PBTF RESEARCH PROGRAM

Request for Proposals: 2026–2027

Idea • Impact • Innovation Awards

PBTF invites Letters of Intent (LOIs) for translational pediatric brain tumor research that advances our 2026–2030 strategy, **in which technology and computational approaches are a central driver of translational impact.** Every funded project must contribute to and draw from a shared, harmonized data ecosystem and demonstrate a clear technology integration plan

Proposals without a defined data strategy will not be funded.

Research Priorities: Three Pillars on a Shared Data Foundation

The topics below are representative examples of research spanning all three pillars and common across all three award mechanisms and not an exhaustive list.

Precision Medicine & Diagnostics	Effective Therapies	Survivorship & Longitudinal Outcomes
• Diagnostic and real-time monitoring tools • Multi-modal biomarker discovery and assay harmonization • Early detection in high-risk populations • Drug delivery and blood-brain barrier penetration	• In silico drug screening / virtual cohorts • Treatment de-escalation strategies • Targeted and molecularly matched treatment • Combination and sequential therapy regimens	• Treatment de-escalation safety modeling • Digital cognitive and QoL outcomes • Relapse detection and MRD monitoring • Late treatment effects (cardiac, endocrine, neurocognitive)

Cross-cutting requirement:

Infrastructure, Data, & Technology. Every proposal, regardless of research priority or award mechanism, must demonstrate how it leverages and contributes to the shared pediatric brain tumor data ecosystem.

- Generates data designed for reuse beyond the original study.
- Adheres to dbGaP, or other data center integration standards (see Appendix A and B): complete, interpretable, and QC'd.
- Specifies data usage and mining strategy for hypothesis generation and testing.
- Includes a technology (AI/ML) integration plan describing how the approach scales across federated, multi-modal datasets.

Award Levels

Research priorities are common across all three award mechanisms. Applicants self-identify the level that best matches the maturity of their science.

Attribute	Idea Award	Impact Award	Innovation Award
Funding	$150K / year	$300K total	$600K total
Term	1 year	2 years	3 years
Stage	High-risk, high-reward translational ideas with a clear pathway to clinical impact	Using existing data advancing toward preclinical or clinical translation where applicable, with a patient-outcome validation plan.	Multi-investigator, cross-institutional programs addressing a major unmet translational challenge with clinical integration
Best fit for	Investigators applying AI/ML, computational modeling, or data science to existing federated datasets; also open to bold, first-in-field hypotheses from early-stage investigators or new directions.	Researchers with validated models or pipelines, and established teams with preliminary data, ready to scale toward clinical readiness. Early-career investigators with strong supporting data are also encouraged to apply.	Multi-site consortia pairing computational/data-science with clinical sites.
Required of all	**Technology integration and Data contribution plan (at large data centers)**		

See individual award mechanism documents for specific information.

Data Sharing & Deposit Requirements

All PBTF-funded projects must deposit research-ready data into large databases such as dbGaP, CBTN, PNOC, and PCDC upon availability of data, so that it can be shared, integrated, and reused across studies, institutions, and time. Data sharing makes data available; integration makes data usable, comparable, and reusable at scale.

Datasets are considered ready when they are:

- **Complete: I**ncludes both raw / source data and primary analysis-ready outputs.
- **Interpretable:** Includes clinical / sample-level context, metadata, and clear variable definitions.
- **Documented & QC'd: I**ncludes basic quality control metrics and a clear description of how data were generated and processed.

Rule of thumb: if another researcher could understand and reuse the dataset without contacting the originating lab, it is ready for integration. For detailed guidance on minimum data package requirements, modality-specific considerations, and repository planning, see Appendix A: PBTF Data Sharing & Repository Guide and Appendix B: Data Modality Reference.

Required Application Components

These components are required of every application across all three award mechanisms. Mechanism-specific additions and page limits are defined in the Idea / Impact / Innovation Mechanism documents.

- **Translational pathway statement:** How the work moves from discovery toward clinical impact within the funding term.
- **Data contribution & deposit plan:** Data types generated, how they meet data repository integration standards, confirmation that consent supports General Research Use (GRU) without Data Use Limitations, and the deposit timeline.
- **Research resource & data use strategy:** Existing dbGaP, CBTN, CCDI, PNOC, PCDC or other relevant data resources the project will leverage and how (including demonstrated use of at least one existing federated dataset where appropriate) and the rationale for generating new data where appropriate.
- **Technology (AI/ML) integration plan:** Methods (including de novo models), validation strategy where applicable, and how the approach scales across federated, multi-modal datasets.
- **Team & Equity Statement:** A brief statement addressing team credibility, confidence in completing the proposed timeline, and how the work's findings, tools, or resources will reach across tumor types and historically underserved populations, where appropriate.
- **Human Subjects & Vertebrate Animals Compliance Statement:** Current IRB approval/exemption status for the proposed human-subjects research protocol, and IACUC approval status for any vertebrate animal work, including PDX and organoid model generation. State “Not Applicable” if neither applies; international sites may submit the equivalent institutional ethics board approval.
- **Bridge to next funding:** A short plan describing how a successful outcome positions the work for the next PBTF award mechanism, external follow-on funding (e.g., an NIH R01), or an industry partnership.

Process & Timeline

Date	Application Milestone
Aug. 18, 2026	Topic-Specific Calls released; Letters of Intent (LOIs) open
Sept. 18, 2026	LOIs due
Nov. 1, 2026	Applicants invited to submit a full proposal are notified
Jan. 12, 2027	Full proposals are due
Jan.–Mar. 2027	Scientific peer review. Applicants may be contacted to address reviewer questions or provide additional information
Apr. 26, 2027	Funding decisions communicated to applicants; award notifications issued
May 30, 2027	Award agreements finalized and recipients publicly announced
June 1, 2027	Funding begins.

Submit & Inquiries

Inquiries: Misha Mehta, Sr. Director of Research, mmehta@curethekids.org

*All applications, including **Letters of Intent (LOIs)**, must be submitted through **ProposalCentral**. Submissions undergo scientific review by the **Research Advisory Network (RAN)** and a data and technology review by the **Technology Advisory Network (TAN)**. Funding selections are made by the **Research Advisory Committee (RAC)**, with final approval authority resting with the **PBTF Board** and **Executive Committee.***