



# TORCH

TRANSFORMATIONAL OUTCOMES  
FOR RARE CANCER HEROES

## REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT (LOI)

*2026–2027 Funding Cycle*

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The Isabella Santos Foundation (ISF) is happy to announce the 2026 funding cycle of the **TORCH (Transformational Outcomes for Rare Cancer Heroes) Initiative**. Through strategic investments in groundbreaking research, clinical trials and survivorship programming, TORCH supports institutions advancing better outcomes for children facing rare cancers.

For the 2026–2027 funding cycle, the Isabella Santos Foundation will invest **\$1,000,000** in high-impact projects aligned with the following priority areas:

- Pediatric Solid Tumors
- Pediatric Central Nervous System Tumors
- Patient-Reported Outcomes, Quality of Life and Survivorship

### Submission Timeline

- Letters of Intent Due: June 1, 2026 at 5 p.m. EDT
- Invitation for Full Applications: July 1, 2026
- Full Applications Due: September 1, 2026
- Funding Announced: November 1, 2026
- Funding Initiated: January 1, 2027

**All LOIs may be directly submitted to TORCH at [info@isftorch.org](mailto:info@isftorch.org).**

All Letters of Intent should be limited to a single page, in PDF format.

Clarifying questions may also be directed to the ISF team.

We are excited to receive innovative and highly impactful applications.

# LETTER OF INTENT REQUIREMENTS

## LOI Formatting Guidelines (must follow NIH)

- Minimum 11-point font
- Single line spacing or greater
- Minimum ½ inch margins
- Single figure (optional)
- One page
- Submit as a PDF

## LOI Requirements (must include)

- Background and Hypothesis
- Aims and Approach
- Duration of Grant Support Requested
- Funding Amount Requested
- Significance and Impact
- Realistic Time to Clinical Translation for Translational Projects (if applicable)

## Funding Guidelines

- Direct costs only
- Maximum 20% salary support unless otherwise noted
- One submission per PI per category
- No institutional cap on submissions
- All projects must demonstrate path toward improved clinical outcomes

## Communication & Marketing Expectations

Awardees will be expected to collaborate with ISF on storytelling and communications efforts that highlight the impact of funded work, including:

- Video production (hospital feature and/or project highlights)
- Brief progress updates and interviews
- Short-form content capture (photo/video)
- Patient or family storytelling, when appropriate and approved

All activities will be coordinated in advance and conducted in accordance with institutional policies and patient privacy regulations.

**Funding limits are per each category.** No more than 20% of the total requested funding can be used for salary support (see specific instructions in Clinical Trials Award). Direct costs only.

## 2026–2027 SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

*\*All applicants should be faculty of rank Instructor or higher (see specific categories) or a laboratory Principal Investigator.*

**Early Investigator Award:** For applicants within 10 years of the end of their terminal research degree or clinical training, whichever is later. Applicants can have rank no higher than Assistant Professor. Research may be basic science, translational or clinical.

**A maximum of \$250,000 may be requested, to be used over 1-3 years.**

**Novel Directions Award:** For applicants at any rank. Mid-career researchers are particularly encouraged to apply. Research may be basic science, translational or clinical. The work should represent a novel direction for the applicant from prior work. This should not be simply application of their prior work to a new disease. High-risk, high-reward applications are encouraged.

**A maximum of \$250,000 may be requested, to be used over 1-3 years.**

**Near-Term Translational Award:** For applicants at any rank. This research is intended to support “justification to translation” research that will allow translation to an early phase clinical trial (e.g., testing of a novel or established agent on disease model(s) to allow for FDA application submission). This may include diagnostics or therapeutics. Expectation would be for submission of an FDA application within 5 years of receipt of award. The final application will require an explicit letter of commitment from the collaborating pharmaceutical company, institution, or equivalent organization that holds the intellectual property rights of the intended diagnostic/therapeutic.

**A maximum of \$250,000 may be requested, to be used over 1-3 years.**

**Clinical Trial Award\*:** For applicants at any rank. This award is intended for direct support of a clinical trial. This may include anticancer therapeutics, supportive care, or quality-of-life and survivorship interventions. While no more than 20% of the lead investigator’s salary may be supported, services such as sample analysis or statistical analysis may be included additionally with considerable justification required in the final application.

**A maximum of \$250,000 may be requested, to be used over 1-5 years.**

*\*If additional funds will be needed to allow for the clinical trial to be completed, a statement of support will be required in the final application from a partnering organization, pharma or the primary institution with contractual commitment of the supporting funds. In such case, the complete trials budget will be requested for evaluation.*

## 2026–2027 SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

**Infrastructure Award:** For applicants at any rank, or any academic clinical research office. ISF recognizes that many institutions will benefit from infrastructure funding to allow them to participate more broadly in innovative research, specifically to those communities more distant from major academic centers. This award will allow support for materials, equipment, software and training to advance translational or clinical trials research efforts. This may also include critical devices to generate therapeutics for clinical trials use. These applications must provide a clear and immediate justification for the funds in a specific use (i.e., applications for theoretical use will be declined), even if the benefits will be longer-term. Funding cannot be used for salaries directly.

**A maximum of \$75,000 may be requested to be used in one year.**

**SPARK Award:** For applicants at any rank, including postdoctoral scientists and fellows (though support of their principal investigator will be needed in the final application). These awards will fund preliminary studies that will provide sufficient data to support a larger funding mechanism in the next 2–3 years (e.g., R21 or R01). The research may be basic science, translational or clinical. 3–5 SPARK Awards are expected to be awarded.

**A maximum of \$50,000 may be requested to be used in one year.**

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*\*If additional funds will be needed to allow for the clinical trial to be completed, a statement of support will be required in the final application from a partnering organization, pharma or the primary institution with contractual commitment of the supporting funds. In such case, the complete trials budget will be requested for evaluation.*