

Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research

CIPHER Research Grant Programme

Call for letters of intent

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Grant information

The Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research (CIPHER) Research Grant Programme awards research grants of up to USD 140,000 over two years to early-stage investigators from low- and middle-income countries. These grants enable recipients to become principal investigators (PIs) for the first time on research projects addressing critical gaps in paediatric and adolescent HIV while advancing their careers. With a focus on research capacity building, the programme cultivates a diverse and talented cohort of professionals from low- and middle-income countries who will drive innovation and progress in this field. Notably, this programme aims to support research that can inform policy change and ensure better outcomes for infants, children and adolescents living with and affected by HIV while providing investigators with the experience they need to compete for larger funding.

Applications will be prioritized based on their potential to address critical gaps in paediatric and adolescent HIV, as well as their ability to inform policy and programmes in resource-limited settings. For this round, CIPHER will favour research that contributes to an HIV cure for children or focuses on strategies to strengthen the paediatric HIV cascade, encompassing case identification, continuity of care and re-engagement in care.

Eligibility criteria

Individuals with the skills, formal education and access to resources necessary to carry out the proposed research are welcome to apply to the CIPHER Research Grant Programme. The applicant must be the PI of the proposed project. The PI should work with a mentor, their institutional colleagues and their partners to develop the research plan.

Eligibility criteria and mandatory supporting documents:

- The PI must be an early-stage investigator, that is, an individual who obtained their terminal research degree (for example, PhD, MD, MBBS or equivalent) less than 10 years before the application deadline (after 30 September 2015). A copy of the terminal research degree or diploma should be submitted with the application.
- The investigator must serve for the first time as PI. PIs who have previously received a non-training research grant exceeding US 30,000 are not eligible.
- The PI must fulfil one of the following criteria prior to the submission deadline:
 - You are a clinical or research trainee (for example, fellow or senior resident) at an academic institution or an institution primarily focused on research.
 - You hold a faculty or equivalent position (for example, assistant professor or lecturer) at an academic institution or an institution primarily focused on research.
 - You hold an established position at an organization with adequate research infrastructure to undertake the proposed research activities.
- A letter of support from the applicant's institution is required.
- The research project should demonstrate the potential to contribute to an HIV cure for children or focus on strategies to strengthen the paediatric HIV cascade, encompassing case identification, continuity of care and re-engagement in care.
- Available funds in any given year will be awarded to applicants from low- and middle-income countries according to the [World Bank classification](#). The applicant should hold a passport or national identity document from a low- or middle-income country.
- The PI must choose a mentor with relevant expertise in paediatric and/or adolescent HIV research. The mentor's contact details and a letter of commitment will be requested from all applicants; CIPHER will request a mentorship plan only from shortlisted applicants.
- The budget should reflect that at least 80% of the direct grant expenses will be spent in low- and/or middle-income countries.

CIPHER especially encourages investigators from western and central Africa and Asia to apply.

Funding information

The nature and scope of the proposed research will vary from application to application and, therefore, we anticipate that the size and duration of each award will vary. Awards will be funded for up to USD 140,000 for up to two years (including direct research costs, two IAS-organized conferences and applicable indirect costs). Second-year funding is contingent upon demonstration of satisfactory progress during year one. The CIPHER Research Grant Programme encourages collaborations between different study sites and institutions; at least 80% of the direct grant expenses must be spent in low- or middle-income countries.

The applicant must be the PI who will be solely responsible for planning, directing and executing the proposed project. The grant may be used for salaries, technical support, laboratory supplies, equipment or other research-related costs. The institution of the applicant is requested to provide the research infrastructure necessary to carry out the proposed project. Requested support for additional equipment and technology must be fully explained in the budget justification for applicants invited to submit full proposals, with clear relevance to the scientific aspects of the project, and not merely for general use. An institution's indirect cost is limited to a maximum of 10%.

Overview and timeline

Application to the CIPHER Research Grant Programme is a two-stage process. All components of the application must be completed by the PI.

Activity	Key dates
Online letter of intent application system opens	1 September 2025
Letter of intent submission deadline	30 September 2025, 18:00 CEST
Invitation to submit a full proposal (shortlisted applicants only)	End of November 2025
Full proposal deadline	30 January 2026, 18:00 CET
Notification of awardees	End of May 2026
Award announcement	July 2026 @ AIDS 2026

Instructions for submitting the letter of intent

The letter of intent must briefly outline the proposed project, including background, specific aims, preliminary data (if any) and methodology. The letters should be submitted through the [online submission system](#) and in the format provided. Applications not submitted through the online system will not be accepted. Applications can be submitted in French or English.

Letters of intent must be submitted no later than 30 September 2025, 18:00 CEST.

Eligible letters of intent will be reviewed by members of the CIPHER Research Grant Working Group, as well as experts in paediatric and adolescent HIV. Shortlisted candidates will be notified and invited to submit full proposals by the end of November 2025.

If you have questions about eligibility criteria, please consult the [frequently asked questions](#). If you have other questions, contact the programme administrator at cipher@iasociety.org.