



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

Instructions for Submission: Pilot Grant Applications National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Please read these instructions and follow them carefully.

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.
- All applications must be submitted in the English language, including all materials and documentation, and budgets must be submitted in U.S. dollars to be considered for review.

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:

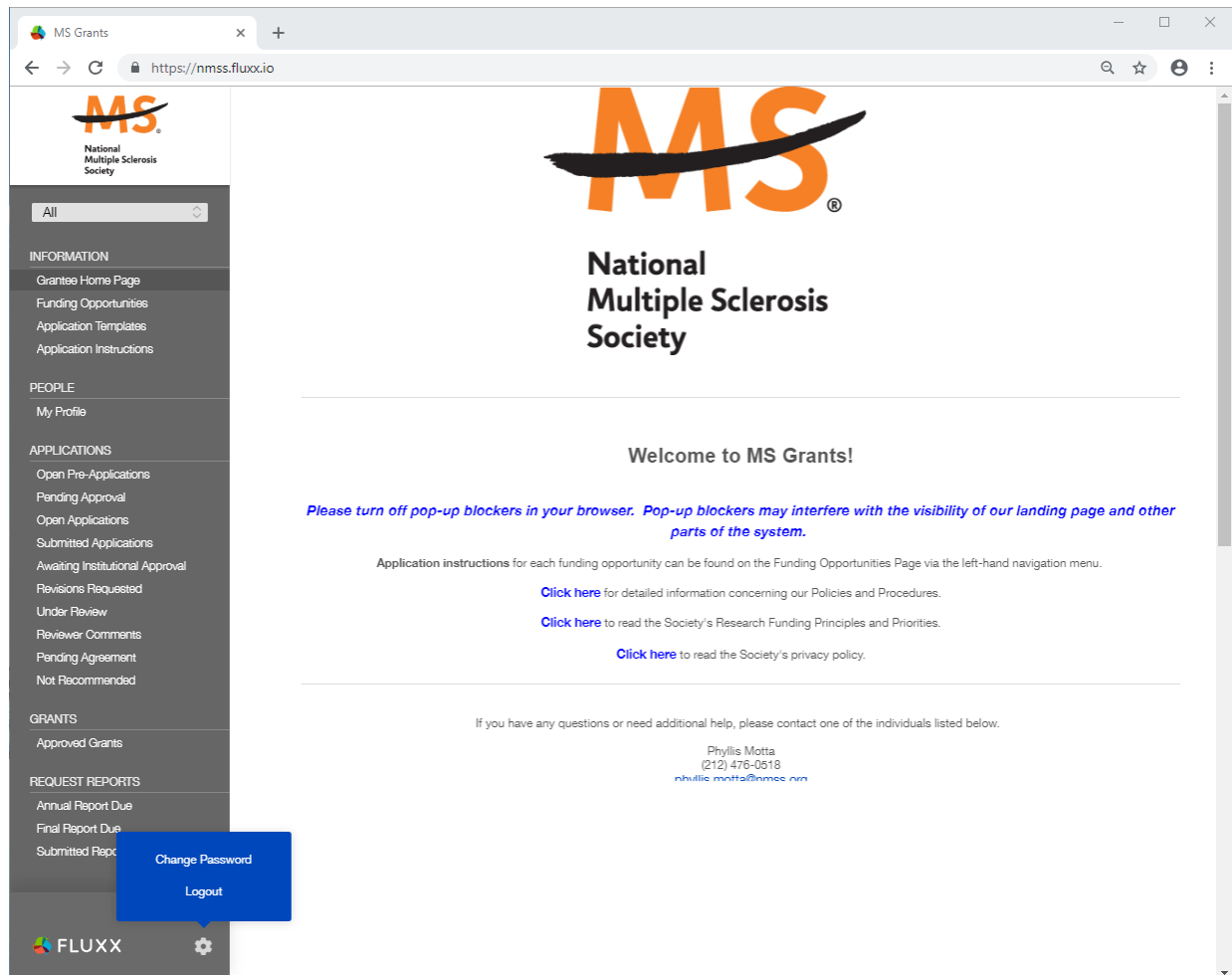
- Uppercase letter (A through Z)
- Lowercase letter (a through z)
- Number (0 through 9)

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 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 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 at a later time.

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.

Approved—Active grants (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.

3. THE PRE-APPLICATION

For each funding opportunity, a pre-application must be completed and submitted to the Society before the applicant can prepare a full application, including resubmissions. 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, ***we required applicants submit a pre-application for review two business days in advance of the final deadline***. Pre-applications are required for all applications, including resubmissions.

3.1. Eligibility

Researchers who have completed their post-doctoral training, and who are considered eligible by their institutions to apply for a research grant, are invited to apply. Individuals who are currently postdoctoral fellows or the equivalent, or who are graduate/medical students or residents, are not eligible for support under this program.

Applicants are not eligible to apply if they have an existing National MS Society pilot research award that expires later than the application deadline.

Additionally, only one application from each PI will be reviewed in for a given application deadline.

Please reference the [Policies and Procedures](#) for more information.

3.2. 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 Pilot Research Grants 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. If you pass all of 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 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. The maximum budget for the Pilot program is \$55,000 for U.S. institutions, inclusive of 10% indirect costs (\$5,000), and \$50,000 for non-U.S. institutions. 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 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** 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.

3.3. Notification of pre-application approval

Once the pre-application is approved you will receive an automated message from MSGrants 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 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

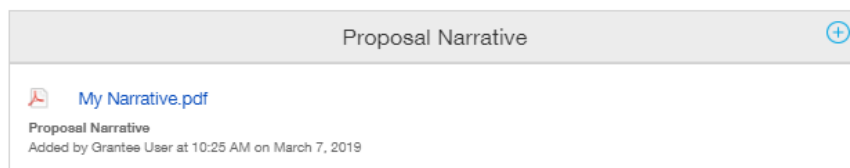
Editing—Any time before you submit your proposal, you can click on the edit button in the **upper right corner** to open your proposal for further editing.

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.

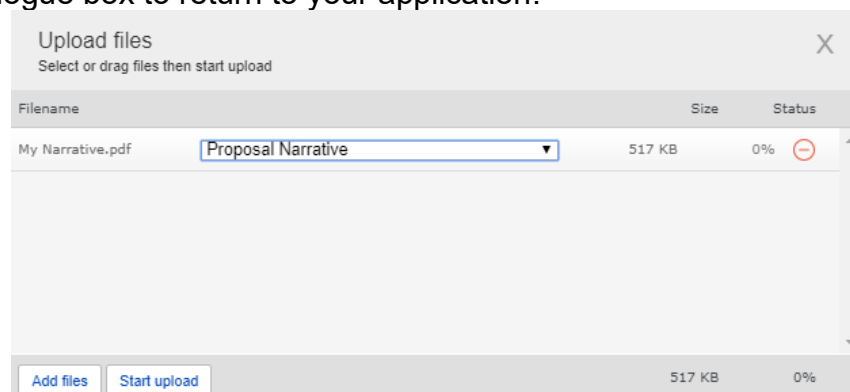
Expanding sections—Black triangles ► indicate the sections of the application that will expand to open when you click on the triangle. The default of the application is for each section to be collapsed so only section headers are visible. You should open each section and complete all the required components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

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. Letters Submitted with Application

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. Letters must be converted to PDF format and uploaded as a single PDF file.

4.6. 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.

4.7. 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 [five Research Priority Areas](#).

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. Please note that for Pilot Grants, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students may assist on the project but may not request salary support.

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 any PI, Co-I, technical staff, and postdoctoral researchers listed on grants. 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 and the main document that reviewers will evaluate. For Pilot Grants, the main component of the proposal is a **scientific narrative which is a maximum of 2 pages**. A template in Microsoft Word format is provided on the MSGrants portal for downloading, see the page called **Application Templates**. This template parallels NIH format. Specifications are 2 pages single spaced (not including references), 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. Applicants who are resubmitting an application should include a brief (about half a page) cover letter detailing their response to the reviewers' comments from the prior submission.

The proposal narrative contains the following components (please note page limits for each component):

Cover letter (Required for resubmissions)

- For a revised, resubmitted application a cover letter is required. In a revised application, there must be changes in the content of the application. This page must summarize the additions, deletions, and changes and may include responses to the criticisms and issues raised by the reviewers of your previous application. Please do not indicate changes by colored text or shading in the scientific narrative.

- **COVER LETTER PAGE LIMIT: one half page**

Scientific narrative

- Include all text related to the research plan in this section. For pilot grants, preliminary data is not specifically required. However, if you choose to include preliminary data, any figures or tables must be imbedded within the 2 pages of text. Supplemental or additional materials are not permitted and will not be evaluated. While there are no requirements for specific sections within the 2-page scientific narrative, applicants may include specific aims, background, preliminary results, experimental design, methods and the proposal's relevance to Multiple Sclerosis.
- **SCIENTIFIC NARRATIVE PAGE LIMIT: two pages**

References

- Include the appropriate literature citations after the 2-page scientific narrative. 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 2-page limit for the narrative does not include the references, i.e., the references can go beyond the 2-page limit.
- **REFERENCES PAGE LIMIT: none**

Facilities Available (Optional)

- Applicants may 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. This document can be placed after the references and does not count against the page limit.
- **FACILITIES PAGE LIMIT: one page**

4.11. Budget

The Society requires a detailed budget for the proposed project, submitted in USD. The budget module is divided into sections such as "Personnel," "Equipment," "Supplies," etc. To add a line item to the budget, click on the blue plus sign 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.

Indirect Costs—The budget module automatically calculates direct costs, indirect costs, and totals; you cannot edit the indirect cost section. This section is calculated by the system based on your entries and is not editable by applicants. Of note, salaries for postdoctoral fellow and graduate students or travel to conferences are **not** permitted for pilot grants.

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.

4.12. Budget Justification

The budget justification for personnel should be discussed in terms of percent effort. 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.

4.13. Materials Submitted with Application

Additional materials, including figures, tables, methods or similar text **are not permitted for pilot grants**. All scientific information must be contained within the 2-page scientific narrative.

5. 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.

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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 **Under Review**.

6. 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 completed all required items in the **Human Subjects and/or Vertebrate Animals** section?
- If applicable, have you uploaded all 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 listed **Other Support** for all professional staff on the project?
- Have you uploaded your completed **Proposal Narrative**?
- 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 Primary Signatory of your organization **Authorized** submission of your application?

7. 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

Phyllis Motta	(212) 476-0518	phyllis.motta@nmss.org
Caryn Knutsen	(212) 476-0437	caryn.knutsen@nmss.org
Fiona Brabazon	(212) 476-0475	fiona.brabazon@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.