Instructions for Submission:
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
2019

Please read these instructions and follow them carefully. The application process itself consists of two parts, a short pre-application and the full application.

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**

Please note:
- 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 accepted by the Society.

Details concerning the grants management system and application process can be found in these instructions and on the MSGrants website itself. Details concerning the content for your application can be found in proposal guidelines specific to each funding opportunity**,** also available on the MSGrants website.

Applications that are incomplete exceed the page limitations and applications that use undersize or condensed type ***will not be considered for funding by the Society.*** The full application, including electronic institutional approval, must be submitted before the deadline.

1. GETTING STARTED

1.1. Registration

If you have never submitted a proposal to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, then you will need to register and be approved for access to MSGrants. 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*.

1.2. Password Reset

If you need to reset your password, please click on **Reset or Create Password** on the main login page for MSGrants or go to **https://nmss.fluxx.io/forgot_password.** At the next screen, enter the e-mail address that you used to register 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 may need to register as if you are a new user.

Your password should contain at least one of each of the following:

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

1.3. A Word about Passwords

It is important that you not share your password. Your password is linked directly to your account as a Principle Investigator and will provide access to all information used in your submissions to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. When logged in, you will be able to use MSGrants for a variety of purposes in addition to preparation and submission of proposals, such as submission of your progress reports. Your password for MSGrants never expires and you will not need to obtain a new password to apply for other funding programs or subsequent cycles.

2. NAVIGATING MSGrants

When you log on you will see the grantee portal (illustrated below). A description of the main parts of the grantee portal, accessed through the left-hand navigation menu, follows.
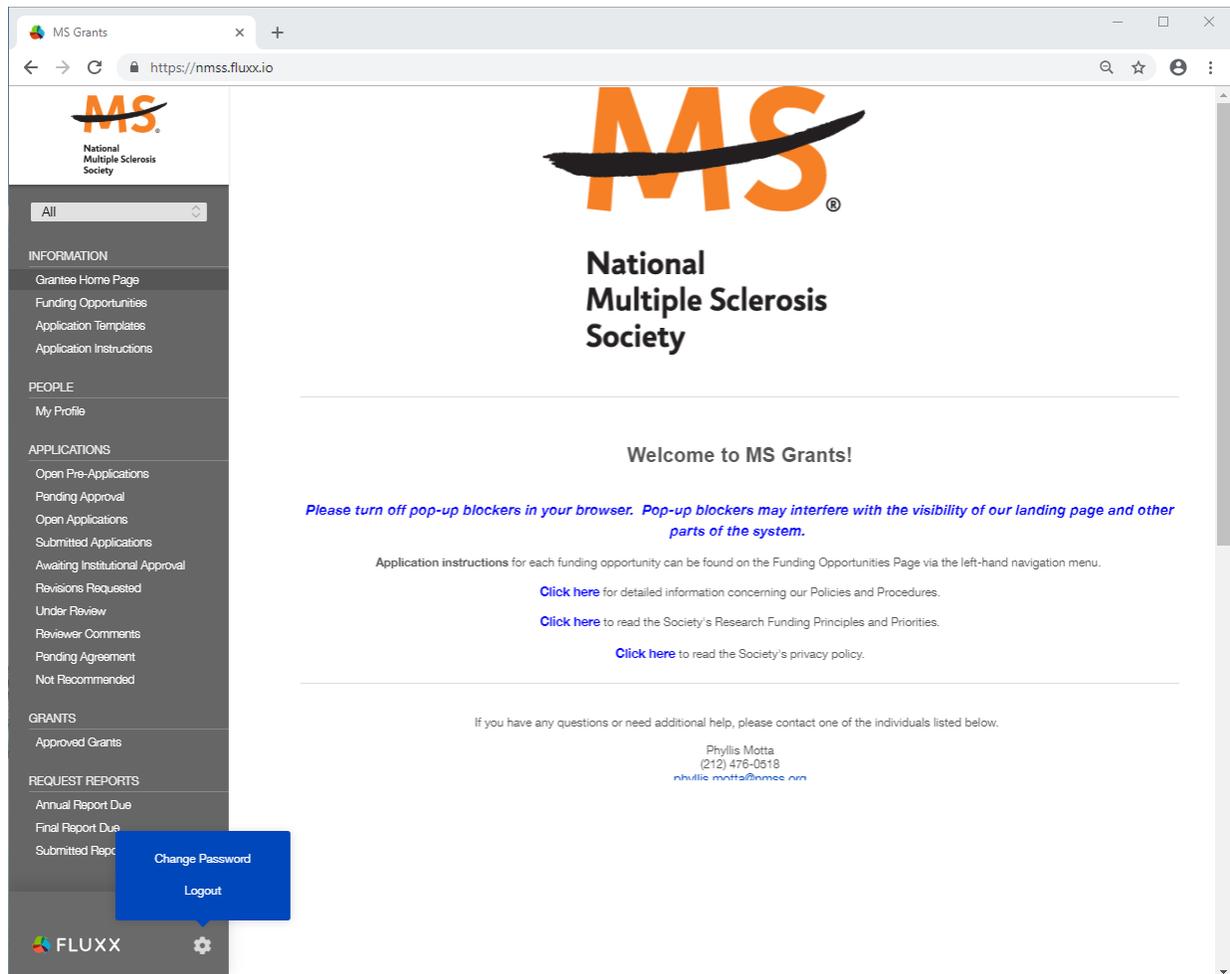
2.1. Information

Funding Opportunities—The funding opportunities that are currently available and the application deadlines. Click on **Apply Now** to start a pre-application.

Application Templates—Various documents available for download that you may need/use in preparing your application. These include the following:
- Templates available to use for preparing specific funding opportunity narratives
- A Word template to use for preparing biographical sketches
- An example of a lay summary
- A PDF file showing the keywords that you will also find in a dropdown list on applicable applications. This PDF file is provided to make it easier for you to see the entire list before making your selections.

Application Instructions—Instructions for all current funding opportunities

2.2. Users

My Profile—Your individual user profile information is outlined in this section. Please make sure all contact information is current and edit this information to update your profile.

2.3. Applications

As your application moves through the various steps in the system, it will be listed under different sections of the grantee portal.

Open Pre-Applications—All new applications and pre-applications that have been started AND saved, but not yet submitted. These pre-applications can be edited.

Pending Approval—Pre-applications that have been submitted for initial review by the Society are found in this section. These pre-applications cannot be edited.

Open Full Applications—Approved pre-applications become full applications and can be accessed in this section. Full applications can be edited and saved for continued revision later.

Submitted Applications—Full applications that have been submitted can be found here. These 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—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.

Pending Agreement—Applications that have been approved for funding, but which still require some additional processing and/or submission of documents can be found here.

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

Approved—Active grants (applications that have been approved for funding and which require no further processing) can be found here.

3. THE PRE-APPLICATION

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 staff to determine that 1) the applicant and organization are eligible to receive funding and 2) the research idea is consistent with the Society's mission and research strategies and the nature of the specific funding opportunity. 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.

***Please Note:** In order to make sure that all components of the final application, including institutional approval can be completed by the final deadline, the Society has enacted a deadline for pre-applications. The pre-application must be submitted *1 week prior to the deadline.*

3.1. How to Complete the Pre-Application

Once you are logged in, click on **Funding Opportunities** to see a list of funding opportunities, along with information on which opportunities are currently open and the application deadlines. Find the opportunity and click on **Apply Now** to open the pre-application form.

- **Title:** Enter a title for your pre-application (this can be changed later).
- **Eligibility Quiz:** The Eligibility quiz will establish whether you are eligible to apply for that funding opportunity, as outlined above. If you pass the eligibility criteria, the rest of the pre- application will open, and you can 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 this 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. If you have an incorrect affiliation or have moved, please contact the Society to change your affiliation.
- **Principal Investigator:** In the **Principal Investigator** field, select your name from the drop-down list.
- **Institutional or 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, leave it blank, and you will be able to edit or input correct information before you submit your 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 as plain text 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 project, including 10%

indirect costs. Indirect costs are only allowed on U.S. based projects. This figure will 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 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** 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.

3.2.   <u>Notification of pre-application approval</u>

Once the pre-application is approved, usually within two business days, you will receive an automated message from MSGrants and 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.

4. THE FULL APPLICATION

Once your pre-application has been approved you can log in and begin to prepare the full application. In 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, save your work, and return later to continue working as many times as you want, but all sections must be completed before you submit.

4.1. Navigation Tips

Editing—Any time before you submit your proposal, you can click on the edit button in the **upper right corner** to open your proposal for further editing.

Save your work—It is a good idea to save as you complete each part of the application. This button is located at the **bottom center** of the application when in edit mode.

Expanding sections—Black triangles ▶ indicate the sections of the application that will expand to open when you click on the triangle. The default of the application is for each section to be collapsed so only section headers are visible. You should open each section and complete all the required components in the section. Clicking the triangle again minimizes that section.

Types of input—The section components can either be drop-down lists, text boxes, or sections where you need to upload one or more files.

Uploading documents—Sections that require one or more files to be uploaded will have a document component, as shown below.

Click on the blue plus sign to open the upload dialogue box. Click on **Add Files** to browse for the file that you want to upload. Click on the dropdown menu to indicate the type of document you are uploading (ex. Biosketch or Proposal Narrative). Click on **Start Upload** to upload the file and exit out of the dialogue box to return to your application.
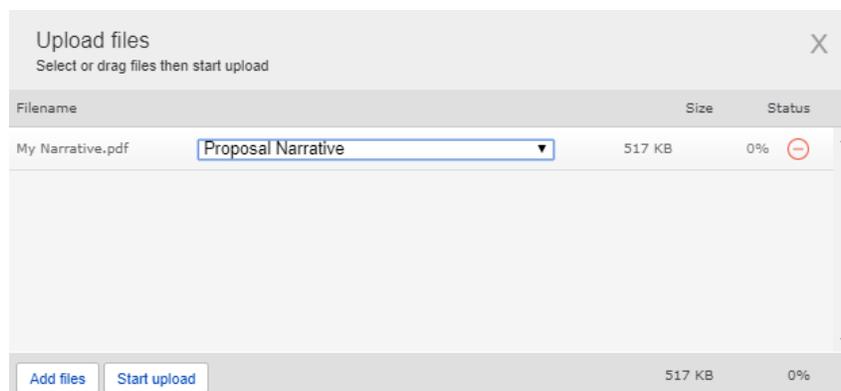
To change the document type or delete the file that you uploaded, position your cursor anywhere to the right of the name of the file and click on the pencil (edit) or the minus sign (delete) that appear.

Please note, any charts, diagrams and figures **MUST** be submitted as a PDF attachment. Additionally, paper copies will not be accepted and will be discarded if they are received by the Society.

Printing—You can click on the print button in the **upper right corner** (🖶) to obtain a PDF file of your application. This will not include the files attached.

Submitting—If you have completed your application, you can use the submit button located at the **bottom center** of the application while in edit mode to advance it to the next stage.

Withdrawing an application—If you do not wish to submit your proposal or continue working on it, you can use the withdraw button in the **bottom right corner**. Once you withdraw an application, it will not be considered. This option is generally used when an investigator has inadvertently started a duplicate application, or an application is not completed by the deadline.

4.2.   Required Fields

This section is a list of required fields 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.

4.3.   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.

4.4.   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 your institution. The primary signatory must be registered with the system 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.

In this section you will also confirm the location of the project; the name of the principal investigator, and the information for your Financial Officer. This information will be used if your application is awarded.

4.5. 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. (See next two sections)

IRB Approval File (if applicable)—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.

Institutional Animal Care File—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.

4.6. Letters of Support/Collaboration

Letters of collaboration/support from all individuals whose cooperation is necessary for the proposed research should be included. Letters must be converted to PDF format and uploaded as a single PDF file.

4.7. 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. This is important information for the society, and we please ask that applicants do not repurpose a scientific abstract for the lay summary. 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. If your project is funded, Society staff may make editorial changes to the summary to enhance its clarity.

4.8. Project Staff

Key professional personnel should be listed. This will assist the Society in more effectively tracking all the researchers and clinicians who participate in Society-funded

projects.

Biographical Sketches—NIH style is preferred but a biographical sketch template is available for downloading on the Application Templates section in case you need one. Biographical sketches are required for all <u>professional</u> personnel working on the project. All biographical sketches must be uploaded in PDF format.

4.9. 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.

4.10. 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 on the Application Templates page of MSGrants for downloading. This template parallels NIH format. Specifications are **11 point or larger font**, and **half-inch margins on all sides**. Applications that manipulate fonts, margins or spacing to circumvent the page limits will not be reviewed. Once the narrative is completed, it must be converted to PDF format and uploaded in this section.

Required Content for the proposed Collaborative Research Center plan:

<u>**Changes to Previous Application, if applicable**</u> **(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 <u>not</u> indicate changes by colored text or shading.

<u>**New Proposals from Previous NMSS Center Awardees**</u>**, if applicable (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 <u>new</u> application in which at least two <u>new</u> 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.

<u>**Proposed Program**</u>**—**This section should be divided by the following subtitles and the entire section should not exceed <u>six</u> pages. The Collaborative Plan should comprise of at least <u>two</u> 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 any of the National MS Society's [five Research Priority Areas](#), 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 and the Society's research priority areas 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.

Supporting Information—This section should contain 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.

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

4.11. Materials Submitted

This is the section where appendix materials submitted with your application are 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. **Caution:** Do not use this section to circumvent the page limits of the narrative section. Putting information here that belongs in the narrative may result in a more negative assessment by the peer review panel.

Items commonly included in the appendix are:

- **Publications: A maximum of 3** reprints or preprints 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.

4.12. Budget

The Society requires a detailed budget for the proposed project, and the budget must be prepared using MSGrants. 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 plus ("+") 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 <u>one</u> Collaborative Center Award from the Society at any given time.

Please review the NMSS Policies and Procedures for information regarding General Categories of Expenditures or contact staff with any questions.

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 and this is automatically calculated by the system.

4.13. <u>Budget Justification</u>

The budget justification can be typed directly into the text box online or copy and pasted as plain text into the text box and then formatted using the tools within MSGrants. Please do not copy text with formatting as this can cause errors in how the text is displayed.

Sub-Contractor Budget Justification—The budget justification can be typed directly into the text box online or copy and pasted as plain text into the text box from a word processor.

5. <u>DUAL SUBMISION TO OTHER AGENCIES</u>

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.

6. SUBMISSION OF YOUR PROPOSAL

Once you are satisfied with your proposal and all sections are marked as complete, you can click on the **Submit** button, available at the bottom center of the application while in edit mode. This will lock your proposal from further editing and move it to the **Authorization** step that is completed by the Institutional Signatory.

6.1. Authorization (Institutional Approval)

Submitted applications are first routed to the Institutional or Primary Signatory identified in the application for approval and final submission to the Society. 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 log on to the system, open the application, and approve or authorize the application before it is submitted to the Society. This **_must_** be completed **_prior_** to 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the date of the deadline.

Please note, 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.

6.2. Confirmation

Once your Institutional Signatory has submitted the application, the Principle Investigator and Institutional Signatory will both receive an automated email confirming receipt of your application by the Society. When your application is successfully submitted, it will be available for review and printing in your portal under the section **Under Review**.

7. <u>APPLICATION CHECKLIST</u>

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 listed all professional staff in the **Project Staff** section?

☐   Have you uploaded **Biographical Sketches** for all professional staff on the project, including the PI?

☐   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 completed 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?

8. <u>HELP IS AVAILABLE</u>

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:

<u>Contacts</u>

Paula Mullings   (212) 476-0418   paula.mullings@nmss.org

Caryn Knutsen   (212) 476-0437   caryn.knutsen@nmss.org

Mark Allegretta, Ph.D.   (802) 425-5545   mark.allegretta@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.