



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Instructions for Submission: Research Grant Applications National Multiple Sclerosis Society *August 2013*

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 reviewed.

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

- A Web site has been established for preparation and submission of proposals. The Web site is www.mssocietyapplyonline.org
- 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 signature page and appendix materials, and no paper copies of any part of the proposal will be sent to the Society.
- 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 process.

Details concerning the Web site and application process can be found in these instructions and on the Web site itself.

GETTING STARTED

If you are reading these instructions you have probably been issued a password already by the National MS Society. If you already have a password, you can skip the next section.

Registration

If you do not already have a password, you will need to register and be approved for access to the Web site. Go to www.mssocietyapplyonline.org and once you are at the login page, click on "Register Here." Complete the online registration form and submit your registration by clicking on the word "Register." 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.

A Word about Passwords

Once you have obtained a user id and password, go to www.mssocietyapplyonline.org and log in at the login page. 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 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 the Web site for a variety of purposes in addition to preparation and submission of proposals. For example, progress reports will be prepared through the system 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.

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 mission of the Society. 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.

How to Complete the Pre-Application

Once you are logged in, click on "Funding Opportunities" and then on "Research Grants." Once you are on the "Opportunity Details" page, the steps are as follows:

- Click on "Start a New Application"
- Complete the "General Information" page which consists of the name of the PI, the title of the study, and the name of the organization.
- Save the "General Information" page.
- Click on "Go to Application Forms."
- In the text box that opens, insert a paragraph or two that provides a "Brief Summary of Research Idea."
- Save the "Brief Summary of Research Idea."
- Then click on "Mark as Complete" and "Submit."

When you submit the pre-application, it will automatically be sent to the appropriate program officer at the Society for review.

COMPLETING THE FULL APPLICATION

Once your pre-application has been approved you can log in and begin to prepare the full application. When you log in, click on “Funding Opportunities.” Then click on the “Research Grants” funding opportunity. This will take you to a page listing any applications that you have open for editing. Find the application that you wish to work on (this would be the pre-application that you submitted and which was approved by the Society) and click on the words “Apply Final” on the right side of the list. This will open the “General Information” section. Make any necessary changes and then click on “Save.” When the next page appears, click on “Go to Application Forms.” You are now ready to complete the remaining sections of the application. A brief explanation of each section follows.

If you are preparing a resubmission, you can save some time by copying your original submission rather than starting from scratch. Whether you start from scratch or copy and revise your original submission, you still need to get your pre-application approved first. Here’s how to copy an existing application:

- At the main menu, click on “Funding Opportunities.”
- Click on the FO for which you are submitting an application and for which your pre-application was approved.
- Click on “Copy Existing Application.”
- Select the application that you wish to copy by checking it.
- Click on “Save” at the bottom of the page.
- The copied application will then open for you to begin editing.

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.

In the first type you complete the various fields, click on “Save” and then click on “Go to Application Forms” to return to the list of sections to be completed. You can return to any section later and click on “Edit” to change any of the information that you have entered. Before submitting your application, you must click on “Mark as Complete” for each section. Even if you mark a section as complete, you can still go back and edit the information in that section so long as the application has not been submitted.

For sections that require you to upload one or more documents, click on the “Add” button to open the “Browse” and “Description” dialogue box. The uploading is completed by clicking on the “Save” button. If you need to replace the document that was uploaded, you can delete the original one and upload the new one.

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

General Information

This section was completed as part of the pre-application and is already populated. However it can be edited if necessary by clicking on the “Edit” button on the upper right side of the screen. If you do make any changes to this section, click on the “Save” button on the upper right side of the screen when you are done

Project Information

This section includes basic information about the proposed project. Click on “Save” when you are done. You can make changes to this section later by clicking on the “Edit” button followed by “Save.” This procedure applies to all sections except sections requiring uploads.

Institutional Officers

This is where you provide information concerning your organization’s president, financial officer, and director of sponsored research.

Letters Submitted with Application (List)

This is a listing of the letters that are uploaded in a subsequent section of the application. All letters submitted with your application must be submitted electronically in PDF format as part of the application. Paper copies will not be accepted and will be discarded if they are received by the Society.

Materials Submitted with Application (List)

This is a listing of appendix materials uploaded in a subsequent section of the application. All appendix materials submitted with your application must be submitted electronically in PDF format as part of the application. Paper copies, CD’s, etc. will not be accepted and will be discarded if they are received by the Society.

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.

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. You can type this into the online text box directly or copy and paste a summary 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.

Scientific Summary of Proposed Project

This summary should capture in condensed form the rationale, methods, and potential significance of the proposed research. You can type this into the online text box directly or copy and paste a summary that you have prepared using a word processor.

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.

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.

Budget

The Society now requires a detailed budget for all years of the proposed project. Unlike in the past, 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. In each section line items are added to the budget by clicking on the "Add" button in that section. 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.

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

This and all subsequent sections of the application are uploads. **All uploads must be in PDF format.** It is recommended that a spreadsheet program such as Excel be used to prepare the subcontractor budget and then convert the spreadsheet to PDF format. 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.

Sub-Contractor Budget Justification

This should be prepared using a word processing program, converted to PDF format, and uploaded.

Biographical Sketches

A biographical sketch template is provided for downloading 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.

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 12 pages single spaced (not including references), 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. Applicants who have a narrative prepared for a NIH application can use this if it conforms to the above dimensions.

Letters Submitted with Application

This is the section where letters submitted with your application are actually uploaded. Letters must be converted to PDF format and uploaded as a single PDF file. Paper copies will not be accepted and will be discarded if they are received by the Society. Most letters to be submitted fall into the following three categories:

- **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.
- **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 Protection from Research Risks, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD 20205. 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.

Materials Submitted with Application

This is the section where appendix materials submitted with your application are actually uploaded. Appendix materials must be in PDF format and can be uploaded as multiple PDF files. Paper copies, CD's, etc. will not be accepted and will be discarded if they are received by the Society. Items commonly included in the appendix are:

- **Publications** – Reprints, preprints, manuscripts, etc. that are relevant to the proposed project can be included as part of the appendix.
- **Clinical Trial Protocols** - In some cases, a proposal submitted to the Society may involve a study that is an add-on to a clinical trial that has been funded by another agency. Although the clinical trial itself is not the focus of the proposal, it is essential for the peer-review panel to have detailed information about the trial. If the above scenario describes your proposal, you must include a copy of the clinical trial protocol as part of the appendix.
- **Other Materials** - If your proposed study utilizes questionnaires or other types of printed assessment instruments, you may want to include these as part of the appendix. Many other types of materials could potentially be included in the appendix. However keep in mind that reviewers have a great deal of material to review and so you should choose your appended materials carefully.

Coversheet Attachment

The cover page of your application, also known as the signature page, should be signed prior to submission of your application, converted to PDF format, and uploaded here. Do not mail a hard copy of this page to the Society.

ORGANIZING YOUR NARRATIVE

To facilitate the review of your application, it is strongly recommended that you organize the discussion of your proposed research using the following guidelines:

Introduction

Use this section only for a revised, resubmitted application. In a revised application, there must be substantial changes in the content of the application. This section must summarize the substantial additions, deletions, and changes. The Introduction must also include responses to the criticisms and issues raised by the reviewers of your previous application. The changes in the Research 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. Work accomplished since the original application was submitted should be included in the "Progress Report/Preliminary Results" section. **PAGE LIMIT: two pages (This can be in addition to the 12 page limit.)**

Research plan

Include all text, figures, and data tables related to the research plan in this section. The individual subsections below may be any length as long as the total for the entire research plan does not exceed the **PAGE LIMIT of twelve pages** (not including the list of literature references).

- **Specific Aims** - Provide a concise statement of each objective of the proposed research project.
- **Background** - Provide a brief summary of the background for this project, including existing knowledge in the area and long-term goals of your research.
- **Progress Report/Preliminary Results** - A progress report is required for renewal applications. For new applications, use this section to report the principal investigator's preliminary studies pertinent to the application. Include any information that will help establish the experience and competence of the investigator's to pursue the proposed research.
- **Experimental Design and Methods** - Describe the design of experiments and the procedures used to undertake the proposed studies. Where appropriate, include possible outcomes, pitfalls, and alternative plans.
- **Relevance to Multiple Sclerosis** - Describe the relevance of your proposed studies to the human disease, multiple sclerosis. Indicate how your project will contribute to the Society's mission, which is: *We mobilize people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS.*

Literature cited

To facilitate the review of your application, give the full title and bibliographic reference for all work cited in your application. ***Please note that the 12-page limit for the narrative does not include the references, i.e., the references can go beyond the 12-page limit.***

Facilities available

Describe the facilities available for the conduct of the proposed research, and list major items of equipment that are available for use in the project. **PAGE LIMIT: one page.**

DUAL SUBMISSION 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

There are three commands on the “Application Forms” page that you can use as part of the submission process. Please note that all sections must be marked as “Complete” before you can submit your proposal.

Preview

Clicking on the “Preview” button shows you your complete proposal. You can scroll up and down through the proposal to check on the various sections that you have completed. This command can be used before all of the sections are marked as “complete” or after you have marked everything as complete.

Print Cover Page

This command allows you to print the coversheet of the proposal before all of the sections are completed so that you can obtain institutional signatures. In order for this to work you must have completed the “Project Information” and “Institutional Officers” sections.

Submit

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 submit your proposal to the Society. You must submit your proposal prior to 11:59 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 **General Information** section?
- Have you completed all required items in the **Project Information** section?
- Have you completed all required items in the **Institutional Officers** section?
- If applicable, have you listed all of the **Letters** of support/collaboration/approval?
- If applicable, have you listed all of the **Materials** included in the appendix?
- Have you completed all required items in the **Human Subjects and/or Vertebrate Animals** section?
- 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 listed **Other Support** for all professional staff on the project?
- 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 uploaded a detailed, multiyear budget for any subcontracts?
- If applicable, have you uploaded a budget justification for any subcontracts?
- Have you uploaded **Biographical Sketches** for all professional staff on the project?
- Have you uploaded your completed **Proposal Narrative**?
- If applicable, have you uploaded all of the **Letters** of support/collaboration/approval?
- If applicable, have you uploaded all of the **Materials** in the appendix?
- Have you uploaded a properly signed **Coversheet**?
- Have you submitted your proposal prior to 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the date of the deadline?

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 concerning the Apply Online 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 Department of the Society:

Contacts

Phyllis Motta	(212) 476-0518	phyllis.motta@nmss.org
Claude Schofield, Ph.D.	(212) 476-0449	claudio.schofield@nmss.org
Nicholas G. LaRocca, Ph.D.	(212) 476-0414	nicholas.larocca@nmss.org

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