Instructions for Submission: Collaborative Research Center Applications
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
2017

INTRODUCTION

Please read these instructions and follow them carefully. Applications that are incomplete exceed the page limitations, or use undersize or condensed type ***will not be considered for funding by the Society.***

The following changes to the Society's application procedures have been implemented:

- The grants management system called **MSGrants** has been implemented for preparation and submission of research proposals to the Society. MSGrants can be found at **https://nmss.fluxx.io**
- Compatible browsers include **Chrome, Firefox,** and **Safari.** Internet Explorer is **not** fully compatible and should be avoided. Check with your IT department for information on installing one of these browsers if you do not already have one.
- Passwords for accessing the site never expire and a new password will not be needed for each cycle.
- Submission of proposals is exclusively electronic for **all** parts of the proposal, including institutional approval and appendix materials, and no paper copies of any part of the proposal will be sent to the Society.
- In place of the former coversheet, institutional approval by your organization to submit your application will be made electronically using the same online system.
- The application process itself consists of two parts, a short pre-application and the full application.
- The basic elements of the application remain largely unchanged but have been re-ordered and reformatted compared to our former system.
- The full application, including electronic Institutional Approval, must be submitted before the deadline.

Details concerning the grants management system and application process can be found in these instructions and on the system's Web site itself.

GETTING STARTED

If you have already been issued a password for MSGrants, you can skip the next two sections.

Registration for New Users

If you did not have a password for our previous system, mssocietyapplyonline, you will need to register and be approved for access to the new system. Go to **https://nmss.fluxx.io** and once you are at the login page, click on **Register Now.** Complete the online registration form and submit your registration by clicking on the words **Submit Request.** This will submit your request for access to the site to the Research Programs staff of the Society. The staff will review your registration information to verify that you are qualified to apply for funding from the Society. If approved, you will receive an automated e-mail message containing your login credentials within ***two business days***.

Registration for Existing Users

If you have a password for our previous system, you do not need to register again, however you will need to reset your password. Go to **https://nmss.fluxx.io** and once you are at the login page, click on **Reset or Create Password.** At the next screen, enter the e-mail address that you used in the old system and click on **Submit.** The system will send you an e-mail with a link to reset your password. If the system does not recognize your e-mail address, you will need to register as if you are a new user.

Your password should contain at least one of the following:

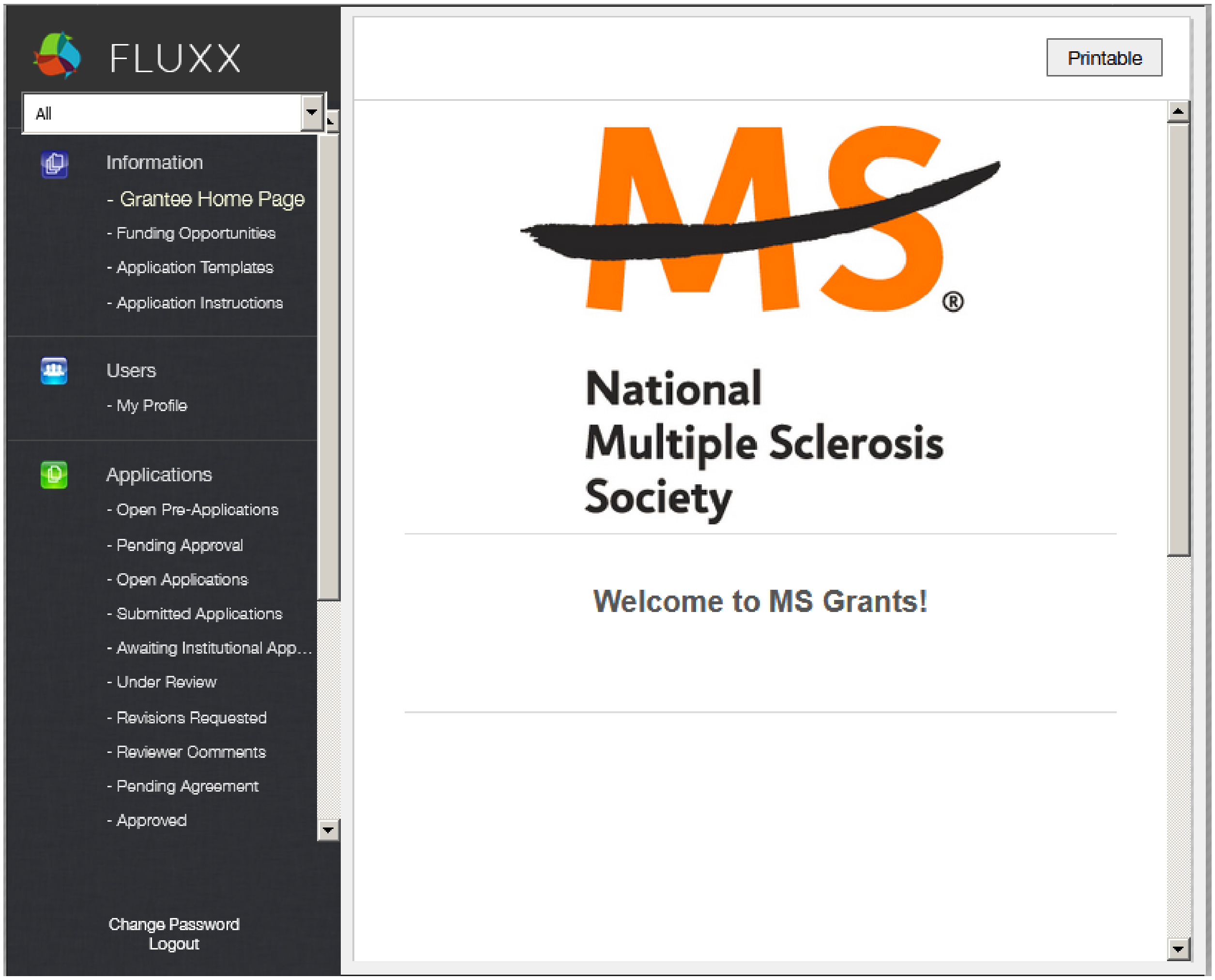
- Uppercase letter (A through Z)
- Lowercase letter (a through z)
- Number (0 through 9)

A Word about Passwords

Once you have obtained a user id and password, go to **https://nmss.fluxx.io** and log in. Once you log in, you will be able to see which funding opportunities are active along with the deadlines for each. You will also be able to begin the preparation of your pre-application. In the system your password never expires and you will not need to obtain a new password in order to apply for other funding programs or subsequent cycles. You will be using MSGrants for a variety of purposes in addition to preparation and submission of proposals. For example, progress reports will be prepared and submitted through MSGrants as well and you will be able to view proposals that you have prepared on the system. It is important that you not share your password with others and it is not possible for two different people to apply for funding opportunities using a single password.

NAVIGATING MSGrants

When you log on you will see the grantee portal (illustrated below). A description of the main parts of the grantee portal follows below.



Funding Opportunities

Click on this item to see the funding opportunities that are currently available and the application deadlines. Click on **Apply Now** to start a pre-application.

Application Templates

Click on this item to download any of several documents that you are likely to use in preparing your application. These include the following:

- A PDF file showing the keywords that you will also find in a drop down list in the application. This PDF file is provided to make it easier for you to see the entire list before making your selections.

- A Word template to use for preparing the narrative for research grant and Health Care Delivery and Policy Research contract applications.
- A Word template to use for preparing biographical sketches.
- An example of a lay summary

Application Instructions

Instructions for all of the current funding opportunities

My Profile

Clicking on **My Profile** will open your individual record. Once open, click on **Edit** to modify your profile. Please make sure all contact information is current.

Open Pre-Applications

As your application moves through the various steps in the system, it will be listed under different sections of the grantee portal. Once you have started a pre-application and saved it, you can retrieve the application to continue to work on it by clicking on the **Open Pre-Applications** link.

Pending Approval

Once you have submitted a pre-application you can find it by clicking on the **Pending Approval** section. Pre-applications listed in this section cannot be edited.

Open Full Applications

Once your pre-application has been approved to move on to a full application, you can access the full application forms here. Full applications that you have worked on and saved can also be found here. These applications can be edited.

Submitted Applications

Full applications that have been submitted can be found here. Applications in this section cannot be edited.

Awaiting Institutional Approval

Full applications that are pending institutional approval for final submission can be found here.

Under Review

Full applications that have been screened by Society staff and advanced to the peer review process can be found here. Applications in this section cannot be edited.

Revisions Requested

Both pre-applications and full applications that have been sent back to the applicant for changes requested by Society staff can be found here. Applications in this section can be edited.

Pending Agreement

Full applications that have been approved for funding but which still require some additional processing and/or submission of documents can be found here.

Approved

Full applications that have been approved for funding and which require no further processing can be found here.

Not Recommend

Applications that have previously been reviewed but were not recommended for funding.

Copying a Previously Declined Submission

If you would like to resubmit a previously declined submission, the application can be found in the Not Recommended section. Click on the application you wish to resubmit, and Click Copy. A new pre-application will be created. You can then make any changes you'd like at that point and/or Submit. When the pre-application is approved, the full application will have all of the previous information not including the narrative or budget. These will need to be added to the application.

THE PRE-APPLICATION

In the past prospective applicants were required to contact a member of the Society's Research Programs staff to obtain clearance before submitting a proposal. While the Society still encourages personal contact and discussion of possible ideas for proposals, in the current system this process has been formalized through the use of a "Pre-Application" step. For each funding opportunity, there is a pre-application that must be completed and submitted to the Society before the applicant can prepare a full application. The pre-application is reviewed by a member of the Research Programs staff to ensure that the research idea is consistent with the Society's mission and research strategies and the nature of the specific funding opportunity. Once the idea is approved you will receive an automated message from the system and you will be able to begin preparation of the full application. In some cases, Society staff may send the pre-application back to you for clarification or changes before final approval.

Please Note**: the Society has enacted a deadline for pre-applications. The pre-proposal must be submitted ***1 week prior to the deadline

How to Complete the Pre-Application

Once you are logged in, click on **Funding Opportunities** to see a list of available funding opportunities, along with information on the application deadlines. Find the funding opportunity to which you wish to apply and click on **Apply Now.** This will open the pre-application. Enter a title for your pre-application (this can be changed later) and complete the **Eligibility Quiz.** The Eligibility quiz will establish whether you are eligible to apply for that funding opportunity. If you pass all of the eligibility criteria, the rest of the pre-application will open and you can begin to complete this step. If you fail one or more of the eligibility criteria, you will not be able to prepare and submit a pre-application for that program.

- **Organization:** If you have only one organizational affiliation, the **Organization** field will be pre-populated. If you are affiliated with more than one organization, select the organization that will be the applicant organization from the drop-down list in the top left-hand corner of the page.
- **Principal Investigator:** In the **Principal Investigator** field, select your name from the drop-down list.
- **Primary Signatory:** This is the individual who "signs off" on the application on behalf of your institution, thereby allowing the application to be submitted. If you do not know who this is, just leave it blank and you will have another opportunity to complete this field during the full application.
- **Project Details:** In the **Project Details** text box, insert a brief (500 words or less) description of your proposed project. You can type this in online, or prepare it off line and copy and paste the text into the text box.
- **Project Zip Code:** In the **Project Zip Code** field enter the zip code (U.S. applications) where the work will actually be done. If more than one site is going to be used, this should be the Zip code of the primary or lead site.

- **Estimate of Amount Requested:** In the **Estimate of Amount Requested** field, enter your best estimate of the total cost of your proposed. This figure is just to allow Society staff to gauge the overall amount of funding that is likely to be requested during a given cycle. This figure will not be used to evaluate whether or not to approve your pre-application and you will be able to change this figure later.
- Once you have completed all sections of the pre-application, click on **Save** to save your work. At this point you can log out and return later to revise your pre-application by pressing the **Edit** button, or you can click on **Submit** to submit your pre-application to Society staff for approval. Saving your application does not send it to Society staff. You must click on **Submit** in order for it to be considered for approval.
- Once you press **Submit**, you will no longer be able to make changes, although you will be able to see your pre-application.

When you submit the pre-application, it will automatically be sent to the appropriate program officer at the Society for review. You will receive notification of approval, disapproval, or the need for changes within ***two <u>business</u> days***.

THE FULL APPLICATION

Once your pre-application has been approved (generally within two business days) you can log in and begin to prepare the full application. At the grantee portal, click on the **Open Applications** link and then on **Edit** to begin working on the full application. You can work on the various parts of your full application in any order you want, save your work, and return to continue working as many times as you want.

Navigation Tips

There are two types of sections in the application: 1) sections in which you select options or fill in text boxes; and 2) sections in which you upload one or more documents. It is a good idea to click on **Save** as you complete each part of the application.

Black triangles ► indicate the sections of the application that will open when you click on the triangle. The default of the application is for each section to be collapsed. You should open each section and complete all of the required components in the section.

The section components can either be drop-down lists, text boxes, or sections where you need to upload one or more files. After you complete a given section, clicking on the triangle again closes that section.

Sections that require one or more files to be uploaded will have a white plus sign on a green background. Click on the plus sign to open the upload dialogue. Click on **Add Files** to browse for the file that you want to upload. Click on the black triangle to indicate the type of document you are uploading. Click on **Start Upload** to upload the file.

To change the document type or delete the file that you uploaded, position your cursor anywhere to the right of the name of the file and click on the pencil (edit) or the minus sign (delete) that appear.

You can complete the sections in any order you wish but all sections must be completed before you can submit.

Required Fields

This section is a list of required field for the application. There is no action to take within this section, it is simply a reminder for the application of the fields that must be completed before the application can be submitted.

Project Information

This section includes basic information about the proposed project. To assist you in selecting the **Keywords** that are a required part of this section, a list of available keywords can be downloaded from the Grantee Home Page.

Institutional Official

- In this section you will indicate the institutional official who will be the **Institutional Signatory** for submission of your full application. This is the individual who "signs off" on the application on behalf of your institution, thereby allowing the application to be submitted. You indicate who this is by selecting the individual's name from the drop-down list of appropriate individuals associated with you institution. The primary signatory must be registered with the system in order for you to make this selection from the drop-down list. If the primary signatory is not registered, this individual must go to the MSGrants log on page **https://nmss.fluxx.io** and register.

- Your application is not actually submitted to the Society until the Institutional Signatory has logged on to the system and authorized submission of the application. The Institutional Signatory must be registered with the system and must be the individual designated by you in the **Institutional Official** section of the application. Once you have submitted your application, a system message will be sent via e-mail to the Institutional Signatory stating that an application is pending authorization. The Institutional Signatory must then log on to the system, open the application, and complete the authorization. This must be completed prior to 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the date of the deadline.

- In this section you will also confirm the location of the project and the name of the principal investigator.

- Fill out the information for your Financial Officer. This information will be used if your application is awarded.

Human Subjects and/or Vertebrate Animals

This section includes information on protection of human subjects and animals. If any documents concerning these assurances need to be included, such as IRB approval memos, they must be included along with any letters uploaded in PDF format as part of the application.

- **Research involving Human Subjects -** If your proposed research involves human subjects, you must provide a signed and dated approval letter from the Institutional Review Board or equivalent appropriate committee of your institution as part of the single PDF file uploaded in the Letters section. If approval is pending, indicate that the project has been submitted to the committee for review in the Human Subjects section. Payment for a successful application will not begin until such signed and dated approval is received, reviewed and approved by the Society.

- **Research involving Vertebrate Animals -** If you plan research with experimental animals, you must provide certification that the institution complies with all federal, state and local regulations and with the standards established by the Animal Welfare Acts and the documents entitled "Principles for Use of Animals" and "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals", available from the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm. If approval has been granted, a copy of the signed and dated approval letter must be submitted as part of the single PDF file uploaded in the Letters. If approval is pending, indicate that the project has been submitted to the committee for review in the Vertebrate Animals section. Payment for a successful application will not begin until such signed and dated approval is received, reviewed and approved by the Society.

Collaborative Arrangements

Letters of collaboration/support from all individuals whose cooperation is necessary for the proposed research should be included as part of the single PDF file uploaded in the Letters section

Lay Language Summary of Proposed Project

The lay language summary should describe your proposed research in language suitable for a news release to the lay public. The lay summary is broken into several sections. In each section you are required to address a different element of your proposed project. Please read these instructions carefully and ensure that you address each element. You can type directly into the online text boxes or copy and paste each section that you have prepared using a word processor. If your project is funded, Society staff may make editorial changes to the summary to enhance its clarity.

Project Staff

Since the PI's information is already captured elsewhere, it does not need to be entered here. However other key professional personnel should be listed. This will assist the Society in more effectively tracking all of the researchers and clinicians who participate in Society-funded projects.

Biographical Sketches

A biographical sketch template is provided for downloading on the Grantee Home Page in case you need one. If you already have a current biographical sketch, you can convert it to PDF format and upload it. Biographical sketches are required for all professional personnel working on the project. All biographical sketches must be uploaded in PDF format.

Other Support

The Society requires detailed information concerning current and pending support for personnel listed on the application. This information is useful in evaluating any potential overlap with the current application and in identifying potential conflicts of interest. This should be uploaded as a single PDF document using the template provided.

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is the heart of the application. Details concerning the preparation of the proposal narrative appear below. A template in Microsoft Word format is provided in this section for downloading. This template parallels NIH format. Specifications are 11 point or larger font, and half-inch margins on all sides. Once the narrative is completed, it must be converted to PDF format and uploaded in this section.

Proposed Collaborative Research Center Plan

1. **Changes to Previous Application, if any (Page limit is one page)**

   Use this section only for a revised, resubmitted application. This section must summarize the substantial additions, deletions, and changes from previous proposal.

   The changes in the Collaborative Plan must be clearly marked by appropriate bracketing, indenting, or changing of typography, unless changes are so extensive as to include most of the text. This exception should be explained in the Introduction. Do not indicate changes by colored text or shading.

2. **New Proposals from Previous NMSS Center Awardees. (Page limit is one page)**

   Competitive renewals are not allowed in order to further encourage new investigators to MS research. Current and past recipients of NMSS Center Awards may apply at the end of the award period with a new application in which at least two new investigators from a non-MS research field are included. Past Center Awardees should include a brief summary of the outcome of their previous award including a list of collaborative publications and a description of the success of the "new investigators to MS" resulting from the previous award. In addition, indicate how the current application is unique and different from the previous funding.

3. **Proposed Program (This section should be divided by the following subtitles and the entire section should not exceed six pages. The Collaborative Plan should comprise of at least two pages of this section.):**

- Overall Goal and Theme: Describe the overall goal of the proposed collaboration program for a 5-year period. A diagram can be included to illustrate how the projects are integrated around a central theme.

- Research Team: Describe each member of the collaborative team highlighting the expertise that he/she would bring to the collaborative group. Include any information that will help establish the experience and competence of the investigators. This is especially true for the new investigators and what their expertise is, and how will they interact.

- Collaborative Plan: Describe the plan for enhancing the collaboration among the investigators, including the vision of the group to maximize collaborative research across scientific disciplines, how the goals of the collaborative group fit within the Society's mission, and the likelihood that funds will in fact be additive to the ongoing research efforts. The description should include statements about how the group will operate, how the collaboration will be encouraged, and how one can ensure that the direction of MS research by the non-MS investigator will continue. Since the base funding projects which constitute an eligible research group will already have been scientifically reviewed and funded, they can be very briefly summarized if relevant to the Center. If the projects are new ones, then they should be presented. The relevance of the project to MS should be apparent throughout the proposal. Describe how the award will support the interface between basic and clinical research, and address research topics and concepts which could not readily be approached through independent research.

- Pilot Research Studies: A program for exploring pilot research that take maximum advantage of new research opportunities explored by this collaborative team must be described.

- Recruitment Plan: A recruitment plan for attracting students, post-doctoral fellows, and other young investigators to work in MS must be included. Describe the educational environment and the mentoring availability to train postdoctoral fellows, and share any successes stories. Indicate how this recruitment plan for postdocs will not substitute, but enhance the number of additional applicants to our regular fellowship program.

4. Supporting Information

- a description of any currently shared facilities and currently shared activities (group seminars; retreats; etc).
- letters of collaboration from all individuals including the co-investigators whose cooperation is necessary for the proposed research plan should be included in the main application.

5. **Literature Cited**

To facilitate the review of your application, give the full title and bibliographic reference for all work cited in your application.

Budget

The Society requires a detailed budget for all years of the proposed project. The budget must be prepared using our online facility. The budget module is divided into sections such as "Personnel," "Equipment," "Supplies," etc. and project years. To add a line item to the budget, click on the green "+" button to open the form. The system will calculate the total budget per year after each line item has been added to the application. Please note, it is recommended that you save the application after each budget section has been completed to expedite the calculation process. The budget module automatically calculates direct costs, indirect costs, and totals. Please note that you cannot edit the indirect cost section. This section is calculated by the system based on your entries and is not editable by applicants.

Although the intent is for flexibility in the use of the funds, the budget should reflect a plan for anticipated expenditure of funds during the first year, and to the extent possible, subsequent years. Maximum amount that can be requested is $150,000 per year in direct costs, for a term of five years. Refer to the Policies and Procedures Manual on our Web site for specific instructions.

The Principal investigator is responsible for determining the most efficient use of these funds to meet the objectives of the program. Percent effort of the PI and of the other senior investigators is not expected, or required.

The institution where the principal investigator is located is the recipient of the funds. The principal investigator's institution must be located in the United States and must be a non-profit research and/or clinical institution such as a university, college, hospital, or laboratory. Collaborative research among investigators within a given institution, or among investigators from different institutions will be considered, and if the latter, a subcontract may be included in the budget from the awardee institution. Subcontracts to institutions in any country are allowable. Steps to ensure coordination and communication among investigators must be specified. An institution can be the recipient of only one Collaborative Center Award from the Society at any given time.

Note: Please review the NMSS Policies and Procedures for information regarding General Categories of Expenditures.

Sub-Contractor Budget

The online system also includes the ability to calculate subcontract budgets and integrate them into the main budget. Like the overall budget, any subcontractor budgets should provide budget detail for all years of the project. The Society will pay up to 10% indirect costs on subcontracts to US institutions, with the usual exclusions for equipment and patient costs. The subcontractor budget should include indirect costs, if applicable. However in the main project budget, only the direct costs for the subcontract should be included since the Society will not pay indirect costs twice on the subcontract amount.

Budget Justification

The budget justification can be typed directly into the text box online or copy and pasted into the text box from a word processor.

Sub-Contractor Budget Justification

The budget justification can be typed directly into the text box online or copy and pasted into the text box from a word processor.

DUAL SUBMISION TO OTHER AGENCIES

You are encouraged to apply to other appropriate agencies, in addition to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. If you apply to another agency for support of the same or similar project, be sure to acknowledge the application(s) in the **Other Support** section and where indicated on the **Project Information Section** of the Apply Online system.

SUBMISSION OF YOUR PROPOSAL

Once you have completed the preparation of your proposal, there are several options.

Edit

If you have not as yet submitted your proposal, you can click on the **Edit** button in order to open your proposal for further editing.

Printable

You can click on the **Printable** button in order to see your proposal as a single document which can be printed or outputted as a PDF file using standard browser commands.

Submit

If you have completed preparation of your application, you can submit it.

Save

If you are not ready to submit your application, you can save it to work on it later.

Withdraw (application)

If you do not wish to submit your proposal or continue working on it, you can **Withdraw** it. Once you withdraw an application, it cannot be recovered and so consider this option carefully. This option is generally used when an investigator has inadvertently started a duplicate application.

The Submission Process

Once you are satisfied with your proposal and all sections are marked as "complete," you can click on the "Submit" button. This will lock your proposal for further editing and move it to the **Authorization** step**.**

Cover Page

In our system there is no cover page, cover sheet, or signature page. In place of the former cover page, the system uses an online **Authorization** step that is completed by the Primary Signatory.

Authorization (Institutional Approval)

Your application is not actually submitted to the Society until the Primary Signatory has logged on to the system and approved submission of the application. The Primary Signatory must be registered with the system and must be the individual designated by you in the **Institutional Official** section of the application. Once you have submitted your application, a system message will be sent via e-mail to the Primary Signatory stating that an application is pending authorization. The Primary Signatory must then log on to the system, open the application, and complete the authorization. This must be completed prior to 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the date of the deadline.

CHECKLIST

To assist you in verifying that you have completed all steps in the application process, here is a checklist that you can use once you are ready to submit your proposal.

☐ Have you completed all required items in the **Project Information** section?
☐ Have you completed all required items in the **Institutional Official** section?
☐ Have you completed all required items in the **Human Subjects and/or Vertebrate Animals** section?
☐ If applicable, have you uploaded all of the **Letters** of support/collaboration/approval?
☐ Have you completed the **Lay Language Summary**?
☐ Have you completed the **Scientific Summary**?
☐ Have you listed all professional staff in the **Project Staff** section?
☐ Have you uploaded **Biographical Sketches** for all professional staff on the project?
☐ Have you uploaded **Other Support** for all professional staff on the project?
☐ Have you uploaded your completed **Proposal Narrative**?
☐ If applicable, have you uploaded all of the **Materials** in the appendix?
☐ Have you completed the **Budget** for all years of the proposed project?
☐ Have you completed the **Budget Justification** for all years of the proposed project?
☐ If applicable, have you complete the **Subcontract Budget(s)** for any subcontracts?
☐ If applicable, have you uploaded a **Budget Justification** for any subcontracts?
☐ Has the Institutional Signatory of your organization **Authorized** submission of your application?

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Basic questions about word processing functions such as copying and pasting, pagination, etc. and questions concerning PDF files should be referred to your organization's IT department or a colleague.

If you have any questions concerning the online application process such as using the online screens, file uploads and downloads; questions about National Multiple Sclerosis Society policy or the content of your proposal, please contact one of the following members of the Research Programs team:

Contacts

Paula Mullings	(212) 476-0418	paula.mullings@nmss.org
Tricia Denton	(212) 476-0413	patricia.denton@nmss.org
Claude Schofield, Ph.D.	(212) 476-00449	claude.schofield@nmss.org

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Please note that online and telephone support is only available Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Eastern Time.