

The American Migraine Foundation's Dodick Lighthouse Research Award

Request for Applications (RFA)

Two-Year Research Awards in Headache and Migraine

Funding Period: 24 months

Program Overview and Purpose

The American Migraine Foundation (AMF) in partnership with the American Headache Society (AHS) invites Letters of Intent (LOIs) for the David Dodick research awards, a competitive two-year research awards that advance high-impact, patient-centered headache and migraine research with clear near-term implications for clinical care and management.

This RFA is intentionally aligned with [research priorities](#) identified by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with the American Headache Society (AHS), and an international multi-stakeholder expert panel, particularly those that:

- Address unmet clinical needs
- Improve diagnosis, stratification, and treatment selection
- Accelerate translation from discovery to practice
- Reduce disability, inequities, and care gaps in headache medicine

AMF seeks to catalyze innovative research that can realistically inform clinical decision-making, guidelines, care delivery models, or therapeutic strategies within a short time horizon.

Priority Research Areas

Applicants should clearly align their proposal with one or more of the following priority domains. Projects may be mechanistic, translational, clinical, or health-services focused, but must articulate relevance to patient care.

1. Precision Diagnosis and Phenotyping

- Improved classification of migraine and other headache disorders
- Biomarkers (clinical, digital, imaging, physiologic, or molecular) with clinical utility
- Differentiation of migraine subtypes, chronicity risk, and comorbid conditions
- Identification of predictors of treatment response or non-response

2. Mechanisms with Therapeutic Implications

- Pathophysiology of migraine initiation, chronification, and remission
- CGRP and non-CGRP pathways relevant to treatment selection
- Neuroinflammatory, vascular, autonomic, or neuromodulatory mechanisms
- Sex-specific, hormonal, or lifespan-related mechanisms

3. Treatment Optimization and Comparative Effectiveness

- Head-to-head or pragmatic comparisons of existing therapies

- Sequencing, combination, or deprescribing strategies
- Predictors of adverse effects or treatment intolerance
- Optimization of neuromodulation, behavioral, or lifestyle interventions

4. Acute and Preventive Care in Real-World Settings

- Emergency department, urgent care, and primary care migraine management
- Reducing medication overuse headache and care fragmentation
- Care pathways that shorten time to effective therapy
- Integration of headache care into chronic disease models

5. Equity, Access, and Health Services Research

- Disparities in migraine diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes
- Care delivery innovations that improve access and continuity
- Digital health tools with demonstrable clinical utility
- Patient-reported outcomes that matter in real-world practice

Funding and Award Structure

- Award Duration: 2 years
- Funding Level: Up to \$150,000.00 total over 2 years
- Number of Awards: 3

Funding may be used for:

- Project-related personnel (limited to 25% of the budget for PI salary support),
- supplies, limited equipment, data acquisition, and
- other justified research expenses

Non-Allowable Costs:

- Indirect costs above 10%,
- clinical care costs not directly tied to research

Eligibility

- Investigators at any career stage are eligible
- Early-career investigators and clinician-scientists are strongly encouraged to apply
- Multidisciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations are welcome and encouraged
- Applicants must demonstrate access to appropriate patient populations, data, or infrastructure

Application Process

Phase 1: Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Length: Maximum 1 page, single-spaced
- Purpose: To assess alignment with AMF priorities, feasibility, and potential impact before inviting full proposals
- LOIs will be reviewed for strategic fit, innovation, feasibility, and clinical relevance.
- Applicants selected from the LOI phase will be invited to submit a full application.

LOI Must Include:

1. Project Title
2. Principal Investigator and Institution
3. Research Question and Rationale
4. Specific Aims (brief and ≤ 3)
5. Relevance to NIH/AHS Headache Research Priorities
6. Near-Term Implications for Patient Care or Management
7. Proposed Study Design and Feasibility
8. Target Population
9. Anticipated Deliverables at 24 Months
10. Indicate if you have applied for funding in the last 12 months from the American Headache Society and state the title for that prior application

Phase 2: Full Application (By Invitation Only)

Invited applicants will submit a full 5-page proposal including:

- Detailed research plan
- Timeline and milestones
- Data sharing and dissemination plan

Additional information that must also be included are:

- Budget and justification
- Investigator biosketches
- Letters of support
- References

Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by expert reviewers using the following criteria:

1. Clinical Relevance and Near-Term Impact
2. Alignment with NIH and AHS Research Priorities
3. Scientific Rigor and Innovation
4. Feasibility within a Two-Year Timeframe
5. Potential to Influence Practice, Guidelines, or Care Models
6. Investigator and Team Expertise
7. Equity and Patient-Centeredness (when applicable)

Expected Outcomes and Deliverables

Funded projects are expected to produce:

- Actionable insights relevant to clinical care
- Publications, presentations, or guideline-informing data
- Tools, algorithms, or frameworks usable in practice
- Clear next-step plans for how study results will lead to additional research funding

Important Dates

- Announcement: February 4, 2026
- LOI Submission Deadline: March 23, 2026
- Invitation for Full Applications: May 1, 2026
- Full Application Due: July 1, 2026
- Funding Start Date: Nov 1, 2026

AMF Mission

The American Migraine Foundation exists to mobilize a community for patient support and advocacy, as well as drive and support impactful research that translates into advances for patients with migraine and other disabling diseases that cause severe head pain.

www.americanmigrainefoundation.org.

AMF Commitment

The American Migraine Foundation is committed to supporting research that moves the field forward quickly, improves the lives of people living with migraine and headache disorders, and strengthens the bridge between discovery and care.

LOI submissions should be sent to Carrie Howell, CEO
chowell@americanmigrainefoundation.org. Related questions may also be directed to this email address. Please include in the subject line - Dodick Lighthouse Research Awards.