



PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH GRANTS 2015 APPLICATION GUIDE

This guide provides information on the letter of intent (LOI) and full grant application (FGA) process for the Neilsen Foundation's **Psychosocial Research Grants** (also referred to as PSR Grants). There is one funding cycle per year, with the current cycle of PSR Grant awards to be funded in early 2016.

For the purpose of this funding initiative, the Neilsen Foundation defines psychosocial research as 1) research focused on the influence of psychological and social factors on an individual's health, functioning or quality of life, or 2) research addressing the interrelation of psychological (e.g., behavioral, emotional, cognitive) and social (e.g., interpersonal, community, environmental) factors with health, disability, participation and other quality of life factors relevant to people living with spinal cord injuries (SCI). The Neilsen Foundation is particularly interested in outcomes research, or effectiveness research, that seeks to measure, evaluate or improve approaches that are patient-centered (i.e., interactions between medical practitioners and individuals with SCI) and/or consumer-centered (i.e., nonmedical interventions for people living with SCI at any stage).

It is critical that applicants follow the instructions and deadlines in the current Application Guide as the Guide is subject to change. Any updates will be posted at the Neilsen Foundation website, www.chnfoundation.org. Adherence to all requirements (both in this Application Guide and the Foundation website) is required and strictly enforced. If there is a conflict in PSR Grant deadlines between these two sources, the Neilsen Foundation website should be considered as the most up-to-date. Applicants are encouraged to sign up on our website to receive application deadline notifications. **Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines, deadlines and documentation requirements will be rejected without review.**

CURRENT DEADLINES	
April 1, 2015 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	LOI submissions due via proposalCENTRAL
May 2015	Notification of LOI Results
July 24, 2015 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	FGA submissions due via proposalCENTRAL
December 2015	Notification of FGA Results

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: OVERVIEW OF GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES	3
A. About the Neilsen Foundation	3
B. Psychosocial Research (PSR) Funding	4
C. General Eligibility and Other Requirements	6
▪ Eligibility	6
▪ Other Requirements	6
▪ PSR Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants	7
▪ PSR Pilot Grants	8
▪ PSR Proof of Concept Grants	9
 PART 2: LOI and FGA APPLICATION PROCESS	 11
A. Application Deadline Dates and Times	11
B. Overview of Application Submission on proposalCENTRAL	11
▪ Online Submission	11
▪ Neilsen Foundation Forms/Templates	11
▪ PDF Attachments	11
▪ Applicant Contact Information	11
▪ Information Consistency and Accuracy	12
▪ Important Notice for Full Grant Applications.....	12
▪ Technical Assistance.....	12
C. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission	13
▪ LOI Submission Deadline	13
▪ Format	13
▪ Information to Include in the LOI	13
▪ Notification of LOI Results.....	14
D. Evaluation Criteria for Letters of Intent.....	14
E. Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission.....	15
▪ Full Grant Application Submission Deadline	15
▪ Format	15
▪ Application Requirements	15
▪ Notification of Application Results and Award Process.....	17
▪ Institutional Review Board/Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee Approvals.....	17
▪ Disbursement of Grant Funds	18
F. Evaluation Criteria for Full Grant Applications.....	18
G. Resubmission of a Full Grant Application.....	21
H. Concurrent and Subsequent PSR Program Submissions	21
I. Concurrent Grants across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios	22
J. Additional Information and Contacts.....	22

CRAIG H. NEILSEN FOUNDATION

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH GRANTS 2015 APPLICATION GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: The Craig H. Neilsen Foundation is undergoing a period of transition and expansion, necessitating significant revision of our funding-related materials. These instructions have been updated for the current grant cycle. Please read them carefully and disregard earlier versions of our *PSR or Psychosocial Research Grants* application policies, procedures, guidelines, forms and deadlines. Applications that do not adhere to the most current guidelines and requirements will be rejected without review.

PART 1: OVERVIEW OF GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES

A. About the Neilsen Foundation

CRAIG H. NEILSEN LEGACY

The Craig H. Neilsen Foundation was established in 2002 as a private foundation dedicated to spinal cord injury (SCI) research and quality of life programs for people living with SCI. Mr. Neilsen lived with a high level spinal cord injury for 21 years until his passing in 2006. He was a visionary with an entrepreneurial spirit who led his companies with inexhaustible passion. He lived each day to the fullest with courage, determination, and dignity. While he worked hard and was grateful for what he had, he always remembered others who were experiencing challenges similar to his own. Craig Neilsen wanted his Foundation to contribute in a significant way to SCI research and to offer those with SCI the quality of life they deserve.

MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation is to improve the quality of life for those living with SCI and support scientific exploration for effective therapies and treatments leading to a cure.

With this vision for the future, the Neilsen Foundation funds SCI projects that will:

- Lead to key discoveries through innovative and collaborative mechanistic, translational, preclinical and clinical research.
- Establish standards for the delivery of care, particularly in the area of rehabilitation.
- Empower individuals living with SCI to live independently in the community and enjoy improved emotional and physical well-being.

CRAIG H. NEILSEN FOUNDATION SCI FUNDING PORTFOLIOS

- **Psychosocial Research (PSR):** Research focused on the interrelation of psychological (e.g., behavioral, emotional, cognitive) and social (e.g., interpersonal, community, environmental) factors with health, disability, participation and other quality of life factors relevant to people living with SCI. Research areas of particular interest include: aging, caregiving (formal and informal networks), employment/work, health behaviors and fitness, independent living/lifestyle, self-management/self-care, and technology access.
- **Quality of Life (QOL):** Funding to support innovative programs that improve independence for individuals living with SCI. Areas of focus include: assistive technology, education, employment, independent living, rehabilitation, and sports and recreation.
- **Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Fellowships (SCIMF):** Fellowships to ACGME-accredited programs to train physicians specifically in the field of SCI.

- **Spinal Cord Injury Research on the Translational Spectrum (SCIRTS):** Research designed to improve understanding and advance the treatment of acute and chronic SCI and to fill gaps in the field, including mechanistic, preclinical modeling, translational and/or clinical research.

See page 22 for information about allowable applications to more than one Neilsen Foundation portfolio.

Please visit the Neilsen Foundation website at www.chnfoundation.org for application guides, cycles, deadlines and information on previously funded grants.

B. Psychosocial Research Funding

BACKGROUND

It is estimated that in the United States and Canada, over 13,000 people sustain SCI each year. The personal and economic effects of SCI are well known by individuals sustaining the injury, their families, and providers who manage their care. Depending on the level of injury, the ability to perform activities of daily living like walking, feeding, grooming and personal care can be significantly impaired. The impact of loss of function and paralysis often leads to drastic lifestyle changes that require adjustment and adaptation.

Within this context, research related to psychosocial adjustment and quality of life can inform individuals with SCI and their providers about strategies to improve and enhance well-being and life satisfaction. In recent years, there has been a growing body of research that has contributed to the understanding of how emotional, behavioral, social and environmental factors are associated with health, wellness, productivity, quality of life, social well-being, and life satisfaction. The fact remains, however, that more research is needed to understand and improve biopsychosocial outcomes.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to better understand the relationship among biological, psychological and social aspects of health and functioning in people living with SCI, as well as identify and prioritize critical program gaps and develop more effective interventions to improve psychological and social outcomes in individuals with SCI across the lifespan, the Neilsen Foundation expanded its grant-making portfolio in 2013 to specifically include funding for **Psychosocial Research (PSR)**.

The Neilsen Foundation PSR portfolio includes 1) research focused on the influence of psychological and social factors on an individual's health, functioning or quality of life, or 2) research addressing the interrelation of psychological (e.g., behavioral, emotional, cognitive) and social (e.g., interpersonal, community, environmental) factors with health, disability, participation and other quality of life factors relevant to people living with SCI.

Emphasis is placed on research directed towards:

- Increased understanding of psychological, social and environmental determinants of health, functioning and activity participation;
- Rehabilitation and habilitation interventions to improve psychological and social functioning, including participation in work, school and other community activities;
- Improved measurements of psychological, social and environmental risk factors, protective factors, processes and outcomes; and
- Identification of critical service gaps, needed data and/or new areas of exploration, within a psychosocial or socioecological context, as defined by, or with input from, people living with SCI.

The **overall goal** for the Neilsen PSR initiative is to lead to “better outcomes for people living with SCI.” PSR topics can address persons with SCI across the lifespan, including targeted SCI population subgroups or

specific aspects of psychological and social support factors that impact health, functioning or quality of life. Research can involve qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies.

The following seven **research topic areas** are of particular interest to the Neilsen Foundation:

- Aging
- Caregiving (formal and informal networks)
- Employment/Work
- Health Behaviors and Fitness
- Independent Living/Lifestyle
- Self-Management/Self-Care
- Technology Access

Examples of critical cross-cutting **strategies** within this grant portfolio include:

- Developing more robust outcome measures for PSR and better definitions of psychosocial barriers to health, independent functioning and excellent quality of life; and
- Supporting the development, testing and adoption of effective interventions.

The Neilsen Foundation is particularly interested in outcomes research, or effectiveness research, that seeks to measure, evaluate or improve approaches that are patient-centered (i.e., interactions between medical practitioners and individuals with SCI) and/or consumer-centered (i.e., nonmedical interventions for people living with SCI at any stage).

Applications to this initiative **must** be research-oriented and psychosocial in their focus. The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions from eligible individuals across a wide range of disciplines; however, it is strongly encouraged that relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise are represented on the project team. PSR Grants are intended to complement the other grant portfolios that are currently funded by the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation. For example, requests to provide adaptive technology to clients with SCI or to enhance services for rehabilitative or transitional programs for people with SCI would fall under the Quality of Life Grants category. A research study to explore novel interventions aimed at improving neurologic function after SCI would fall under the SCIRTS Grants category. In comparison, a research study that examines the psychosocial impact of participation in a community interventions class for those living with SCI and their caregivers would fall under the Psychosocial Research Grants category. For examples of past grants funded under these grant categories, please visit www.chnfoundation.org.

This Application Guide is intended specifically for the following three research grant funding categories:

- **PSR Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant**: This funding category is intended to provide mentored PSR training in SCI research to early-career investigators, for two years at \$75,000 per year. Applicants must have a doctoral degree conferred no earlier than five years before the FGA submission deadline in July 2015, or be candidates who will attain their doctoral degree no later than the FGA submission deadline. For details, see page 7.
- **PSR Pilot Grant**: This funding category is intended to support pilot studies that lay essential groundwork to inform future studies, allow the PI to test the feasibility of novel methods and procedures and/or collect new data that can lead to, or enhance, larger-scale studies. Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent Principal Investigator (PI). Proposed Pilot projects should indicate how they will establish a new investigational program or take on “high risk” balanced by high potential impact. These grants provide one year of funding at \$100,000 per year. For details, see page 8.
- **PSR Proof of Concept Grant**: This funding category is intended to support substantive research projects that develop, test and evaluate interventions that open new areas of SCI psychosocial research or fill important gaps in the SCI field. Proposed Proof of Concept projects should facilitate and improve the

translation of knowledge and/or adoption of interventions and practices that will have a positive impact for those living with SCI. Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent PI. These grants provide two years of funding at \$150,000 per year. For details, see page 9.

C. General Eligibility and Other Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

All three PSR funding categories require an LOI submission for a given grant cycle. Only Principal Investigators/Fellows invited through the most recent LOI process may submit a FGA for that grant cycle.

The following eligibility requirements apply to all three funding categories of the PSR Grants:

1. Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent professional degree. Non-fellowship applicants must demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an **independent principal investigator**. The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions from eligible PIs who represent a wide range of disciplines; however, it is required that **relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise** are represented on the proposed research project team.
2. Applicants must work in a **nonprofit institution (academic/research), or rehabilitation facility** with a demonstrated capability to conduct grant-funded research. These institutions must be **located in the United States or Canada**.

An applicant is not required to be a citizen of the United States or Canada to apply for a Neilsen Foundation research grant; however, the applicant must be employed by an eligible institution located in either country. Each application must include the appropriate endorsement of an official who is responsible for the administration of awarded funds (hereafter known as the “Grants Administrator”).

Neilsen Foundation research grants are not awarded to individuals, private foundations or certain 509(a)(3), Type III supporting organizations.

3. It is expected that the PI named in a grant application is the person who will be personally and actively responsible for the conduct of the research and who is considered eligible by his or her institution to apply for a research grant.

Multi-PI grants are not allowed, however, multiple PIs from an institution may submit concurrent, independent applications in a given PSR Grant cycle if the projects are separate, with distinct and non-overlapping Specific Aims.

The Neilsen Foundation discourages concurrent applications with *overlapping* Aims from Postdoctoral Fellows and their mentor/sponsor(s) on multiple funding categories of the PSR program.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1. Applications/communications must be written in English and budgets must be in U.S. dollars.
2. There are additional requirements specific to each of the three funding categories of the Neilsen PSR Grants. Applicants should carefully review the instructions to see if they also meet these specific requirements before submitting an LOI or FGA.

NEILSEN PSR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP GRANTS

Overview:

- This funding category is intended to provide mentored PSR training in SCI research to early-career investigators. The applicant should be mentored (or co-mentored) by an investigator experienced in SCI research.
- Fellowship applicants must have a doctoral degree conferred no earlier than five years before the FGA submission deadline in July 2015, or be candidates who will attain their doctoral degree no later than the FGA submission deadline.
- Criteria for this grant include the qualifications of the Fellow, how the training plan and environment provided by the mentor/sponsor(s) will enhance the Fellow's research career, the scientific merit of the proposal, and the relevance of the project to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation and this grant program.
- This funding is designed to encourage training and specialization in the psychosocial field of SCI. Funding for the two-year project is \$75,000 per year, i.e., \$150,000 in total.

Details for This Funding Category (in addition to general eligibility requirements on page 6):

- Neilsen PSR Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants are awarded to support the Fellow, not to the mentor/sponsor(s). The proposal should be written by the Fellow, although the mentor/sponsor(s) should serve as an advisor. Funding is to be designated primarily for the salary and fringe benefits in support of the Fellow. The Neilsen Foundation does not allow indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, etc.) on its postdoctoral fellowships. No funding for other personnel (e.g., technical staff) or equipment is allowed.
- While it is expected that the mentor/sponsor(s) will make available necessary general office equipment and supplies, the Neilsen Foundation will allow up to \$15,000 per year for other items, such as project-related supplies, publication costs and/or travel. Please note that this \$15,000 must be included within the funding cap of \$75,000 per year.
 - Travel: Travel support for conferences is limited to \$2,500 per year. Adequate justification is required for any additional travel support.
 - Publication Costs: Publication costs up to \$2,000 will only be allowed in the *second year of the grant*.
- A two-page Training Plan is required. The document should focus on the activities related to the acquiring, expanding, and/or enhancing of the Fellow's knowledge and expertise in psychosocial research and SCI and should be signed by the Applicant and their mentor/sponsor(s). For details, see page 16.
- The Neilsen Foundation funds two-year PSR Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants. Funding for the second year will be contingent on a favorable review of an annual interim progress and expenditure report. A final research report and a final expenditure report are required at the end of the grant term.
- Applicants should carefully read the Evaluation Criteria sections on pages 14 and 18.

NEILSEN PSR PILOT GRANTS

Overview:

- This funding category is intended to support pilot studies that lay essential groundwork to inform future studies, allow the PI to test the feasibility of novel methods and procedures and/or collect new data that can lead to or enhance larger-scale studies. Proposed Pilot projects should indicate how they will establish a new investigational program or take on “high risk” balanced by high potential impact.
- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent principal investigator.
- Criteria for these grants include the scientific merit of the pilot project, the innovative nature of the proposed psychosocial research and the likelihood that success will move the SCI field forward. Funding is \$100,000 for a one-year project.

Details for This Funding Category (in addition to general eligibility requirements on page 6):

- Applicants must be independent investigators, but can be at any stage of their research career (junior or established). Criteria for funding junior investigators include evidence of a strong research background that is relevant to the proposed research and the mission of the Neilsen Foundation. If the PI is not in a designated research, e.g., tenure track, position, a letter co-signed by the responsible supervisor (e.g., Director or Department Chair) and the Grants Administrator must be provided. The letter, indicating that the applicant is an independent investigator and that necessary space and equipment are available for this research, must be submitted with the LOI and FGA (the same letter may be submitted at both stages).
- The Neilsen Foundation does not allow Co-Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators on its research grants. If two or more investigators are working together on a research project, they must select one as the PI. The other(s) should be listed as Collaborator(s).
- The total amount requested for the one-year project cannot exceed \$100,000, which includes personnel (salary and fringe benefits combined), equipment, supplies, travel, subcontracts, indirect costs, etc.
 - **PI Salary:** The total amount requested may include up to 15% of the total costs of the grant for the PI's support (salary and fringe benefits combined). For example, if an applicant requests \$100,000 for a one-year project, the maximum PI support allowed is \$15,000.
 - **Collaborator(s):** In general, a collaborator is an individual who will make a significant contribution or play a significant role in the direction and conduct of the research or research-related activity on the project. In most cases, the collaborator provides a certain expertise, such as a specific type of SCI research experience, to the project. Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with the same institution; a subcontract may be used to support a collaborator at a different institution. Collaborators named in the proposal may be paid or unpaid. If paid, the total amount requested for each collaborator's support (salary and fringe benefits combined) should not exceed 10% of the total yearly cost for the project. Support for collaborators beyond this limit may be requested, with strong justification.
 - **Other Personnel:** This category includes other key project staff (e.g. project coordinator, statistician, community interviewer, etc.) who will contribute directly and substantively to the project; they are usually staff at the PI's institution. The Neilsen Foundation *does not* fund graduate student tuition or fees. However, stipends/salaries for predoctoral students can be included as “Other Personnel.” There is no restriction on the percentage of support for other personnel.
 - **Equipment:** Requests for equipment are not encouraged but are allowed if justification is provided. Equipment requests cannot exceed \$5,000 for the one-year project. If the total equipment request exceeds \$2,500, an explanation must be provided regarding the proposed use of such equipment following completion of the grant.

- **Travel:** Travel support for conferences is limited to \$3,000. Adequate justification is required for any project-related travel support (e.g., research participant travel, travel to a collaborating site, etc.).
- **Publication Costs:** Publication costs up to \$2,000 are allowed.
- **Indirect Costs:** The maximum amount allowed for indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, per capita infrastructure costs, etc.) is 10% of the total direct cost. The maximum total amount requested cannot exceed \$100,000, which includes direct and indirect costs combined. For example, if an applicant requests \$100,000 for the one-year project, the maximum total indirect cost allowed is \$9,091. Thus, unless the institution agrees to waive some or all of the indirect costs, the maximum total direct cost allowed is \$90,909.
- **Per Capita Infrastructure Costs:** These costs cannot be charged as direct costs (e.g., IT, network, communications or other charges not specific to the research Aims); indirect costs in the Pilot Grant category may be used to defray these charges, subject to the 10% of total direct cost cap.
- **Subcontractors:** In general, subcontractors are defined as a person/entity, at another site, who helps the PI carry out the activities of the proposed project by performing a portion of the research work using their own site. If subcontracts are included in the grant, the combined indirect cost amount for the applicant's institution and the subcontract's institution may not exceed 10% of the total direct costs.
- The Neilsen Foundation funds one-year PSR Pilot Grants. A final research report and a final expenditure report are required at the end of the grant term.
- Applicants should carefully read the Evaluation Criteria sections on pages 14 and 18.

NEILSEN PSR PROOF OF CONCEPT GRANTS

Overview:

- This funding category is intended to support substantive research projects that develop, test and evaluate interventions that open new areas of SCI psychosocial research or fill important gaps in the SCI field. Proposed Proof of Concept projects should facilitate and improve the translation of knowledge and/or adoption of interventions and practices that will have a positive impact for those living with SCI.
- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent principal investigator.
- Criteria for these grants include the innovative nature of the proposed psychosocial research, the likelihood that success will move the field forward, and a history of productivity and significant contributions by the investigator. Psychosocial interventions can involve approaches that will enhance clinical treatment, rehabilitation, habilitation and/or other related quality of life subsets. Funding for a two-year project is \$150,000 per year or \$300,000 in total.

Details for This Funding Category (in addition to general eligibility requirements on page 6):

- Applicants must be independent investigators, but can be at any stage of their research career (junior or established). Criteria for funding junior investigators include evidence of a strong research background that is relevant to the proposed research and the mission of the Neilsen Foundation. If the PI is not in a designated research, e.g., tenure track, position, a letter co-signed by the responsible supervisor (e.g., Director or Department Chair) and the Grants Administrator must be provided. The letter, indicating that the applicant is an independent investigator and that necessary space and equipment are available for this research, must be submitted with the LOI and FGA (the same letter may be submitted at both stages).

- The Neilsen Foundation does not allow Co-Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators on its research grants. If two or more investigators are working together on a research project, they must select one as the PI. The other(s) should be listed as Collaborator(s).
- The total amount requested for a two-year project cannot exceed \$300,000, which includes personnel (salary and fringe benefits combined), equipment, supplies, travel, subcontracts, indirect costs, etc.
 - PI Salary: The total amount requested may include up to 15% of the total costs of the grant for the PI's support (salary and fringe benefits combined). For example, if an applicant requests \$300,000 for a two-year project, the maximum PI support allowed is \$22,500 per year.
 - Collaborator(s): In general, a collaborator is an individual who will make a significant contribution or play a significant role in the direction and conduct of the research or research-related activity on the project. In most cases, the collaborator provides a certain expertise, such as a specific type of SCI research experience, to the project. Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with the same institution; a subcontract may be used to support a collaborator at a different institution. Collaborators named in the proposal may be paid or unpaid. If paid, the total amount requested for each collaborator's support (salary and fringe benefits combined) should not exceed 10% of the total yearly cost for the project. Support for collaborators beyond this limit may be requested, with strong justification.
 - Other Personnel: This category includes other key project staff (e.g. project coordinator, statistician, community interviewer, etc.) who will contribute directly and substantively to the project; they are usually staff at the PI's institution. The Neilsen Foundation *does not* fund graduate student tuition or fees. However, stipends/salaries for predoctoral students can be included as "Other Personnel." There is no restriction on the percentage of support for other personnel.
 - Equipment: Requests for equipment are not encouraged but are allowed, if justification is provided. Equipment requests cannot exceed \$10,000 for a two-year project. If the total equipment request exceeds \$2,500, an explanation must be provided regarding the proposed use of such equipment following completion of the grant.
 - Travel: Travel support for conferences is limited to \$3,000 per year. Adequate justification is required for any project-related travel support (e.g., research participant travel, travel to a collaborating site, etc.).
 - Publication Costs: Publication costs up to \$2,000 per year are allowed.
 - Indirect Costs: The maximum amount allowed for indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, per capita infrastructure costs, etc.) is 10% of the total direct cost. The maximum total amount requested for this two-year project cannot exceed \$300,000, which includes direct and indirect costs combined. For example, if an applicant requests \$300,000 for a two-year project, the maximum total indirect cost allowed is \$13,636 per year. Thus, unless the institution agrees to waive some or all of the indirect costs, the maximum total direct cost allowed is \$136,364 per year.
 - Per Capita Infrastructure Costs: These costs cannot be charged as direct costs (e.g., IT, network, communications or other charges not specific to the research Aims); indirect costs in the Proof of Concept Grant may be used to defray these charges, subject to the 10% of total direct cost cap.
 - Subcontractors: In general, subcontractors are defined as a person/entity, at another site, who helps the PI carry out the activities of the proposed project by performing a portion of the research work using their own site. If subcontracts are included in the grant, the combined indirect cost amount for the applicant's institution and the subcontract's institution may not exceed 10% of the total direct costs.
- The Neilsen Foundation funds two-year PSR Proof of Concept Research Grants. Funding for the second year will be contingent on a favorable review of annual interim progress and expenditure reports. A final research report and a final expenditure report are required at the end of the grant term.
- Applicants should carefully read the Evaluation Criteria sections on pages 14 and 18.

PART 2: LOI and FGA APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Application Deadline Dates and Times

The Neilsen Foundation's PSR Grants program offers one grant cycle each calendar year (see page 1 for current deadlines). Within each cycle, the application process begins with an LOI. FGAs will only be accepted from PIs/Fellows invited through the most recent LOI competition.

PIs/Fellows may hold only one PSR grant at one time. A grantee must fulfill the obligations of a current research grant, including submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report, before submitting another LOI to the PSR program. Please note that "grantee" refers to the PI/Fellow, not the organization/institution.

Both the application deadline dates and times are strictly enforced. The Neilsen Foundation uses the web-based grants system, proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>), to review and manage its grants.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not wait until the last day to submit your grant application and any required documentation. The online system, proposalCENTRAL, will automatically close at the grant's stated deadline date and time. Technical difficulties will not be accepted as an explanation for late submissions.

B. Overview of Application Submission on proposalCENTRAL

ONLINE SUBMISSION

The Craig H. Neilsen Foundation uses proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) to review and manage all of its grants. All information for the application must be submitted via proposalCENTRAL. Paper or other electronic (e.g., email or fax) copies submitted directly to the Neilsen Foundation will not be accepted.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION FORMS/TEMPLATES

The Neilsen Foundation requires all applicants to use the most recent Neilsen Foundation forms/templates provided on proposalCENTRAL for the LOI and FGA processes. *It is important to note that applicants may **not** modify any Neilsen Foundation form/template.* Examples of disallowed modifications include changing margins, deleting form/template text (including instructions) changing form/template font sizes, etc. **If an applicant modifies or fails to use a Neilsen Foundation form/template, or exceeds page limits, the LOI or FGA is automatically disqualified for the current grant cycle.**

NOTE FOR MAC USERS: All Neilsen Foundation documents are created in Microsoft Word. Mac users may experience difficulties, so it is strongly suggested that applicants allow ample time to create and submit proposal materials. If you have difficulty with the forms or templates, please contact your local IT support.

PDF ATTACHMENTS

All documents must be submitted as portable document format (PDF) attachments. If you need assistance in converting your documents to PDF, please access your proposalCENTRAL account and click on "FAQ" (located on the top right of your screen). Select "Converting Files to PDF," then select "What software products or services are available for converting files to PDF format." If you need further assistance, please contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com.

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

When entering your contact information on proposalCENTRAL, provide both a street address (i.e., not a P.O. Box) for your organization/institution AND an email address that you use on a daily basis.

The Neilsen Foundation relies on the contact information located on proposalCENTRAL to correspond with its applicants/grantees. In order to receive important updates, it is the applicant/grantee's responsibility to keep his/her proposalCENTRAL account contact information current. This includes current contact information for the organization/institution's grants administrator, signing official and financial officer.

In addition, we recommend that you check the 'Auto Notify' box in the "Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal" section in proposalCENTRAL for at least one other contact at your organization/institution. You can also set the 'Permissions' access level for each contact (i.e., view, edit or administrator). This allows the other contact to access your account and/or assist you with the submission.

PLEASE NOTE: If the contact information in proposalCENTRAL is outdated, and we are unable to contact you, we will assume that you are no longer interested in funding from the Neilsen Foundation. This includes all significant information, from notification of a grant award to reporting deadlines.

INFORMATION CONSISTENCY AND ACCURACY

- There may be sections in the LOI or FGA where you will be asked to provide duplicate information. This information is required for the grant reviewers, as well as your proposalCENTRAL account.
- Double-check that all provided information is consistent and accurate.
- Respond to all sections of the forms/templates. If a section or question does not apply to your proposal, enter "N/A" in the response.
- It is suggested that you carefully proofread your LOI or FGA before submitting it on proposalCENTRAL. Inaccurate or incomplete submissions will be disqualified without review.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR FULL GRANT APPLICATIONS

On your proposalCENTRAL online application in the Proposal Section – Print Signature Pages (located in the grey box on the left), press the "Print Signature Pages" button and **print only page one (Grant Application) of the PDF file**. Once this page is signed by the Applicant AND the Signing Official, upload the PDF on the "Proposal Narrative & Other Attachments" section.

The Applicant must verify that all documents that have been converted to PDFs are legible before submitting the application. In the online Proposal Section, Print Signature Pages, click on the "Print Signature Pages and Attached PDF Files" button to view the uploaded documents.

PROTECT YOUR PROPOSAL CENTRAL USERNAME AND PASSWORD

Please be aware that emails you receive from the proposalCENTRAL email system contain a link to proposalCENTRAL along with your Username and Password. If you need to forward any of these emails to another individual, we recommend that you delete this confidential information.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For technical questions regarding the online submission process, please contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com, during their business hours, Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM (Eastern Time). There is no technical support available on weekends or holidays.

ProposalCENTRAL also has a tutorial section on its website that may be helpful in completing your application: <https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com/help.asp> or click on the "Contact Us" link at the bottom of the page.

C. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission

LOI SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Letters of Intent for this cycle are due on **Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)**. The proposalCENTRAL online submission system will automatically close at this time. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Do not wait until the last day to submit your LOI and required documentation. Technical difficulties will not be accepted as an explanation for late submissions.

FORMAT

All LOIs must be submitted online, via proposalCENTRAL. The current LOI template on proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) must be used for LOI submissions. Further instructions and page limitations will be provided on the LOI or application form/templates. The Neilsen Foundation LOI or application forms/templates may not be modified by the applicant. **All original text and formatting must remain on the forms/templates.**

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN THE LOI FORM

The following project information is required:

1. Hypotheses and project aim(s).
2. Overview of the experimental design/methods.
3. Relevance to the Neilsen Foundation's mission and the PSR grant program.
4. Brief preliminary project budget (for the entire project period). At the LOI stage, the budget should be broadly categorized. Eligible project costs should directly support the project Aims, such as personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, etc.
5. The applicant must also submit a Biosketch (not to exceed four pages) using either the most recent Neilsen Foundation template (provided) or an NIH Biosketch format; no other Biosketch templates are allowed. Use of the personal statement to circumvent page limits by adding specific information on the proposed research plan is not allowed.

The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions from eligible individuals who represent a wide range of disciplines; however, it is strongly encouraged that relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise are represented on the project team. For the Pilot and Proof of Concept Research Grants, an applicant should consider submitting a Biosketch from any major collaborator who provides this expertise to the proposed project. For Postdoctoral Fellowships, the Biosketch(es) of the mentor/sponsor(s) must be provided in addition to a Biosketch for the Fellow. Please be sure to include a Biosketch for the mentor/sponsor(s) in a separate PDF file.

6. For the Pilot and Proof of Concept Research Grants, an applicant who is not in a designated research, e.g., tenure track, position must include a letter from the responsible supervisor (e.g., Director or Department Chair) indicating that the facilities required to perform the proposed research are available and that the applicant has reached a level of independence to successfully pursue and undertake responsibility for completion of the proposed work. This letter should be co-signed by the institution's Grants Office and submitted as a separate attachment via proposalCENTRAL. ***If this assurance is not provided, the LOI will not be considered further, as the application will not be eligible for funding.***
7. Resubmissions: If the LOI is a first resubmission of a previously reviewed but not funded FGA, up to ½ page may be appended to the end of the LOI template to respond to reviewer comments; this ½ page does not count in the 3-page limit. See Section G. for more information on resubmission policies.

A bibliography is not required at the LOI stage. If the applicant would like to provide references, these can be included as a single page appended at the end of the completed LOI template, in one PDF file.

NOTIFICATION OF LOI RESULTS

Letters of Intent submitted by eligible applicants by the posted deadline date and time will be reviewed by the criteria listed below. *Approximately eight weeks* after the LOI submission deadline, applicants will be notified via email whether they are invited to submit a full grant application or if their LOI has been declined.

An LOI must be approved by the Neilsen Foundation in order for the applicant to move to the next step of the grants process, submitting a full grant application.

D. Evaluation Criteria for Letters of Intent

Letters of Intent submitted to the Neilsen Foundation PSR program will be reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation's staff and/or external peer reviewers. The critique and evaluation of an LOI will be based primarily on innovation and relevance to the Neilsen Foundation mission and in the field of psychosocial issues in SCI research, though notable feasibility issues will also be considered. A brief summary of the reason(s) for rejection of an LOI and/or suggestions for improvement will be provided to the applicant at the end of the LOI review process. Below is a list of issues that will be considered when evaluating LOIs:

IMPACT AND INNOVATION

The reviewers will evaluate the LOI to assess the likelihood that the project will exert a sustained, powerful influence in the field of SCI psychosocial research that is consistent with the mission of the Neilsen Foundation. This assessment is based on the following criteria:

1. Significance

The extent to which the project, if successful, will make an original and important contribution to PSR in SCI, including:

- a. Does the study address an unsolved problem or important issue for persons with SCI?
- b. Does the study have the potential to improve clinical practice quality of life for persons with SCI and/or establish novel areas of psychosocial investigations in this field?
- c. Is the proposed research innovative versus incremental?

2. Relevance

- a. The extent to which the project is relevant to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation (page 3), the field of SCI, and stated goals of the grant program to which it is applied.

APPROACH

The extent to which the conceptual framework provided for the studies to be proposed will test the stated hypotheses and is appropriate to the Aims of the project.

1. Feasibility

Reviewers will make a preliminary assessment of whether the described scope of work appears to be feasible within the project period by the investigators, given their experience and expertise, past progress, and available resources.

2. Program Specific Considerations

- a. **Postdoctoral Fellowships (if applicable):** Will this training period, mentor/sponsor(s) and project increase the skill set of the applicant to further their career path in SCI research?

- b. **Pilot Grants (if applicable):** Will this project help establish a junior PI's research program and/or enhance an established program? Does the project have the potential for "high gain" to balance risk?
- c. **Proof of Concept Grants (if applicable):** Does this project propose cutting-edge ideas, interventions and/or test approaches that have great potential to have a positive impact for those living with SCI?

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Hypothesis

- a. Are the hypotheses clearly stated within an appropriate conceptual framework?
- b. Do the study objectives/Aims address the hypotheses?

2. Principal Investigator and Preliminary Data

- a. Does the application address the PI's and other personnel's familiarity and competence with the proposed techniques and activities?

3. Research Plan

- a. Is the general design appropriate for solving the stated problems?
- b. For clinical-based research: Is the scope and type of the planned study clearly described and is it likely to be feasible within the resources provided by the Neilsen Foundation program?

PRESENTATION

- 1. Is the application clearly written, within the page limits and free of typographical errors?
- 2. For Pilot and Proof of Concepts Grants: If the PI is not in a designated research, e.g., tenure track, position, is there a letter from the Director or Department Chair that shows that needed facilities are available and that the applicant has reached a level of independence to undertake responsibility for completion of the proposed work?

BUDGET

Is the initial budget estimate appropriate to the nature and scope of the study?

E. Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission

FULL GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

As stated above, only applicants receiving approval of an LOI submission may submit a FGA. FGAs for this cycle are due on **Friday, July 24, 2015 at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)**. The proposalCENTRAL online submission system will automatically close at this time. Late submissions will not be accepted.

FORMAT

ALL FGAs must be submitted online, via proposalCENTRAL. The FGA template on proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) must be used for FGA submissions. Further instructions and page limitations will be provided on the application form/templates. The Neilsen Foundation application forms/templates may not be modified by the applicant. **All original text and formatting must remain on the forms/templates.**

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

There are a number of forms/application requirements that can be found on proposalCENTRAL. A few specific requirements are discussed below.

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants

At the FGA stage, applicants must provide: 1) a research plan; 2) a Biosketch of the Fellow; 3) a Biosketch of the mentor/sponsor(s); 4) a training plan (see below); and 5) two recommendation letters.

- **Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Plan:** All postdoctoral grant applications **MUST** include a two-page **Training Plan** designed to enhance the postdoctoral experience through a program of structured activities focused on acquiring, expanding, and/or enhancing knowledge and expertise in *psychosocial research* and *spinal cord injury*. The plan should delineate activities, opportunities and experiences that align with the postdoctoral fellow's long-term career goals. The fellow's contribution to the mentor's research program(s) should also be addressed.

The plan should be developed collaboratively by the postdoctoral fellow and mentor(s) and the Training Plan document must be signed by both (if co-mentors are listed, their signatures or a letter indicating agreement should also be included). An additional one-page instructions sheet is provided on proposalCENTRAL as a downloadable PDF. It is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure that this document is signed and submitted by the deadline. Please note that proposalCENTRAL will not allow an application to be submitted until all required documents, including this Training Plan, are uploaded.

Junior or Clinical-Track Investigators

At the FGA stage, the Neilsen Foundation requires that if the PI is not in a designated research, e.g., tenure track, position, a letter co-signed by the responsible supervisor (e.g., Director or Department Chair) and the Grants Administrator must be provided. The letter should indicate that the facilities required to perform the proposed research are available and that the applicant has reached a level of independence to successfully pursue and undertake responsibility for completion of the proposed work. This letter should be submitted as a separate attachment via proposalCENTRAL. This may be the same letter that was submitted with the LOI. ***If this assurance is not provided, the FGA will not be considered further, as the application will not be eligible for funding.***

Biosketch(es)

Please complete a separate Biosketch for all key personnel for the proposed project using the Neilsen Foundation template or a NIH Biosketch template. No other Biosketch templates are allowed. Key personnel are defined as the PI and other individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not salary or compensation is requested.

- The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions from eligible PIs who represent a wide range of disciplines; however, it is strongly encouraged that relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise are represented on the project team. For the Pilot and Proof of Concept Research Grants, an applicant should consider submitting a Biosketch from any major collaborator who provides this expertise to the proposed project.

Subcontractors

If your research requires work to be carried out by another institution (i.e., a subcontract), the proposed relationship must be disclosed in the Proposal Narrative and Budget sections of the application.

Other Research Support

The applicant must provide information for **all** current and pending grants. For Postdoctoral Fellowships, other research support for the Fellow **AND** the mentor/sponsor(s) must be provided. For Pilot and Proof of Concept Grants, the other research support information only needs to be provided for the PI.

To avoid overlap with the Neilsen Foundation funds:

- a. If an applicant submits an application to another funding agency, after submitting his/her Neilsen Foundation application, the applicant is required to update the Neilsen Foundation about the *new pending application*.
- b. In addition, if the applicant is notified that his/her application to another funding source has been conditionally *approved* for funding, the applicant is required to notify the Neilsen Foundation immediately of this new award.

Failure to report other funding applications, pending or approved, will jeopardize the applicant's current Neilsen Foundation grant application status.

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION RESULTS AND AWARD PROCESS

Completed FGAs submitted by eligible applicants by the posted deadline date and time will be reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation PSR Review Board. The Neilsen Foundation will notify applicants, via email, of the outcome of their grant application submission *approximately six months* after the FGA submission deadline. Only approved FGAs will proceed to the award process.

Applicants whose FGA is approved for funding will be required to submit additional documentation to the Neilsen Foundation before grant funds will be issued to the institution. The additional documentation will include but is not limited to: 1) a signed Research Grant Agreement; 2) a Certification of Tax-Exempt Status form along with a copy of the organization/institution's most recent IRS Determination letter; 3) a Preconditions for Grant Award form; and 4) an IRB/IACUC Approval Letter (see below). Instructions for executing the additional documentation will be included in the award announcement, which will be emailed to the applicant via the proposalCENTRAL correspondence link.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD/INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE & USE COMMITTEE APPROVALS

Prior to receiving funding for an award, the applicant must provide documentation of IRB/IACUC approval for use of human or animal subjects.

Important: An Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IRB/IACUC) approval letter from your institution is required. The IRB/IACUC approval letter must be on the institution's letterhead and must include the following: 1) The name of the IRB or IACUC Chair; 2) The expiration date of the approval; 3) the PI's name (or mentor/sponsor's name in the case of postdoctoral fellows); and 4) the Neilsen Foundation project title. If the IRB/IACUC approval is for a broader project and the title on the approval letter differs from the Neilsen project title, please ensure that the approval letter mentions that the approval also covers the project funded by the Neilsen Foundation. If multiple IRB/IACUC approvals are required (e.g., multiple institutions), provide each approval letter as a separate PDF file.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION DUE DILIGENCE

Due to the 2006 Pension Protection Act, private non-operating foundations (such as the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation) are required to verify the nonprofit subsection of all prospective grantee organizations/institutions. Therefore, when submitting your application and other required documents, you will also need to provide the following information:

1. For **United States-based** organizations/institutions:
 - a. Please provide a copy of the most recent IRS Determination letter which proves the organization/institution's 501(c)(3) designation or tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code 170(c)(1).
 - b. *If the organization/institution is classified as a public charity under Section 509(a)(3), please refer to IRS Notice 2006-109 (dated December 18, 2006) which is entitled "Interim Guidance Regarding Supporting Organizations and Donor Advised Funds." Per the IRS Notice, the organization/institution will be required to provide additional information as a Supporting Organization, which is*

seeking a grant from a private foundation. Please note that the Neilsen Foundation cannot issue grants to certain 509(a)(3), Type III Supporting Organizations.

2. For **Canadian-based** organizations/institutions:

- a. The Neilsen Foundation prefers to make grants to (i) a Canadian organization/institution that has obtained an IRS determination letter, or (ii) the Canadian organization/institution's U.S.-based "friends of" charity that holds an IRS determination letter. If the Canadian organization/institution can satisfy either of these requirements, please provide a copy of the most recent IRS Determination letter for such organization/institution.
- b. If the grantee organization/institution does not have an IRS determination letter or a U.S.-based "friends of" charity, the grantee organization/institution must be a "registered charity" with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Please provide a copy of the page from the CRA website listing the organization/institution. *If the grant is awarded, the Neilsen Foundation will also require an "equivalency affidavit" showing that the Canadian organization/institution is the equivalent of a U.S. public charity.*

In conjunction with the documents listed above, the Neilsen Foundation requires that all organizations/institutions complete a Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status form. The Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status template is available on proposalCENTRAL, in Proposal Section, Download Templates & Instructions.

Please Note: *The entity listed on the certification form must be the same as the entity listed on the IRS Determination letter or CRA website.*

Do not upload copies of tax returns, EIN letters, W-9s, internal documents noting the organization/institution's nonprofit status, etc., in lieu of, OR in addition to, the IRS Determination letter. Only copies of the official IRS Determination letter will be accepted.

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS

Once all of the required documentation is received and approved by the Neilsen Foundation, and our due diligence process is completed, funding will be made to the applicant's organization/institution by the start date of the grant funding period. The projected Grant Funds Disbursement date is **April 1, 2016**.

F. Evaluation Criteria for Full Grant Applications

PSR applications submitted to the Neilsen Foundation will be peer-reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation PSR Review Board and other external reviewers. The critique and evaluation of a FGA will be based on scientific merit, innovation and relevance to the Neilsen Foundation mission. A summary of the evaluation critique will be available to the applicant after the current grant cycle's applications are reviewed and the grants selected for funding are announced.

Below is a list of issues that Neilsen Foundation reviewers are asked to consider when evaluating a FGA:

IMPACT AND INNOVATION

The reviewers will summarize the proposal's strengths and weaknesses and assess the likelihood that the project will exert a sustained, powerful influence that is consistent with the mission of the Neilsen Foundation. This assessment is based on the following criteria:

1. **Significance**

The extent to which the project, if successful, will make an original and important contribution to research in SCI, including:

- a. Does the study address an unsolved problem or important psychosocial issue for persons with SCI?
- b. Does the study have the potential to improve clinical practice, quality of life for persons with SCI and/or establish novel areas of psychosocial investigations in this field?
- c. Are there innovative aspects of the proposed research?

2. **Relevance**

The extent to which the project is relevant to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation (see page 3), and its support of research directed towards:

- a. Increased understanding of psychological, social and environmental determinants of health, functioning and activity participation;
- b. Rehabilitation and habilitation interventions to improve psychological and social functioning, including participation in work, school and other community activities;
- c. Improved measurements of psychological, social and environmental risk factors, protective factors, processes and outcomes; and/or
- d. Identification of critical service gaps, needed data and/or new areas of exploration, within a psychosocial or socioecological context, as defined by, or with input from, people living with SCI.

3. **Approach**

The extent to which the conceptual framework, design, use of unique or novel subject populations or animal models, methods, and analyses are properly developed to test the stated hypotheses, are well-integrated and appropriate to the Aims of the project.

4. **Pilot Grants (if applicable):**

- a. Will this project help establish a junior PI's research program and/or enhance an established program?
- b. Does the project have the potential for "high gain" to balance risk?

5. **Proof of Concept Grants (if applicable):**

Does this project propose cutting-edge ideas, interventions and/or test approaches that have great potential to have a positive impact for those living with SCI?

RESEARCH DESIGN

In addition, reviewers will examine the overall design and scientific merit of the proposed project.

1. **Hypothesis**

- a. Are the hypotheses clearly stated within an appropriate conceptual framework?
- b. Are the study objectives related to the hypotheses?

2. **Background and Significance**

- a. Is there a critical, balanced review of the recent and relevant literature?
- b. Does the literature review support the significance of the study?

3. **Preliminary Data**

- a. Are preliminary data available, and if so do they support the credibility of the proposed hypotheses and feasibility of the study's objectives/Aims?
- b. Does the application support the PI's and other personnel's familiarity and competence with the proposed techniques?

4. **Research Plan**

- a. Is the design appropriate for solving the stated problems?
- b. When used, is the animal model selected appropriate for the study Aims?
- c. Is the study an experiment, case control study, cohort study, randomized clinical trial, planned

observation, or retrospective analysis of records? When applicable, is the recruitment plan for patients/participants adequate?

- d. Are the experiments properly controlled and does the proposal substantiate the rigor of the proposed experimental design?
- e. Are the methodology and outcome variables appropriate to the study Aims and clearly justified?
- f. Are potential confounding variables and potential pitfalls identified, and is there an alternate plan in the case of problems?
- g. For clinical studies, are there clear operational definitions of the key terms and variables, including diagnostic criteria, inclusion criteria, measurements, and outcomes?

5. Analysis

- a. Are the proposed methods of analysis appropriate to the source and nature of the data and to the specific Aims of the study?
- b. Have the psychometric properties of the outcome measures been addressed?
- c. Is the sample size justified based on an appropriate power analysis?
- d. What methods will be used to perform statistical significance testing?

6. Ethical and Safety Issues (Appropriate Use of Human and Animal Subjects)

Reviewers are asked to evaluate the appropriate, safe, and humane use of subjects, both human and animal. While the project must be approved by the appropriate intramural organizational/institutional committees, organizational/institutional approval is not always evidence of a procedure's acceptability.

Note: Appropriate IRB and/or IACUC approvals must be received before a successful application can be funded but need not be obtained at the time the application is submitted.

- a. When animals are used, are plans for their comfort, analgesia, and euthanasia consistent with Federal (e.g., NIH) guidelines?
- b. Are recruitment strategies for human subjects included? Are plans for confidentiality and anonymity of human data adequate?

7. Presentation

- a. Is the application clearly written and free of excessive typographical and spelling errors?
- b. Are supporting materials (e.g., graphs, micrographs, etc.) legibly sized and used appropriately?
- c. Are there Biosketches, including other support statements, for all key personnel?

FEASIBILITY

Reviewers will look at whether the proposed work can be accomplished within the project period by the investigators, given their documented experience and expertise, past progress, preliminary data, requested and available resources, organizational/institutional commitment, and, if appropriate, documented access to special reagents or technologies and/or recruitment and retention of human subjects. If the PI is less experienced, reviewers consider his/her expertise in using the proposed techniques, as well as the research environment and availability of experienced mentors or collaborators.

1. Personnel

- a. Do the PI and key personnel have the appropriate background, skills and experience in the proposed techniques? Is there relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise reflected on the project team?
- b. Is the study appropriate for the grant category, career level and experience of the PI?
- c. Does the PI demonstrate adequate time to conduct the study, taking an active role in the project, beyond supervision of technical personnel?
- d. Is adequate technical and scientific expertise available among the key personnel to fulfill the study Aims and is the study feasible by the personnel within the time frame?

Training Plan for Postdoctoral Fellow (if applicable)

- a. If this is a postdoctoral fellowship, is a training plan provided with sufficient detail to establish that it

- will be appropriate to the needs of the Fellow's stated career goals and objectives of the grant?
- b. Will this training period and project significantly increase the skill set of the Fellow?
- c. Does the mentor/sponsor(s) demonstrate a history of successful training/mentoring?

2. **Environment/Facilities**

- a. Is there evidence of a supportive research environment?
- b. Are the existing facilities and resources adequate for the proposed study?

3. **Budget**

- a. Is the budget request appropriate to the nature and scope of the study?
- b. Are there adequate justifications for the proposed expenditures?
- c. Since the Neilsen Foundation limits support for equipment purchases, is any requested equipment essential to carry out the study, and not otherwise available to the PI?
- d. Are there concerns about overlap with other funding? Potential overlaps must be included in the application.

G. Resubmission of a Full Grant Application

Applicants are permitted one resubmission of a revised FGA that was favorably reviewed but not funded in a prior grant cycle. A new LOI is required for the resubmission of a previously reviewed application, but does not guarantee that it will be approved for an FGA resubmission. The LOI should briefly indicate how the applicant plans to respond to the previous critiques. This may be up to ½ page and is not counted in the standard LOI page limit.

If the original submission was a PSR Pilot Grant, it cannot be “re-submitted” in the PSR Proof of Concept Grant category. To meet the Proof of Concept Grant criteria, the Aims and scope must be significantly modified, making the project a new submission.

If the original submission was a PSR Proof of Concept Grant, it may be “re-submitted” as a PSR Pilot Grant with similar Aims but decreased scope.

Aims that were unsuccessful in a resubmission may now be submitted in a new grant application in a subsequent grant cycle using the standard template (i.e., no response to reviewer comments). A new LOI is required for any such application and previous acceptance of similar Aims does not guarantee approval for invitation as a FGA.

H. Concurrent and Subsequent PSR Program Submissions

For each PSR Grant Cycle, a PI may only have one LOI or FGA under consideration at any time. If a FGA has been submitted for review, another LOI may not be submitted until the cycle after the result of the (unfunded) FGA review is received. However, different PIs with different research projects/Aims, but from the same organization, may apply during the same PSR grant cycle.

PIs may hold only one PSR grant at one time. A grantee must fulfill the obligations of a current research grant, including submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report, before submitting another LOI to the PSR program. Please note that if the Final Report and/or Expenditure Reports are unsatisfactory, this may impact the review of a new LOI.

Grantees are allowed to submit another LOI to the Neilsen Foundation upon submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report from a previously funded grant. Even if funded previously by the Neilsen Foundation, an applicant must begin the grant application process with an LOI. The Neilsen Foundation will consider a new grant application using all of the criteria outlined in this Application Guide, as well as evaluating

the outcome of the previously funded grant(s), the timeliness of all required report submissions, and the quality of the submitted reports.

I. Concurrent Grants across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios

- For **all** Neilsen Foundation portfolios: Non-trainee applicants may apply for one grant per cycle per Neilsen Foundation portfolio (“SCIRTS,” “PSR” and “QOL”), and may hold up to one grant in each of the three portfolios at a time.
- For **non-training** grant programs: To advance the Neilsen Foundation mission by encouraging SCI researchers to consider both traditional and PSR research and/or develop QOL programs that serve the SCI community, a PI is allowed to apply for and receive up to one grant (Pilot, Proof of Concept, Senior Research; any tier of Quality of Life) in each of the Neilsen Foundation portfolios. Such applications will be evaluated independently, according to each program’s timelines, guidelines and review criteria.
- For **Fellowship/Training** grants: Postdoctoral Fellows, by definition, are not in a position to apply for a non-training award and should be focused on a defined training program specific to the needs of their research interests. Therefore, Postdoctoral Fellows MAY NOT submit multiple training applications to different programs at any point in the LOI or FGA submission process.

J. Additional Information and Contacts

APPLICATION SUBMISSION CONTACTS

- For technical questions regarding the online submission process, please contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com, during their business hours, Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM (Eastern Time). There is no technical support available on weekends or holidays. ProposalCENTRAL also has a tutorial section on its website that may be helpful in completing your application: <https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com/help.asp> or click on the “Contact Us” link at the bottom of the page.
- For questions regarding a grant submission status, please contact Kim Cerise, Director of Grants Management, at kim@chnfoundation.org.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS

- For questions regarding the **Psychosocial Research Program**, please contact Joy Guihama, Program Officer, at joy@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding the **Quality of Life Program**, please contact Trish Oba, Program Officer at trish@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding the **SCI Research on the Translational Spectrum Program**, please contact Linda Jones, Program Officer, at linda@chnfoundation.org or Tracey Wheeler, Program Officer, at tracey@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding the **SCI Medicine Fellowship Program**, please contact Joy Guihama, Program Officer, at joy@chnfoundation.org.

Please Note: The Neilsen Foundation strongly discourages applicants from contacting any member of any Neilsen Review Board once an application has been submitted. Such contact may result in an automatic disqualification of the LOI or FGA.