another source of funding.

Video:

Submission of a short 1–2-minute introductory video of the grant applicant. The video must include the name of the principal investigator, the title of the project, a summary of the research project IN LAYMANS TERMS (which will be used in communication with the public and Foundation donors) and should end with a thank you to ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation donors.

The Foundation relies upon donations from individuals and corporate entities to fund grants. In such a competitive fundraising environment, it is essential that donors are made aware of the impact of their donations to the Foundation on the research projects and careers of grant recipients. This will be your opportunity to highlight your research, your professional career path, patient stories, etc. in your own words.

Status of Applicable Institutional Assurances (IRB/IACUC):

This section should include the applicable institutional assurance approval letter from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) depending on which is appropriate for your project, or an explanation of the current IRB/IACUC approval status and documentation of any steps taken to obtain the applicants institutional IRB/IACUC approval. If the grant is awarded, no funds will be sent until all approvals are provided. If approvals are not received by March 1 of the funding year, the grant award may be rescinded.

Applicant and Institutional Commitment:

Commitment forms must be signed by the Principal Investigator and by the Institution Official authorized to sign the application on behalf of the institution.

Applications will be denied if received without all applicable documents.

ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation Grant Award and Reporting

TIMELINE – Large Grants												
	June	Jul.	Aug.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan 1	March	Aug.	Sept.	Dec 31	Mar 31 Of next year	By Dec 31 Of next year
Performance period						Starts				Ends		
Grant requirement			Original Application due Or 2 nd year Application due	Award Notification	Submit any outstanding ethics board approvals		Award ceremony at ASPEN conference – dates vary each year	Interim Progress & Financial report due			Final Progress & Financial report due	Abstract to ASPEN Conference and <i>JPEN</i> manuscript submission
Payment					1st payment					2 nd payment		

2nd year awards follow the same timetable as year 1 grants.