Request for Applications

Early Career Research Awards

for the Study of the Economics of AD/ADRD

Funding Opportunity EC-READ-27

Key Dates:	
Request for Applications – Released	March 30, 2026
Informational Webinar	May 28, 2026 @ 12:00pm ET
Application Due	June 30, 2026 @ 11:59pm ET
Scientific Merit Review	July-August 2026
Project Start Date	September 1, 2026

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Program Overview

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has funded the NBER Coordinating Center [U54AG090084] as part of its Consortium for Economic Research on Alzheimer's Disease (AD) and Alzheimer's Disease–Related Dementias (AD/ADRD) Prevention, Treatment and Care to advance the field of economic research in dementia care. This new initiative establishes a Coordinating Center and a network of research teams across the United States to better understand and address the economic impact of dementia on patients and their families, health care systems and society, including policies that may improve prevention, treatment and care of people living with dementia and their caregivers. The NBER Coordinating Center fosters collaborations to generate economic and policy-relevant research and to facilitate translation of this research into practice. Further details about the Coordinating Center may be found at the following linked page:

> NBER Coordinating Center on the Economics of Alzheimer's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias (AD/ADRD) Prevention, Treatment and Care

The NBER Coordinating Center focuses on questions with major economic implications—such as how new treatments and care models are adopted, how different payment systems affect access and quality, and how to ensure that resources are used wisely to support individuals and families affected by AD/ADRD. By generating rigorous economic evidence through 1 to 2 -year research projects, it aims to inform the design of more effective, accessible, and financially sustainable approaches to AD/ADRD prevention, treatment, and care.

Funding Opportunity Description

The NBER Coordinating Center invites applications from early-career investigators committed to carrying out research on the economic impact of prevention, treatment, and care of people living with AD/ADRD and their caregivers. All awardees will be paired with a mentor affiliated with the Consortium to provide guidance on conducting economic research in AD/ADRD and on interacting with related policy, clinical, and caregiving disciplines.

Early-Career Research Awards for the Study of Economics of AD/ADRD (EC-READ) seek to support the development of early-stage PhD, MD or equivalent researchers who:

✓ Are within 10 years of completing their post-doctoral training and have not previously served as Principal Investigator on a funded NIH research grant (e.g., R01s, R03s, etc.). Those with faculty appointments must hold a rank of associate professor or below.

✓ Demonstrate a commitment to studying the economics of AD/ADRD. This may be demonstrated by current or prior training or research projects focused on _either_ economic research or AD/ADRD. This mechanism is intended to support early-career investigators who seek to enter and grow within the field of AD/ADRD economics.

✓ Provide evidence of prior research productivity.

✓ Plan to expand their research and training activities on the economics of AD/ADRD over the next two years.

✓ Develop a research proposal that directly informs the economics of AD/ADRD and is designed for completion within two years. Potential research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Policy and payment models that impact access to and quality of long-term services and supports for people living with dementia.

- Economic impact of caregiving for people living with dementia for individuals, families and workforce at the national-, regional-, and/or state-level.

- Economic and labor market factors, including household as well as economy-wide factors, that impact the recruitment, training, and retention of healthcare workers in the dementia care workforce.

- Investigations of how institutional factors in health care delivery and/or finance systems influence access, utilization, and outcomes for PLWD and their families.

- Economic modeling of the future costs and impacts of AD/ADRD, ranging from studies at the household to the national aggregate level, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and real-world data to enhance forecasting and analysis.

- Economic impact of prevention and management strategies for dementia, as well as the use of economic incentives, to modify individual or institutional actions.

- Investigations of the relationship between labor force participation and other aspects of employment over time on dementia risk and health outcomes.

- Economic aspects of drug development for dementia treatments, including the costs, incentives, and barriers associated with discovering and bringing new drugs to market, including issues of resultant access and coverage for patients.

The NBER Coordinating Center for Economic Research on AD/ADRD expects to award up to five EC-READ Awards through a competitive review process.

NIH grants policies as described in the NIH Grants Policy Statement will apply to the awards made from this funding opportunity.

Informational Webinar

An optional 30-minute informational webinar will be hosted to provide investigators with an overview of application details and an opportunity to ask questions. Pre-registration is required using the link below. The session will be recorded and posted on the NBER Coordinating Center homepage. .

- **Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 12:00pm ET.** Register here for the webinar.

Eligibility

- Applicants must (1) hold a PhD or equivalent degree, (2) hold a faculty position at the rank of associated professor or below or have a research scientist position at an academic institution, (3) be within 10 years of post-doctoral training, and (4) not have served as the Principal Investigator of any NIH grant since completing their PhD or equivalent degree. Postdoctoral fellows are welcome to apply if they meet the other eligibility criteria.

- Applicants must be legally authorized to work for any employer in the US or be able to obtain authorization to work for the NBER. The NBER is able to sponsor Principal Investigators for concurrent H-1B visas.

- Eligible applicants may submit no more than one application to this funding opportunity.

- Applicants to this EC-READ funding opportunity may be a collaborator on an application to our companion READ funding opportunity (Research Awards for the Study of the Economics of AD/ADRD), but may not be a Principal Investigator on a concurrent READ application.

Budget Considerations

Budgets are for up to $50,000 **in direct costs only** over a two-year period. Indirect costs will be covered by the coordinating center and should not be included in the proposal budget, nor should one's institutional fringe rate. This is a direct award from NBER to the investigator; subawards to outside institutions are not allowed. Please consult with your university administrator to see if you are eligible to be paid directly from NBER, as it is a required condition of the award.

The budget must adhere to NIH guidelines for allowable costs. These funds may be used to support project costs such as salary support (e.g., summer salary) for the Applicant, data analysts and research assistants, data purchases, travel costs (e.g., professional conferences, training workshops), and training activities, but not for tuition or for salary or stipend support for the applicant's mentor(s), consultant(s) or collaborator(s). All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the proposed research activities.

Do not include travel costs for the required in-person Annual Meeting in Bethesda, MD or the annual meeting at NBER in Cambridge, MA; the NBER Coordinating Center will cover these travel expenses.

Please contact adrd@nber.org if you need any assistance with developing your budget.

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted as a single PDF, with sections ordered as specified below, by visiting the following linked page:

Application Submission Page

The deadline for submissions is **Tuesday, June 30, 2026 11:59pm ET**. Applicants are encouraged to submit early to avoid last-minute technical issues. To ensure fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted

Required Application Structure and Format

Applications must use Arial 11-point font, with a minimum of ½ inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left and right). Applications that do not adhere to these formatting and submission guidelines may not be reviewed.

- **Cover Page (1 page):** Include the project title and the following information for the Principal Investigator: name, academic degrees, title or position, and institutional affiliation.

- **General Audience Summary** (max 500 words)

- **Specific Aims (up to 1 page):** The Aims page should concisely state the overall goal of the project, its significance, and the specific aims the research will accomplish. It should reflect a focused and feasible research plan appropriate to the candidate's career stage, while demonstrating the potential for long-term impact. The page should highlight the central hypothesis, the rationale, and specific, well-defined aims that are logically connected to <u>both</u> the research goal and the applicant's training and career development objectives. The Aims page should end with a summary that clearly describes how the proposed project will contribute to a better understanding of the economic impact of AD/ADRD and support the candidate's trajectory towards research independence.

- **Career Development Plan (1 page):** This section should outline a structured and tailored plan for the candidate's continued professional and scientific development, with a clear connection to the overall goal of becoming an independent investigator studying the economic impact of dementia on patients and their families, health care systems or society. The plan should include:

  - <u>Career Objectives</u>: A clear statement of the candidate's short- and long-term career goals, how these align with the proposed research, and how the award will help bridge the gap to research independence.

  - <u>Training and Skill Development</u>: Specific training goals and activities the candidate will pursue during the award period, such as coursework, workshops, directed readings, or mentored experiences to develop new analytical skills, gain content expertise (e.g., in dementia, aging, or health economics), or address gaps in prior training (e.g., econometrics, use of new or complex databases, or advanced statistical methods).

  - <u>Participation in EC-READ Activities</u>: All awardees are expected to participate in the activities of the NBER Coordinating Center, including the Annual Scientific Conference in Bethesda, MD, as well as the NBER Consortium Investigator Meeting. In addition, awardees will be welcomed, but not required, to spend time in residence at the NBER's office in Cambridge, MA, where they will have access to a range of workshops, conferences, and training opportunities.

The Career Development Plan should be well-integrated with the candidate's research plan. All awardees will be paired with a mentor affiliated with the Consortium to provide ongoing research and professional development guidance, including advice on preparing for future funding applications.

- **Research Plan (4 pages)**

  - <u>Background and Significance</u>

  - <u>Implications for the Economics of AD/ADRD</u>: Applicants must include a section that clearly describes how the proposed project will contribute to the evidence on the Economics of AD/ADRD.

  - <u>Preliminary Studies</u> (if applicable)

  - <u>Research Design and Methods</u>: Include the following:

    1) Describe the primary data source(s) for the proposed research. If applicable, indicate whether the applicant currently has access or outline a clear plan to obtain access in time to complete the project.

    2) Define the study population, including inclusion and exclusion criteria, and explain how it aligns with the research aims.

3) For each Specific Aim, detail the proposed analytic approach, including modeling strategy, variables of interest, and sample size justification.

4) Describe potential challenges or limitations and the alternative strategies that will be used to address them and ensure project feasibility.

- Timeline and Deliverables: A realistic timeline that includes career development and training activities and research deliverables including manuscripts presentations. All projects are expected to produce one or more papers submitted for peer-review by the end of the award period.

- Future Directions and Next Steps: Specify the candidate's future directions and how this study will directly inform the next steps.

- **Bibliography and References Cited (limit to 2 pages)**

- **Biosketches:** Please provide an NIH Biosketch form. An example can be found here.

- **Budget and Budget Justification:** Please provide a line item budget table for the one-year budget period and for the entire proposed two-year period. Please include a budget justification that clearly explains and justifies all proposed costs. As noted above under budget considerations, please do not include your institutional fringe and IDC rates

- Provide a conflict-of-interest statement describing any financial or other interests of the applicant that might bear on the proposed project.

Scientific Merit and Final Review

Applications will be reviewed by at least two non-conflicted scientific reviewers and one of the Coordinating Center's Core leaders. Scientific review and merit ratings will be conducted following a process aligned with NIH peer review standards using review criteria outlined in the appendix.

Since the Coordinating Center is funded by NIA all applications recommended for funding will undergo final review and approval by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) Program Officer (PO) responsible for the Coordinating Center.

EC-READ Award Grant Recipients

Award recipients of the Early Career Research Awards for the Study of the Economics of AD/ADRD (EC-READ) Grant Program are expected to adhere to the following requirements:

1. Adhere to IRB and Data and Resource Sharing policies. Human subjects research cannot commence without IRB approval.

2. Complete Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) assurance and training as detailed under the NBER's policy in accordance with PHS (42 CFR Part §50.604) FCOI regulations.

3. Engage in the NBER Coordinating Center for Economic Research on AD/ADRD scientific community, including:

   a. Participating in the academic, training and networking activities of the Coordinating Center.

   b. Attending and presenting at the in-person Annual Scientific Meeting in Bethesda, MD.

     c. Attending and presenting at the in-person NBER Consortium Investigator Meeting in Cambridge, MA.

4. Submit progress reports as may be required and follow NBER invoicing guidelines.

5. Adhere to the timelines for submitting one or more publications by the end of the project period.

6. Acknowledge sponsorship in all presentations, publications, and subsequent grants stemming from this EC-READ Award. This information is required for reporting to NIA.

7. Peer reviewed publications resulting from this award will be subject to the NIH Public Access Policy requirements.

8. Respond to all NBER Coordinating Center queries for information after the project ends.

Questions

Please email all questions to adrd@nber.org.

APPENDIX: Scientific Review Criteria

Overall Impact Score

Integration of Criteria: What is the potential for the proposed study to contribute to the research on the economics of AD/ADRD? What is the potential for this award to launch the candidate's development as an independent investigator in the economics of AD/ADRD or accelerate the candidate's research trajectory in this field?

1. Candidate

Expertise: Are the candidate's previous training and research experience appropriate for this award? Does the candidate have a track record of academic productivity?

Entry into the fields of economics and/or AD/ADRD research: Is the applicant new to the field of AD/ADRD research and/or to studying the economics related to AD/ADRD? *Note: This award is designed to bring early-career investigators into ADRD research from economics and vice versa.*

Commitment: Does the candidate have a clear commitment to advancing the field of AD/ADRD economics and improving care for people living with dementia and their caregivers?

Potential: Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher in the field? How compelling is their description of how the project will facilitate their career development as a researcher in the field of economics of AD/ADRD?

2. Career Development and Future Research Trajectory

Is the research plan appropriate to the candidate's current stage of development and effective in advancing their research skills in the economics of AD/ADRD?

Will the proposed project provide the foundation for future research in the economics of AD/ADRD?

Is the research plan likely to position the candidate more competitively for next stage funding?

3. Research Plan and Feasibility

Relevance to the Economics of ADRD: Does the project address critical economic issues associated with AD/ADRD?

Alignment with the Funding Mechanism: How well does the proposed research align with one or more research areas specified in the EC-READ RFA?

Scientific Rigor: Are the study design, methodology, and analytic plan robust, appropriate, and well-justified?

Potential for Impact: Potential of findings to influence policy, healthcare delivery, economic systems, or quality of life for people living with AD/ADRD and/or their caregivers?

Feasibility: Is the scope of work achievable within the proposed timeline (2 years) and budget?

Manuscript: Will the project have 1 or more manuscripts ready for submission for publication by the end of two years?

Access to Data: Does the candidate have access to appropriate datasets to support the analysis (e.g., Medicare data, Social Security data, surveys like the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS), National Dementia Workforce Study (NDWS), the NIA Data Linkage enclave, etc.); and can these datasets be accessed in a sufficiently timely manner to complete the project in the stated time frame?