



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**

## **Instructions for Submission: Biostatistics/Informatics Junior Faculty Award**

### **National Multiple Sclerosis Society**

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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://nms.fluxx.io>

Please note:

- Compatible browsers include **Chrome, Firefox, and Safari**. Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge are **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 not previously 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](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:

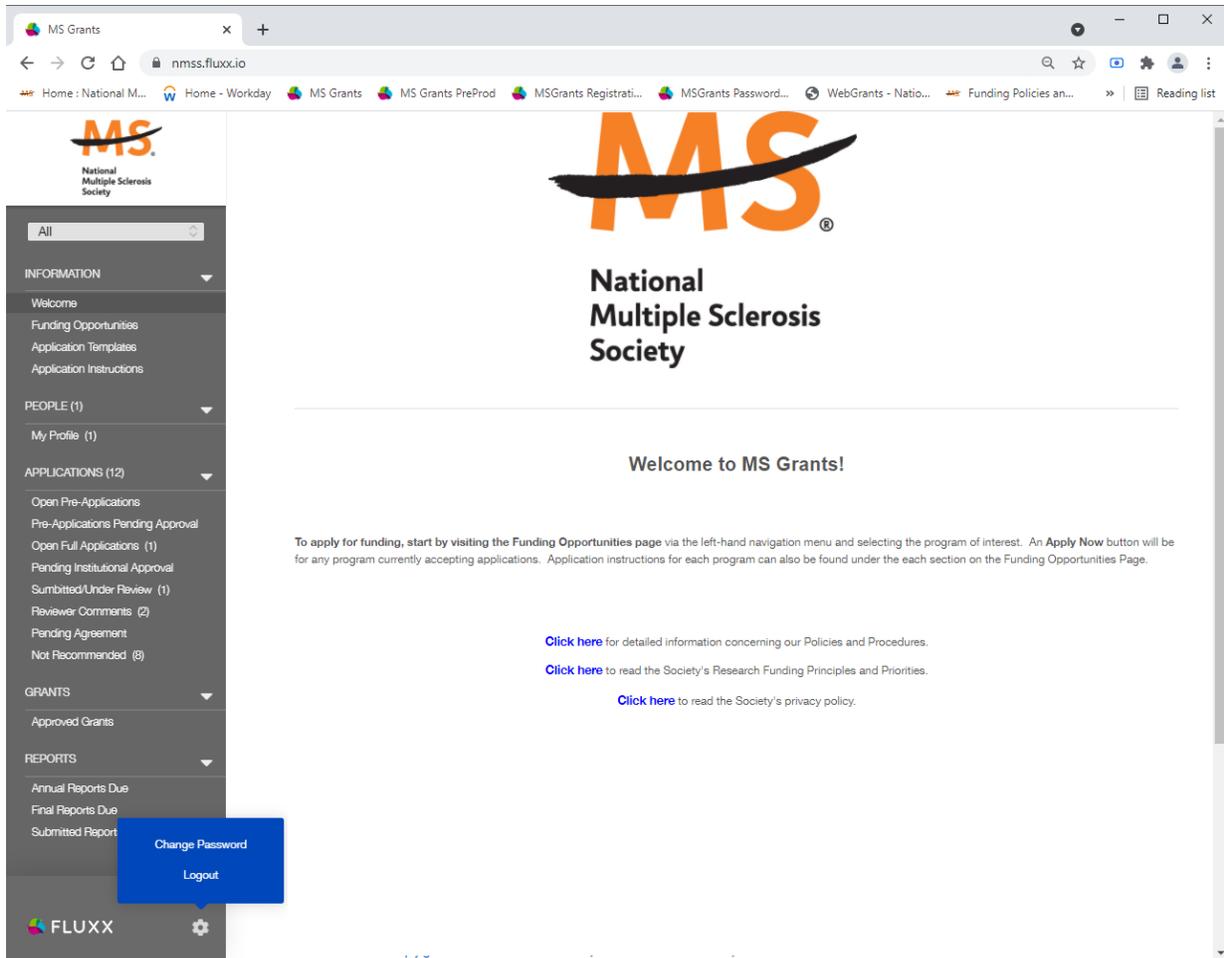
- Uppercase letter (A through Z)
- Lowercase letter (a through z)
- Number (0 through 9)

### 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 Principal 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 for preparing specific funding opportunity narratives
- A Word template for preparing biographical sketches
- An example of a plain language 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 pre-applications that have been started AND saved, but not yet submitted. These pre-applications can be edited.

**Pre-Applications 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.

**Pending Institutional Approval**—Full applications have been submitted and are pending institutional approval can be found here. Applications in this section cannot be edited by anyone other than the Institutional Signatory identified in the application.

**Submitted/Under Review**—Applications that have been submitted can be found here. These applications will be screened by Society staff and advanced through the peer review process; 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 are found here.

### 2.4. Grants

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

### 2.5. Reports

**Annual Reports Due**—All annual reports scheduled for multi-year grants can be found here. Reports in this section can be edited and saved for continued revision later.

**Final Reports Due**—All final reports for grants can be found here. Reports in this section can be edited and saved for continued revision later.

**Submitted Reports**—All reports submitted to Society staff can be found in this section. These

reports cannot be edited.

### **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 [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#) 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 of interest and click on **Apply Now** to open the pre-application form.

- **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:** The **Organization** field will be pre-populated with the organization identified in your profile. 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 Signatory:** This is the individual who “signs off” on the application on behalf of your institution, meaning they have the legal authority to act and speak for the institution and are authorized to act on behalf of the institution and to assume the obligations. The Signatory will be responsible for authorizing the application in MSGrants to complete the application submission. If you do not know who this is, leave it blank, and you will be able to edit or input the correct information before you submit your full application.
- **Title:** Enter a title for your pre-application (this can be changed later in the full application).
- **Summary:** In the **Brief Summary of Research Idea** text box, insert a brief (500 words or less) description of your proposed project.
- **Project Zip Code:** In the **Project Zip Code** field enter the zip code where the work will be done. If more than one site is going to be used, this should be the Zip code of the primary or lead site.
- **Amount Requested:** In the **Estimate of Amount Requested** field, enter your best estimate of the total cost of your proposed project, including indirect costs. Indirect costs, 10%, are only allowed on U.S. based projects. Indirect costs are not provided for institutions outside of the United States. This figure will not be used to evaluate whether to approve your pre-

application and you will be able to change this figure in the full application.

- **Biosketch or CV Upload:** Upload your Biosketch as a PDF document

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, though you will still 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. Notification of pre-application approval

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 Full 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** of the application when in edit mode.

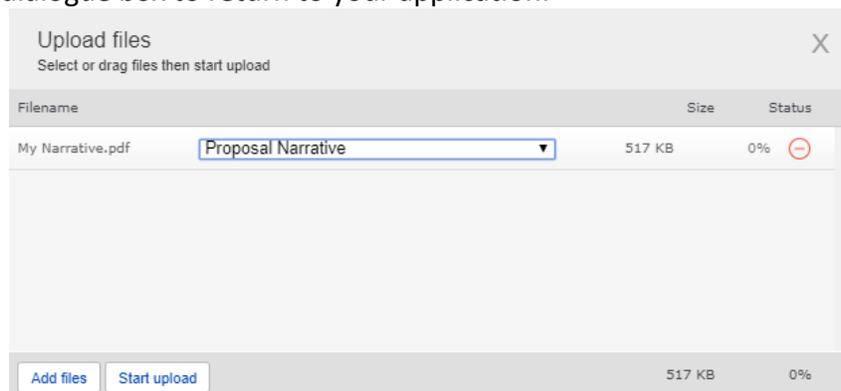
**Expanding sections**—Black triangles indicate the sections of the application that will expand to open when you click on the triangle. The default of the application is for each section to be collapsed so only section headers are visible. You should open each section and complete all the required components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

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

**Submitting**—When you have completed your application, you can use the submit button located at the **bottom right** of the application after you have saved and exited 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**. Once you withdraw an application, it will not be considered for funding. This option is generally used when an investigator has inadvertently started a duplicate application or decided not to submit an application that has already been started.

#### 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.

**Note on resubmissions:** for fellowship programs, an application is considered a resubmission if the applicant has applied to the same program previously, regardless of whether the research project described has changed.

#### **4.4. Institutional Official**

This section will be pre-populated from your pre-application, but you should confirm that the Principal Investigator and Institutional Signatory information is correct.

The **Principal Investigator** should be the applicant. The individual selected in this field will receive all communications for this application.

The **Institutional Signatory** is the institutional official who has the legal authority to act and speak for the institution and is authorized to act on behalf of the institution and to assume the obligations. The Signatory will be responsible for authorizing the application in MSGrants to complete the application submission. This individual is required to have a MS Grants account, and complete authorization of the application online. If the Signatory is not registered, this individual must go to the MSGrants log on page <https://nmss.fluxx.io> and register before they will appear in the dropdown list to be added to the application. The Principal Investigator may not serve as the institutional signatory.

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

#### **4.5. Project Staff**

The key professional personnel with whom you are collaborating should be listed. This will assist the Society in more effectively tracking all the researchers and clinicians who participate in Society-funded projects.

#### **4.6. Biographical Sketches**

Confirm or update your biographical sketch uploaded in the pre-application in PDF format and add the CV(s) in PDF of one or more members of the MS group with whom you propose to

collaborate. Any biosketches that were uploaded with the pre-application will appear in this section of the application and do not need to be uploaded again.

An NIH style biosketch is required and a template is available for download on the Application Templates section of MSGrants if needed. All biographical sketches must be uploaded in PDF format and labeled as “Biosketch.”

#### **4.7. Plain Language Description of Proposed Project**

The plain language description should describe your proposed research in language suitable for a news release to the lay public. This is important information for the society and for the success of the application. We please ask that applicants do not repurpose a scientific abstract for the plain language description. The plain language description 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. Applicants are advised to utilize the many resources the Society had provided on how to write a successful Plain Language Description [found here](#) (.pdf). If your project is funded, Society staff may make editorial changes to the summary to enhance its clarity.

#### **4.8. Scientific Summary of Proposed Project**

This is equivalent to a scientific abstract, and this summary should capture in condensed form the rationale, specific aims, methods, anticipated outcomes, and how the proposed research addresses the National MS Society’s [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#).

#### **4.9. Proposal Narrative**

The proposal narrative is the focal point of the application and the main document that scientific peer reviewers will use to evaluate for scientific merit. All proposal narratives should adhere to standard NIH formatting, and a template is available for download on the Application Templates page of MSGrants. The specifications are 11 point or larger font (Ariel or Times New Roman), single spaced and half-inch margins on all sides. Proposals that manipulate font size, spacing or margins to circumvent the page limit will be not reviewed. The proposal narrative should contain the following sections:

##### **Overview of Research Program (PAGE LIMIT: Up to 3 pages):**

- This section should provide an overview of the candidate’s current activities and outline of the planned MS research collaboration. The applicant should list collaborators and describe the overarching themes of the planned MS research, long-term goals, and relevance to the National MS Society’s [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#).

##### **Research Plan (PAGE LIMIT: Up to 10 pages):**

- This section should consist of a proposed 3-year research project(s) that supports the

candidate's overarching research program. This section should follow the general conventions of a research grant proposal and may include figures and data tables related to the research. This section should include the individual subsections listed below, each of which may be any length, as long as the entire research plan does not exceed the page limit of ten pages.

- **Background**
- **Specific aims**
- **Experimental design**
- **Dataset(s) to be evaluated**
- **Any preliminary data**
- **Any other sources of support for this work**

#### **Literature Cited (no page limit)**

- Any appropriate and relevant literature cited in any section of the proposal narrative should be listed into a single bibliography section placed at the end of the narrative. Please give the full title and bibliographic reference for all work cited in your application. There is no set page limit for references, but it should be of reasonable length.

Once the narrative is completed, all components should be collated into a single document and must be converted to PDF format, uploaded in this section, and labeled as "Proposal Narrative."

#### **4.10. 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 Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval memos, they must be uploaded in PDF format as part of the application.

IRB Approval File (if applicable)—If your proposed research involves human subjects, you must provide a signed and dated approval letter from the IRB or equivalent appropriate committee of your institution. If approval is pending, indicate that the project has been submitted to the committee for review in the Human Subjects section. Payment for approved grants will not begin until a signed and dated approval is received, reviewed and approved by the Society.

Institutional Animal Care File (if applicable)—For research involving animals, it is the obligation of the Principal Investigator to provide written approval from the applicants (or subcontractor's) Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee (IACUC) or equivalent international accreditation committee. If approval has been granted, a copy of the signed and dated approval letter must be submitted. If approval is pending, indicate that the project has been submitted to the committee for review in the Vertebrate Animals section. This approval must be received by the Society prior to the release of any funds specifically related to the part of the Project that requires this kind of approval, and a copy of the approval must be received by the Society on an annual basis during the funding term of the Award.

All biomedical research which involves the use of animals must adhere to the laws and guidelines for use of animals in scientific experimentation imposed by the country in which the experiments are conducted.

#### **4.11. Letters of Support/Collaboration**

This is the section where letters submitted with your application are uploaded, such as letters of collaboration or support from any individuals whose cooperation is necessary for the proposed research plan. This section should not be used for the submission of the Reference Letters described above. Letters must be converted to PDF format and should be combined and uploaded as a single PDF file and labeled as “Letters.”

For the Biostatistics/Informatics Fellowship, applicants must include letter(s) of support from one or more members of the MS research group with whom candidate proposes to collaborate, detailing the goals of the collaboration, anticipated collaborative project(s), funding sources for the data-generating study(ies), frequency of meetings with the fellow, and other information that will enable reviewers to assess the feasibility and opportunities provided by the collaboration. A letter of support from the applicant’s department chair is also required.

#### **4.12. Materials Submitted**

This is the section where appendix materials submitted with your application are uploaded. Examples of common appendix materials are listed below. Appendix materials must be in PDF format and can be uploaded either as a combined file or as multiple PDF files and should be labeled “Materials.” **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.
- **Questionnaires and assessments:** If your proposed study utilizes questionnaires or other types of printed assessment instruments, you may want to include these as part of the appendix.
- **Other Materials:** 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.

#### **4.13. Other Support**

The Society requires detailed information concerning current and pending support for the applicant. 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 and labeled as “Other Document.”

#### **4.14. Budget**

The Society requires a detailed budget for the proposed project, and the budget must be submitted using MSGrants. The Biostatistics/Informatics Award provides three years of partial salary or equivalent support, as well as some support for access to datasets and the budget must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Salary or Teaching Buy-out:** The program provides partial (25-50%) salary support or teaching buy-out funds, with a 3% annual increase in each of the remaining 2 years. The total salary may be supplemented by funds from other sources to a level commensurate with the current pay scale of the sponsoring institution, but not to exceed the NIH salary caps (in place on date of application).
- **Research Support:** The maximal direct costs for dataset fees that may be requested and justified in the grant budget of the award is \$20,000 per year. Sources of other support/funding should be specified in the budget justification for datasets that require more than \$20,000 per year.
- **Travel:** Justified travel fees of \$2,000 per year to attend a domestic conference are also permitted to the extent that they further the goals of the collaboration.

The budget module is divided into sections such as “Personnel” or “Research Support” and project years. To add a line item to the budget, click on the plus (“+”) button to open the form. The Society will pay up to 10% indirect costs on all eligible expenses, but these costs should not be added as line items because indirect costs are automatically calculated by the system in the final budget calculations (see next section).

#### **4.15. Final Budget Calculations**

The Final Budget Calculations module automatically calculates direct costs, indirect costs, and totals. Please note that you cannot edit the final budget calculations or the indirect cost section. The final budget calculations will only update after you save the application, so it is recommended to save your application periodically as you add line items.

#### **4.16. 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 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.

#### **4.17. Applicant Demographics**

The Society is requesting this information to be used for internal purposes only, specifically to help inform the Society's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity initiatives (please see our Cultural Values and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement online [here](#)). Your responses will be confidential and will not affect consideration of your application.

## 5. 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 it is indicated on the **Project Information** section of your proposal.

## 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 right of the application after the application is saved. This will lock your proposal from further editing and move it to the **Authorization** step, which is completed by the Institutional Signatory.

### 6.1. Authorization (Institutional Approval)

Submitted applications are first routed to the Institutional 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 automatically 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 step **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 Principal 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 **Submitted/Under Review**.

## 7. APPLICATION 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 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 completed the **Plain Language Description**?
- Have you completed the **Scientific Summary**?
- Have you uploaded your completed **Proposal Narrative**?
- 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?
- If applicable, have you uploaded all of the **Materials** in the appendix?
- Have you uploaded **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?
- Has the Institutional Signatory of your organization **Authorized** submission of your application?

## 8. 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:

### Program Contact

Bruce Bebo, PhD                      [bruce.bebo@nmss.org](mailto:bruce.bebo@nmss.org)

### MSGrants Troubleshooting

Phyllis Motta                        [phyllis.motta@nmss.org](mailto:phyllis.motta@nmss.org)

Caryn Knutsen                      [caryn.knutsen@nmss.org](mailto:caryn.knutsen@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.**