

AMERICAN BRAIN FOUNDATION  
STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
2017-2021

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the leadership and generosity of board members, volunteers, organizations and staff in the development of our strategic implementation plan.

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AMA Foundation  
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Rheumatology Research Foundation  
College of American Pathologists Foundation  
American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation  
American Heart Association  
American Cancer Society  
Arthritis Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation  
National MS Society  
Alzheimer's Association  
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## **2017-2021 Strategic Implementation Plan**

### **Purpose of This Plan**

To create a road map for implementing the American Brain Foundation's strategic directions.

### **Our Strategic Direction**

With more than 50 million Americans suffering from neurological diseases, the American Brain Foundation wants to substantially increase its impact. Accordingly, the ABF Board of Directors has determined that the Foundation must build upon its traditional support of young investigators by extending funding to include higher risk, cutting-edge medical research, and more innovative and creative ideas to speed the development of cures for brain diseases.

Virtually all medical research funding sources, such as government entities, take an incremental approach toward finding cures, leaving gaps in funding for higher risk research. Grants are awarded on a disease-by-disease basis. The ABF has the freedom to fund across the spectrum of inter-related brain diseases.

As it moves toward this innovative funding model, the ABF must also “go public”—i.e., go beyond the relatively small cohort of neurologists who have historically supported the Foundation and appeal to the public to support its mission. The American public understands “Cancer” as a single medical challenge, while at the same time understanding that there are many different forms of cancer. While there are >400 brain disorders, many share common disease mechanisms leading to neurodegeneration and injury. Therefore, the ABF has the potential to rally public support around “Brain Disease” as an umbrella term, while supporting work focused on individual brain disorders ranging from Alzheimer's disease to multiple sclerosis to concussion and beyond. If we cure one, we will cure many.

### **Guiding Principles**

The ABF Board of Directors adopted these principles as the guide to our planning process.

1. Honor and build upon the ABF's past achievements
2. Be bold, but verify—audacious goals, but fundable, data-driven and achievable in scope
3. Make new friends, but keep the old—make the shift to public support while valuing our relationship with traditional supporters

4. Enthusiasm for our vision “Cure Brain Disease”
5. Independence from *and* thriving partnership with the AAN

### **Focus of Strategic Implementation Planning**

For this plan the Board will work on three focus areas.

1. **Research:** To define the need, niche and scope that the ABF will fulfill as a grant-making foundation.
2. **Fundraising:** To recommend a fund development strategy that is both rooted in an analysis of our fundraising potential and aligned with our programmatic goals.
3. **Business Model:** To establish a sustainable business model.

### **A Snapshot of the Future – The ABF in 2021**

Based on the above focus areas, a snapshot of our future emerged:

- *In 2021* the ABF is a national voice for brain health and a dynamic force for bringing researchers and donors together to defeat brain disease.
- The ABF’s core business platform is a virtual clearinghouse featuring a broad selection of fundable proposals—submitted by scientific investigators from throughout the world—on research seeking to prevent, treat or cure one or more of the 400+ diseases of the brain and nervous system.
- Donors of all types come directly to this comprehensive virtual clearinghouse to search out and contribute to specific projects which appeal to them, often because of their personal or institutional stake in a particular disease. These donors are inspired to know that all of the research under the ABF’s umbrella offers them hope. This is because the Foundation accepts fundable research proposals which include a solid case for how their discoveries may potentially be applied beyond a specific disease to other brain diseases.
- The ABF is a grant making public charity whose major program is funding research grants. From time to time the ABF may choose to focus over a multi-year period on one or two strategic initiatives. The foundation also manages donor advised funds, which may be restricted to a variety of other purposes within the realm of brain disease research and education.
- The ABF’s unique research partnership with the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is another powerful draw for donors. Donors have great

confidence in their investments knowing that the ABF has access to the best and brightest minds—the world’s largest association serving neurologists and the neuroscience community—to source the most high-risk and high-reward research cutting across various diseases of the brain.

- ✓ At any given time the ABF plans to have one or more multi-year strategic initiatives in play. For the past five years, the central initiative has been developing the brain disease research hub/clearinghouse. Now the Foundation is turning toward developing a multi-million dollar national research prize (aka X-Prize) to fundamentally change the landscape of brain disease. The prize will be awarded to the first team to reach the audacious goal of delaying the onset or progression of a major neurological disease.

## **Strategic Implementation Plan**

### ***VISION***

To cure brain disease.

### ***MISSION***

To bring researchers and donors together to defeat brain disease.

### ***GOALS***

1. **Core Business Model:** Create a community to support research in brain disease.
2. **Culture of Philanthropy:** Build an environment that meets the needs of donors to advance the ongoing health of the Foundation and defeat brain disease.

### ***STRATEGIES***

1. **Research Clearinghouse:** Match the best science with the largest pool of committed donors to advance a continuum of research.
  - a) Construct a dynamic, virtual research platform that fosters valuable fresh connections- where researchers pitch their best ideas to donors, where donors advance their own research concepts, where patient advocacy groups connect with new untapped populations, where the power of crowdfunding propels research forward.
  - b) *A continuum of research from training fellowships, to career development awards, to high-risk/high-reward studies to the unique X-Prize* attracting venture capital to fundamentally change the landscape of brain disease. The X-Prize will be awarded to the first team to reach the audacious goal of delaying the onset or progression of a major neurological disease.

**2. Public Engagement:** Build the ABF brand around our unique niche.

- a) The whole brain approach: *A cure for one brain disease is a cure for many.*

*The ABF promotes key research for your grandmother with dementia, your uncle with stroke and your close friend with MS. Your ABF donation touches all of us since different brain diseases share common mechanisms.*

- b) ABF's collaborative relationship with the AAN "all-star team"
- c) Signature projects to "seize the moment" and promote research for timely topics (concussion, CTE, dementia, brain health).
- d) An awards program – the "Nobel Prizes" of brain disease builds upon the ongoing AAN awards program.

**3. Philanthropy:** Develop full-fledged public support and deepen giving from AAN members.

- a) Build internal capacity
- b) Broaden and deepen annual fund base
- c) Refresh brand and strengthen case for support

**4. Aligned Leadership:** Create a thriving partnership with the AAN.

- a) Align organizational ABF/AAN goals and strategies to foster a high-performing "win-win" environment with incentives for working together.
- b) A structured AAN/ABF relationship with expectations and incentives for communication, synergy, transparency and trust.
- c) Mutually beneficial transparent policies to facilitate communication, governance, fundraising and finances.