

Dana Foundation Neuroscience & Society

Letter of Interest Guidelines

Letter of Interest: Content

See formatting guidelines below

Project Narrative

1. Background (1-2 paragraphs)

Provide a brief overview of the need, gap, or problem your project addresses and its significance to advancing work at the intersection of neuroscience and society. Please be *concise* – background should simply justify your project’s goals and activities.

- a. *Discuss the challenges, limitations, or opportunities motivating this work.*
- b. *Explain how this work aligns with or intersects broader societal needs and goals, and (if applicable) the consequences if this work is not pursued.*

2. Goals (1 paragraph or list)

- a. Please frame your goals in terms of intended impact (*e.g., increased understanding, increased trust, strengthened relationships, broaden representation, increase opportunities, etc.*)
- b. Please aim to make your goals specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

3. Strategy (4-5 paragraphs)

This section should describe the overall progression of activities leading to deliverables.

a. Activities (2-3 paragraphs)

- i. What activities will you undertake to make progress towards your goals? (*e.g., convene a community advisory board, host listening sessions, create internship/training program, recruit trainees, host professional development workshop series, etc.*)
- ii. Please briefly identify which specific methodologies will you utilize (*e.g., human-centered design vs focus group methods, specific pedagogies such as inquiry-based or experiential learning, embedded ethicists models, collaborative communities, etc.*). Choices should be based on the literature, best practices in the field, and/or evidence from prior work.
- iii. Please identify who will carry out the project, including a brief listing of the core project team (such as PIs and Co-PIs) and any key partner organizations. Describe who the project is intended to engage (*e.g., researchers, scientists, community leaders, educators, students, etc.*), and include any evidence that the intended audience will be receptive to and benefit from the proposed work.

b. Deliverables (1 paragraph or list)

- i. List the products, tools, or other outcomes/deliverables you aim to produce (*e.g., event(s), curricula, website(s), institutional change(s), novel partnerships, etc.*).
- ii. Briefly describe your dissemination and sustainability plan (*e.g., how the work will be shared, scaled, or maintained beyond the grant period*).

c. Evaluation (1 paragraph)

Briefly describe your evaluation methods – How will you evaluate your progress and impact in terms of your goals? (*e.g., surveys, interviews, testimonials, focus groups, event metrics, etc.*).

- i. Evaluations may be quantitative and/or qualitative to assess impact, and/or efficacy of the chosen approach towards goals.

4. Timeline

- a. Please provide a short description of estimated timeline (narrative or table formatting is acceptable).

5. Alignment (1-2 paragraphs)

- a. Please address how this project is aligned with the [goal and objectives](#) of the Dana Foundation program to which you are applying.
- b. Please also briefly describe how the project aligns with **both** the Dana Foundation’s [mission and values](#).

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6. Budget

- a. Please briefly list the major budget items. A granular line-item budget is not necessary at this stage.
 - i. *Please note that to maximize the impact of our grants, we generally do not fund indirect costs or operational overhead.*

Letter of Interest: Formatting Guidelines

- Letters should not exceed 3 pages.
- Letters can be single-spaced.
- Font should be 12-point (Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman only).
- Margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides.
- Upload as a single PDF file.
 - Name file as: Org. Name_ Abbreviated Project Title_ PI Last Name

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Dana Foundation Programs

Visit our [FAQs for Grant Seekers](#) for answers to common inquiries, e.g., what we do and do not fund.

Dana Education

Goal: Strengthen neuroscience's positive role in the world by supporting education that empowers people to use neuroscience in their everyday lives through deeper understanding of the field's connection to people's needs, values, and experiences.

The [Dana Education program](#) supports innovative neuroscience education projects that extend beyond teaching basic science concepts to explore the real-world applications of neuroscience, advancing understanding of the field's connections to people's needs, values, and experiences. We seek to support comprehensive, sustained programming across informal, formal/nonformal, and professional learning environments that teaches neuroscience through the lens of societal challenges and opportunities and empowers learners with the knowledge and skills to address them. Funded projects expose learners to the interdisciplinary nature of neuroscience, including connections to non-science disciplines such as ethics, law, policy, and the humanities. We encourage novel, immersive formats that invite diverse audiences to engage meaningfully with how neuroscience impacts their lives and communities. Dana Education funds projects that are accessible, adaptable, freely available, and designed to become models that others can replicate and build upon within their own communities. Our goal is to enrich neuroscience education by fostering a vibrant educational ecosystem that illuminates neuroscience's direct application to people's lives and role in solving pressing societal challenges.

For Brain Awareness Week-related projects, interested applicants may apply to one of the two [grants programs](#) that support Brain Awareness Week event organizers worldwide. Brain Awareness Week is a legacy initiative of the Dana Foundation that is separate from the Dana Education program.

Objectives:

1. Empower people of all ages to use neuroscience in their everyday lives by strengthening their knowledge of the field's real-world applications and ethical considerations through sustained informal education programs.
2. Engage K-12 students in learning about neuroscience through structured education opportunities (formal and non-formal) that integrate relevant, real-world topics and issues to capture their interest and inspire continued study.
3. Facilitate greater understanding and informed decision-making among professionals by supporting new education approaches on neuroscience topics related to their practice.

Dana NextGen

Goal: Strengthen neuroscience's positive role in the world by preparing the next generation of scholars to think reflexively and responsibly apply neuroscience knowledge to benefit society by supporting innovative training opportunities, workforce development, and collaboration across disciplines.

The [Dana NextGen program](#) aims to catalyze a new generation of interdisciplinary experts who transform neuroscience and neurotechnology research and development by centering consideration of societal needs throughout the process. We seek to support projects that provide neuroscience and society training opportunities and workforce development at the early career stage, inclusive of undergraduate students through pre-tenure faculty or equivalent, with an emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaboration between neuroscience and non-science disciplines. NextGen trainees will be demographically and intellectually diverse, bridging the divide between neuroscience and the publics it's meant to serve. We welcome projects that go beyond traditional pedagogy and focus on experiential learning to broaden a trainee's education such that they are equipped with the necessary resources and collaborators to answer the complex problems raised by advances in neuroscience.

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Objectives:

1. Prepare trainees at early career stages to think critically and reflexively about the ethical, legal, and societal implications raised by real-world neuroscience applications through experiential learning and innovative curricula.
2. Strengthen workforce development for careers within academia and beyond, empowering a new generation of scholars in neuroscience and society who will shepherd neuroscience's positive role in the world.
3. Encourage rigorous, collaborative, and cross-disciplinary work between neuroscience and non-science disciplines to solve complex problems that cannot be answered by neuroscience alone.

Dana Frontiers

Goal: Strengthen neuroscience's positive role in the world by increasing collaborative engagement with diverse publics, supporting opportunities for all people to shape neuroscience and benefit from its power and promise.

The [Dana Frontiers program](#) supports multidirectional engagement to collaboratively identify and address key issues at the intersection of neuroscience and society. We support projects that build meaningful relationships between the many communities of people involved in neuroscience. These communities may include patient groups, technology end-users and developers, clinicians, researchers, ethicists, regulators, policymakers, as well as public audiences and others. Frontiers-supported projects ensure these different perspectives shape neuroscience research and relevant policies. By supporting multidirectional engagement in neuroscience, the Frontiers program ultimately aims to build capacity for communities and organizations to collaboratively respond to societal challenges and opportunities related to neuroscience.

The Frontiers grant portfolio includes the development of engagement tools and resources, novel engagement approaches, and support for leadership in multidirectional engagement in neuroscience. This could include new tools for trust-building and deep listening with communities, creating new opportunities for community collaboration across sectors and identities, and support for leaders who champion effective models of neuroscience engagement.

Objectives:

1. Develop engagement resources to cultivate trust and improve the quality of relationships between neuroscience practitioners, policymakers, and communities of people.
2. Pilot innovative multidirectional engagement opportunities to embed community perspectives in research, policy, and decision-making.
3. Empower neuroscience and society practitioners who champion inclusive, effective models of multidirectional engagement with diverse publics so that more communities can use neuroscience to address their priorities

Dana Opportunistic

Our grants are organized around the three program areas listed above (Dana Education, NextGen, and Frontiers), with a focus on strengthening neuroscience's positive role in the world. However, we recognize that we don't have all the answers and it's our job to keep looking. If you have a project idea that you believe would strengthen neuroscience's positive role in the world in alignment with our mission, vision, and values (see <https://dana.org/about-dana/>), but your idea does not align with one of our three primary program areas (Dana Education, NextGen, and Frontiers), please submit it under the Dana Opportunistic program.