

NOAH's Funding Sources Information Packet

Greetings!

We would like EVERYONE in and around the albinism community to be able to attend the 2026 National Conference. However, we know many people could use some help with travel and conference expenses. To help, we've created the following **Funding Sources Information Packet**. We hope the information provided is informative and useful, and it helps in receiving any necessary funding to attend the National Conference. This information is meant to be a starting point for you to find funding sources, but it is, by no means, an exhaustive list. When your funding search is complete, please let us know how you did. Was the information included useful? Did you find another source or method that might be useful to another NOAH member?

It's going to be a great conference, and we look forward to seeing you in Ohio this summer!

Time is your greatest ally when searching for funding sources. Many agencies and organizations have set disbursement schedules, or a series of steps that must be completed during the application process. Get started early so that you won't be scrambling to complete forms or trying to gather information at the last minute.

Don't be afraid to cast a broad net. It is rare that one group will be able to fulfill your entire funding request. It is possible you will have greater success by applying for a smaller amount (or specific item such as one night's lodging) to several groups.

First Things First, Get Organized!

Make a list of all your expenses, travel (*don't forget to include transfers from the airport or train station to the hotel*), lodging, meals, conference registration fees, etc. The 2026 NOAH conference will be held July 16-19, 2026 at Hilton Columbus Downtown, 402 N High St. Columbus, OH 43215 USA. www.hiltoncolumbusdowntown.com

Standard rooms are $182 per night plus taxes and fees. Plan on a total room cost of approximately $216.58 per night. Exact room cost can be calculated at https://book.passkey.com/go/NOAH2026

Once you total your expenses, determine exactly how much you will be able to contribute. It is important to show potential funders that you are invested in attending the conference. By stating that you are willing to pay part of the cost of attending, demonstrates how important conference attendance is to you and your family.

2026 NOAH National Conference Registration Fees

Staying at the conference hotel as part of the discounted room block pays off! In addition to being an important part of the social conference experience for attendees, reserving your room at the beautiful Hilton Columbus Downtown also keeps conference costs more affordable for everyone!

New this year, NOAH is offering discounted conference registration fees to attendees lodging at the conference hotel!

Early Registration Discount Rates Register by 4/19/2026		
	Onsite Lodging Discounted Rates *Lodging at Conference Hotel*	**Standard Registration Rates** *Lodging Off Site*
Young Children (6 mos - 4 yrs)	~~$180.00~~ $165.00 *($15 Savings!)*	$180.00
Students (Elementary - College*) **must be actively enrolled in classes.*	~~$270.00~~ $240.00 *($30 Savings!)*	$270.00
Adults	~~$280.00~~ $250.00 *($30 Savings!)*	$280.00

Conference registration will include:

- Thursday night reception
- Friday & Saturday lunches
- Saturday night reception
- Sunday farewell breakfast

Registrations after 5/24/2026 on a space-available basis only. Programs for attendees 17 and under have limited enrollment and are **not available for walk-in registration**.

Cancellation Policy:

All credit card fees paid are nonrefundable.
All tickets purchased for optional off site activities are nonrefundable.

Written refund requests are subject to an additional 5% processing fee and the following receipt deadlines:

All fees by 5/15/26
50% fees - by 5/31/26
No refunds after 5/31/26

Identify Possible Funding Organizations

Now it's time to locate organizations to contact about the possibility of assistance with conference expenses. Here are some suggestions:

NOAH 2026 Conference Personal Grant

NOAH has a limited budget for conference personal grants. The Personal Grant Program helps those who, without assistance, would not be able to afford to attend the conference. Applicants must contribute to the cost of attendance. The Personal Grant Program will not fund the full cost of attendance. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek additional support as described below. The 2026 Conference Personal Grant Application is available online at www.albinism.org/NOAHCon.

Local Community Service Groups

Elks, Lions, Soroptimists, Masons, International Order of Odd Fellows, Knights of Columbus, Jaycees, YMCA, YWCA, Rotary, Kiwanis, area Woman's Clubs, Optimists, Altrusa, Telephone Pioneers, PTA, teachers' organizations, Grange, Farm Bureau, Farmer's Union, business associations, employee's associations, Chamber of Commerce, Medical Society, Dental Society, Business and Professional Women, church groups, synagogues Urban League, NAACP, college, university alumni groups, senior citizen groups and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Social Service Agencies

Special Education Departments or the Department of Human Services, whoever administers money in the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) budget for a disabled individual or a parent. They will often provide stipends or scholarships to attend conferences.

Other Possible Sources

Aside from the groups listed above, talk to the people you or your child interact with on a daily basis, your employer, your Early Intervention provider, Teacher for the Visually Impaired, or a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Ask them for potential funding sources.

Requesting and / or Applying for Funding

If the target group has a set application process, you're set. If not, you may need to prepare an initial letter of inquiry to be sent via email and / or mail. Included below is a sample letter that you should customize and personalize to meet your needs.

Tips to keep in mind.

1. It may seem obvious, but presentation is everything. Make sure your letter is neat and has no grammar and spelling errors. Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person.
2. Ask for financial assistance in providing travel, lodging and registration fees for (*describe who will be attending*) to attend (*name of conference, location and date*).
3. State why you need to attend this conference, itemize how much it will cost, and state how much you or other individuals or groups can contribute.
4. State your goals in attending - i.e. gain valuable information, to learn more about my genetic condition, to help my child with albinism and others in my community.
5. State length of conference and general subject areas to be covered.
6. State that you will collect conference and vendor material and will gladly speak to (the group you are writing to) after the conference with a description of the conference and to share information about albinism. If you aren't comfortable speaking in front of a group, you could offer to create a written report, travel log or scrapbook. Also state that you want to share this information with others in your community.
7. Include your detailed budget and your contribution.
8. You may want to include information about albinism. NOAH has electronic copies of our information bulletins online at www.albinism.org. Printed versions of NOAH publications can be obtained by calling 800- 473-2310.

Patience and Persistence

The next part of the process is probably the hardest. Now that you've made your request, you must be patient AND persistent. Wait a week to ten days and then follow up with the organization, preferably by email, to confirm that they received your letter. Ask if they need any further information. You can also inquire about an appropriate time frame for a decision and or when to follow up again.

Good luck with your search!

Sample Letter

March 22, 2026

Ms. Mary Smith
1255 Oak Valley Drive
Anytown, PA 12345

Mr. Jeremy Bell, President
Anytown, Lions Club
P.O. Box 1786
Anytown, PA 12345

Dear Mr. Bell:

NOAH, the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation will be holding a national conference this July in Columbus, OH. NOAH is a national, non-profit organization run primarily by volunteers. NOAH's mission is to provide information and support for people with albinism and their families. I am writing to ask for the Lion's assistance in attending this conference.

Albinism is a genetic condition that causes a lack of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes or in some cases, just the eyes. It is a relatively rare condition affecting one in 17,000 in the United States. The effects of the condition are both physical (i.e. low vision that isn't correctable) and at times emotional. Information about albinism and best practices for treating and living with the condition is not readily available and because this condition is so rare, it is not often that I/we encounter others with common experiences.

NOAH conferences provide the only opportunity in the U.S. to connect with researchers and other professionals familiar with albinism, meet others with the condition, share experiences and learn about the latest medical updates and visual aids.

By attending this conference, I hope to learn:

- What are the latest visual aids, legislation and best practices that might allow me to earn a driver's license?
- What strategies can I employ to maximize my child's learning experience in the classroom?
- What extra steps do I/my child need to take to protect my skin from the harmful rays of the sun?
- What strategies can I employ to minimize the effect my low vision has in a work environment?

- How do others cope with the social and emotional issues that accompany living with albinism?

I (We) hope to gather information and materials to expand our knowledge so that we can become a resource for others with albinism in our community. I also hope to build a network of others with similar experiences so as I face challenges in the future, I will have resources upon which to draw.

I anticipate our expenses to be:

Expense	**Total cost for a family of 4**
Airfare: Round-trip Pittsburgh to Columbus, OH, including transfers to the hotel: $350 each	$1400.00
Hotel: $182 per night plus tax/fees = $216.58 per night 3 nights at $216.58 per night	$649.74
Meals for a family of 4: ● 2 breakfasts ($40 each) ● 2 Dinners ($80 each)	$240.00
Early Conference Registrations: 2 adults @ $250, 2 students @ $240	$980.00
GRAND TOTAL	**$3,269.74**

I anticipate that we will be able to contribute $750 toward these expenses. Would the Lions Club be willing to contribute $500 toward our airfare? We are approaching other organizations for additional funding. I would be happy to make a presentation on albinism and our trip to the NOAH conference to the Lions Club upon our return.

I will follow up in a week. I look forward to your reply.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Mary Smith