



Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Award:

V Scholar

2026 Request for Applications

PURPOSE OF AWARD:

This award is designed to recognize scientists whose personal journeys, shaped by unique experiences and perspectives, bring valuable and often overlooked insights into adult cancer research. The V Foundation's Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Award highlights how those lived experiences have influenced career paths and research focus, while supporting some of the most innovative and impactful proposals in the field. To make real progress toward Victory Over Cancer®, we need to elevate the voices and ideas that don't always get the spotlight and ensure those insights are part of the conversation.

SPECIAL FOCUS AREA:

This request for application is restricted to adult cancer research. The V Scholar Award supports young 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 R01 or similar sustaining grants.

Please note: A biostatistics plan is required as part of the full application. Proposals submitted without one will not be reviewed. Full applications will be evaluated and scored by biostatisticians, and these scores will heavily influence funding decisions.

GRANT SPECIFICS:

\$800,000 over 4 years (previously \$600,000 over 3 years), paid in annual installments.

WHO MAY APPLY?

Each invited institution may submit **one nominee** to apply for this Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Award. The **SOLE** nominee may apply in either the V Scholar or Translational grant type. Both Breaking Barriers in Cancer Research Award RFAs are provided so you may decide which program best fits your nominee.

INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY:

Only research institutions that received this invitation may submit a single nominee for consideration. Other affiliates of the institution that did not receive the email are not eligible to nominate an applicant. Please 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 a non-profit research institution (e.g., 501c3, Section 170).
- Either a US Citizen or a permanent legal resident in the US. This requirement does not apply to invited Canadian institutions.
- Possess at least 2 years of 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 R01 at your institution).
- 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 to nominees who took parental leave during this window. Please contact us at grants@v.org with the following for approval BEFORE submitting the nomination form:
 - Appointment start date
 - Length of leave
 - Institutional tenure clock stoppages/extensions, if applicable
 - Other types of leave may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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 R01 award by the nomination due date.
- 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.
- 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.

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:

Recommendation Letter (LOR): Nomination must include a LOR from the cancer center director. If the institution has no cancer center director, then a senior official at a similar level can provide this letter. The LOR will be provided with the Nomination Form and is also uploaded by the applicant in the applicant's online application. **This letter is expected to include the following elements which will be evaluated by the review committee:**

- A description of the process used to identify your nominee.
- Why did you choose this nominee.
- 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 this nature of the research is basic and/or translational science, how will science communication

- with diverse 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:

- The single nominee may apply in **either** the V Scholar **or** Translational program type.
- Select and complete the appropriate Nomination Form for your sole nominee, based on the program type (V Scholar or Translational) for which your nominee will be applying.
- The nomination form must include the signature of the primary researcher and the Cancer Center Director (or similar high ranking research official) who is responsible for the nomination.
- Include a Letter of Recommendation (details above) and the completed Financial Worksheet with the Nomination Form **or the nominee will be deemed ineligible.**
- Email the completed Nomination Form with all required accompanying documents in **one** email to nominations@v.org.
- Please allow at least 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: Early February 2026

Application Due Date: Early March 2026

If you have questions about the nomination process, please contact the Research and Grants Team at grants@v.org. We are delighted to extend this invitation and look forward to receiving your nomination.

Best Wishes,



Kara Coleman, PhD
Vice President, Research and Grants Administration
the V Foundation for Cancer Research

VICTORY OVER CANCER®

The V Foundation - 2026 V Scholar Eligibility: Are they Eligible Handout?

Please note that this is a basic handout to help explain the eligibility criteria for the V Foundation's V Scholar grant mechanism. We strongly encourage all invested parties view the Request for Applications for this call, in its entirety, for more information. If you have any outstanding questions regarding eligibility after using the provided resources, please reach out to the Research and Grants Team at: grants@v.org.

Start here:

Is your nominee a US Citizen or permanent legal resident? (This criterion does not apply to invited Canadian Institutions).

If 'yes', continue to the next question. If 'no', ineligible.

Does the nominee have an PhD, MD, DO, or DVM degree?

If 'yes', continue to the next question. If 'no', ineligible.

Is the nominee in the first five years of their academic appointment after having completed their fellowship or post-doctoral training (Assistant Professor or equivalent)? Individuals who will begin such a position by the nomination due date are eligible for this grant.

If 'yes', continue to the next question. If 'no', ineligible.

Has the nominee received a previous V Scholar award?

If 'no', continue to the next question. If 'yes', ineligible.

Has the nominee accepted or received notification of an R01 award by the nomination due date?

If 'no', continue to the next question. If 'yes', ineligible.

Has the nominee 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.

If 'no', continue to the next question. If 'yes', ineligible.

Has the nominee 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.

If 'no',

The nominee would be considered eligible to apply.