American Society of Gene + Cell Therapy

CONVINCE YOUR BOSS TOOLKIT

Make the Case for Breakthroughs in Cell + Gene Therapy

November 12 and 13, 2026 | Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN, or online

Breakthroughs is a two-day ASGCT meeting for researchers and leaders, from academia to industry, working in cell and gene therapy. Use this guide to request approval to attend. It includes talking points, details on partnering, what you can bring back to your team, a cost worksheet, and an email you can edit and send to your manager.

WHY ATTEND

Why Breakthroughs is worth the investment

Managers are more likely to say yes when a request connects directly with and benefits your work. Use the points below that apply to you.

1 **Sessions that match your work.** Three tracks run at the same time. Track 1 covers central nervous system therapeutic modalities, Track 2 covers targeting and delivery, and Track 3 covers translation, trial design, manufacturing and patient access. You can move between tracks and choose the sessions that fit your projects.

2 **Dedicated time to meet potential partners.** Partnering is built into both days, with a Partnering Lounge, a scheduled lunch and partnering time blocks each day. Our event app helps match you with the connections you need, and makes booking one-on-one meetings and small group discussions fast and easy.

3 **New research and direct access to the authors.** Oral abstract sessions and a Poster Reception showcase new work, and you can talk with the scientists who did it. Speakers include researchers and leaders from Regeneron, the Broad Institute, Wave Life Sciences, NIH, UCSF, the Gates Foundation, FDA, and Ultragenyx.

4 **Practical lessons on the problems that slow programs down.** Track 3 includes sessions on regulatory challenges where you can hear directly from the FDA and learn about AAV manufacturing for early-phase trials and ways to bring down costs.

5 **One venue, with an online option.** Sessions, exhibits, posters and partnering all take place at Gaylord Opryland, for an efficient and productive attendee experience (with breakfast and lunch provided both days). If you cannot travel, you can register to attend online instead. All attendees have access to on-demand recordings post-event.

PARTNERING

Partnering at Breakthroughs

Breakthroughs is designed to build connections and the schedule gives you dedicated time on both days to meet researchers, companies, and potential partners.

Partnering Lounge	One-on-one meetings	Exhibits, posters and roundtables
Open Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Both days include a lunch, exhibits and partnering block from noon to 1:30 p.m.	Use our partnering platform in the event app to post a topic you want to discuss, schedule one-on-one meetings, or join small-group conversations.	Meet exhibitors in the hall both days, talk with authors at the Thursday poster reception, and join the Friday afternoon roundtables in your track.

Who you will meet

Breakthroughs brings academic investigators and industry leaders together, so collaborators, advisors, service providers and potential partners are all in the same place. If your organization is evaluating a new platform, looking for a manufacturing partner, or building relationships with academic labs, this is a practical place to start those conversations.

Sponsors

Forge Biologics · Lonza · MaxCyte

Exhibitors

Bio-Techne · Boston BioProducts · Caladan Bio · Catalyze · Cirena · CoJourney · Dyno Therapeutics · EMIT Imaging · Forge Biologics · Genevoyager · Illumina · ImgGyd · Lonza · MaxCyte · Nitto Avecia · PackGene Biotech · Refeyn

Industry leaders from

Astellas Gene Therapies · Eli Lilly · Novartis · Pfizer · Regeneron · Sarepta Therapeutics · Thermo Fisher Scientific · Ultragenyx · Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Research and clinical leaders from

Broad Institute · Mass General Brigham · Nationwide Children's Hospital · St. Jude Children's Research Hospital · Stanford University · UCSF · University of Pennsylvania

Funders and policy leaders from

Alliance for Regenerative Medicine · California Institute for Regenerative Medicine · Gates Foundation · NIH/NCATS

...and nearly 100 more companies, institutions, and foundations.

How to use partnering in your request

- Name the organizations or researchers you hope to meet, so your manager can see exactly who you will be talking with.
- Set up your partnering and networking topics before you arrive so other attendees can find you.
- Plan to share a list of new contacts afterward, with notes on possible next steps.

UPON YOUR RETURN

What you'll bring back

A request is easier to approve when it includes a plan to share what you learn. Choose the steps that fit your role and add them to your email.

Before	During	After
• Choose the sessions most relevant to your current projects. • Write down the questions your team wants answered. • Request meetings through the partnering platform.	• Attend sessions tied to your team's priorities and take notes to share. • Visit the poster reception and talk with the authors. • Meet with exhibitors your team is evaluating.	• Send a one-page summary of key takeaways within a week. • Share your new contacts with suggested follow-ups. • Give a short debrief at your next team meeting.

How your organization benefits

- Your team gets a current view of targeting, vector engineering and delivery approaches before making decisions about its own programs.
- You hear how other groups have handled regulatory, CMC and trial design challenges, which helps your team plan ahead.
- You return with new contacts who may become collaborators, advisors or service providers.
- You can share what you learned with colleagues who could not attend.

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THE PROGRAM

Program highlights by track

The three tracks run at the same time on both days. Pick the track closest to your work and mention specific sessions in your request.

TRACK 1 Central Nervous System Therapeutic Modalities + Platforms

What new therapeutic architectures are redefining what is possible?

This track highlights five approaches to treating the CNS and beyond: engineered cell therapies with updated data in Parkinson's and drug-resistant epilepsy, RNA and oligonucleotide approaches, vectorized oncotherapy from glioblastoma to solid tumors, Cas9 ribonucleoproteins delivered in LNPs that cross the blood-brain barrier, and focused ultrasound-enabled delivery. You'll hear from groups far enough along to say what's working and what isn't.

- Engineering brain-resident CAR T cells as a delivery platform for Alzheimer's disease. Justin Eyquem, PhD, UCSF
- Unlocking the broad potential of RNA medicines to transform human health. Erik Ingelsson, MD, PhD, Wave Life Sciences
- Oncolytic HSV for glioblastoma. Alex Ling, PhD, Mass General Brigham

TRACK 2 Targeted Delivery + Biological Precision

How do we deliver cell and gene therapies precisely, safely and effectively to the right biological targets?

This track offers an intensive examination of the strategies and biological insights driving precise delivery across diverse tissues and cell types. Intentionally indication-agnostic, these sessions focus on cross-platform targeting and delivery of innovations that advance the entire field.

Explore the latest breakthroughs in targeting biology, vector and payload localization, biodistribution control, and platform adaptability, along with advances in capsid and vector engineering, and receptor-mediated transport, such as blood-brain barrier (BBB)-crossing strategies and next-generation biological shuttles.

- Retargeting AAV to the brain via anti-AAVxTfR bispecific antibodies. Maria Praggastis, PhD, Regeneron
- BI-TfR1 CapX mediates efficient low dose delivery throughout the CNS. Ken Chan, Broad Institute
- Engineering novel LNPs for safe and efficient extra-hepatic delivery. Federico Mingozzi, PhD, Nava Therapeutics

TRACK 3 Translation + Manufacturing

How do we translate innovation into durable, scalable impact?

The keynote covers the investigator-initiated path to genetically targeted therapies in prion disease. Sessions cover regulatory initiatives meant to streamline rare disease trials, regulatory challenges and setbacks, including the path to approval of Rebi-Vec, the first FDA-approved treatment for MPS IIIA (Sanfilippo syndrome type A), manufacturing approaches that support accelerated clinical development, and what a gene therapy actually costs to deliver internationally, including one case of academic manufacturing picking up a therapy after commercial abandonment.

You'll hear directly from scientists working on gene delivery, vector engineering, nonviral delivery, gene editing, targeting biology, and translational research.

- Keynote: Investigator-initiated path to genetically targeted therapies in prion disease. Sonia Vallabh, PhD, Broad Institute
- NIH-funded efforts to support platform clinical trials approaches for rare genetic diseases. PJ Brooks, PhD, NIH
- Bringing effective and accessible curative interventions for HIV and sickle cell disease to all in need. Mike McCune, MD, PhD, Gates Foundation
- FDA overview on expedited development programs and approval pathways, including Accelerated Approval. Megha Kaushal, MD, FDA
- FDA perspectives on CMC readiness and regulatory flexibility to support accelerated clinical development of cell and gene therapies. Andrew Harmon, PhD, FDA

Benefits of attending also include oral abstract presentations, sponsored spotlights and dedicated partnering time. Thursday ends with a poster reception, and Friday includes roundtables and a closing panel. The program and speakers may change. See the full program at asgct.org.

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THE BUDGET

Cost worksheet

Your manager will want to see a total expense to attend. Fill in the right-hand column and include the total expected cost in your email.

Registration rates

	Advanced Now to Nov 11	On-site Nov 12 and 13	Online
ASGCT member	$650	$725	$550
Trainee member	$350	$425	$250
Nonmember	$900	$975	$800

Ways to pay less

- ASGCT members save $250. Explore ASGCT membership options at asgct.org.
- Register by November 11 to save $75 against the on-site rate.
- Groups of five or more from the same organization save 10%.
- ASGCT trainee members who are first and presenting authors on an accepted abstract pay $225.
- Breakfast and lunch are included on both days.

Your estimate

Expense	Details	Your estimate
Registration	Advanced rate applies through November 11	
Hotel	Gaylord Opryland group rate $319 per night plus $30 resort fee and taxes. Extended deadline: book by October 27.	
Airfare or mileage	Nashville International Airport (BNA); Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center (2800 Opryland Dr., Nashville, TN 37214)	
Ground transportation	Airport transfers, rideshare or parking	
Other		
Total		

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THE ASK

Request email template

Copy this suggested message into an email and complete the bracketed text with your own details. Naming specific sessions, people and projects will make your request stronger.

Subject: Request to attend Breakthroughs in Cell + Gene Therapy, November 12 and 13

Hi [manager name],

I would like to attend ASGCT's Breakthroughs in Cell + Gene Therapy meeting on November 12 and 13 in Nashville [or online]. The program covers [topic area, for example CNS delivery, targeting, or manufacturing and CMC], which ties directly to our work on [project or goal]. Here is why I think it is worth it:

1. Sessions in [track name] address [a challenge our team is facing], including [session title and speaker].

2. The meeting has dedicated partnering time, and I can set up one-on-one meetings through the event app with [researchers, potential partners or vendors].

3. Track 3 covers [regulatory, manufacturing or cost] challenges, with speakers from [NIH, Ultragenyx, FDA, or the Gates Foundation]. What they share could help us plan ahead on our own programs.

The estimated total is [$ total], including registration at [$ rate] if I register by November 11, [number] nights at the conference hotel, and travel.

When I am back, I will share [a one-page summary of key takeaways or a short team debrief] within [one week], along with my new contacts and suggested follow-ups.

Could we talk about this by [date]? The hotel group rate ends October 27 and advanced registration ends November 11.

Thanks,

[your name]

KEY DATES

Dates to know

October 26	Abstracts released to the public
October 27	Hotel group rate deadline (extended)
November 11	Advanced registration rate ends
November 12 and 13	ASGCT Breakthroughs in Cell + Gene Therapy meeting, Nashville, TN and online

Ready to register? Visit asgct.org to register and view the full program. Rates and program details are as of October 2026 and subject to change.