

2017 PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE CREATING OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



This guide provides information on the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's Creating Opportunity & Independence (CO&I) grants. It is the applicant's responsibility to carefully review the current guidelines. Submissions that do not adhere to the most current guidelines, deadlines and/or required documentation will be disqualified without review.

CURRENT DEADLINES	
January 4, 2017 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	LOI Submission Due via proposalCENTRAL
January, 2017	Notification of LOI Results
March 10, 2017 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	FGA Submission Due via proposalCENTRAL
September, 2017	Notification of FGA Results
October, 2017	Awarded Grants to be Funded

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PART 1: OVERVIEW OF GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES

A. About the Neilsen Foundation

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. 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

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's funding is dedicated to supporting both programs and scientific research to improve the quality of life for those affected by and living with spinal cord injury.

Vision

Individuals with spinal cord injuries, and those who care for them, live full and productive lives as active participants in their communities.

Values

Our values are inspired by our Founder, Craig Neilsen, who overcame barriers during his lifetime, empowered others to do the same, and created this organization to impact the field today and expand solutions for tomorrow. We value excellence, leadership, accountability, innovation, and collaboration.

CRAIG H. NEILSEN FOUNDATION SCI FUNDING PORTFOLIOS

Research Grants:

- 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, translational and/or clinical studies.
- Psychosocial Research (PSR): Studies of the interrelation of behavioral, social and other quality of life factors that will benefit individuals living with SCI. Areas of focus include: aging, caregiving (formal and informal networks), employment, health behaviors and fitness, independent living, self-management, and technology access.

Programmatic Grants:

- Creating Opportunity & Independence (CO&I): Funding to support innovative programs/projects that improve participation and independence for individuals living with SCI. Areas of focus include: assistive technology, education, employment, independent living, rehabilitation, and arts, sports and recreation.

Education Grants:

- Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Fellowships (SCIMF): Fellowships to ACGME-accredited programs to train physicians specifically in the field of SCI rehabilitation.
- Neilsen Scholarship Program (NSP): Funding to selected academic institutions to provide scholarships to qualified students in the curriculum of their choice. The Neilsen Foundation supports tuition, fees, books, as well as providing supplemental support funds to remove barriers to academic progress related to the students' SCI-associated needs.

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

B. CO&I Portfolio Funding

PORTFOLIO SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

In support of the Neilsen Foundation's mission, CO&I grants support innovative programs/projects that improve participation and independence for individuals living with SCI and address critical areas of need in rehabilitation. CO&I grant support includes, but is not limited to, access to assistive technology, rehabilitation programs and clinical equipment, transportation, arts initiatives, adaptive sports and recreation programs, home modifications, adaptive driving, vocational programs, education initiatives and patient assistance programs.

The Neilsen Foundation is interested in projects that have broad impact, affect people across their lifespan, demonstrate community partnerships and empower individuals with SCI by providing options and opportunities to achieve greater independence.

This Application Guide is intended specifically for the following grant funding category:

- CO&I Project Grants

C. Eligibility and Other Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

- The grantee must be a **nonprofit institution/organization or rehabilitation facility located in the United States or Canada** with a demonstrated capability to conduct grant-funded programs or activities.
- Neilsen Foundation grants are not awarded to individuals, private foundations or certain 509(a)(3), Type III supporting organizations.
- The PI/Applicant named in a grant application must be deemed eligible by his/her institution/organization to apply for a grant, and is expected to be responsible for conduct of the program/project.
- An institution/organization may only submit one application in a given program cycle and may hold only one Neilsen Foundation award within a given CO&I grant category at one time. (see section below: PART 2, SECTION E. Concurrent Grants Across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios).

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- All application materials and communications (including IRB approvals, where applicable) must be written in English and budgets must be in U.S. dollars.
- Applicants should carefully review additional requirements specific to each funding category (see instructions below) to ensure they meet the relevant, specific requirements before submitting either a Letter of Intent (LOI) or Full Grant Application (FGA).
- Grants from the Neilsen Foundation may be multi-year awards. Funding for each subsequent year will be contingent on a favorable review of an annual progress and expenditure report. Approval of a final project and final expenditure report will be required at the end of the grant term to receive final payment.
- Perceived or real conflicts of interest (e.g., shareholder in a company providing a device for a study or program) must be disclosed in all stages of the application process.
- The grantee institution will retain title to Intellectual Property developed through the study or program/project.

CO&I PROJECT GRANTS

Overview:

- CO&I Project Grants support equipment, services or programs benefiting individuals with SCI.
- Topic areas include:
 - Assistive Technology: i.e., access to a piece of equipment, device or product system (e.g., an app) to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with SCI.
 - Education: e.g., patient/family education, peer mentoring/training, consumer-based conferences.
 - Employment: e.g., vocational training, local employment placement, employment initiatives.
 - Independent Living: e.g., accessible housing to move individuals with SCI out of nursing homes, adaptive driving programs, companion animal services, independent living center support for SCI programs.
 - Rehabilitation: e.g., wellness programs, patient assistance funds and equipment, including clinical and/or assistive technology associated with rehabilitation services for people with SCI.
 - Arts, Sports and Recreation: e.g., community partnership initiatives, visual and performing arts programs, equipment, travel funds, event support or wellness programs.
- Funding is for one year, from \$25,000 - \$100,000.

Details for This Funding Category:

- **Focus on SCI:** CO&I Project Grant applications must clearly address the needs of people living with SCI and must include the projected numbers of individuals to be served. While the Neilsen Foundation understands that spinal cord disease/conditions may be closely linked, the Neilsen Foundation's primary area of focus is on traumatic and chronic spinal cord injury.
- **Impact and innovation:** The Neilsen Foundation prioritizes novelty of approach and programs/projects that are likely to exert a sustained, powerful influence on quality of life for individuals living with SCI.
- **Relevance:** Applicants must demonstrate relevance to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation.
- **Feasibility:** The project must be accomplishable within the grant period, given documented experience and expertise, past progress, requested and available resources, and institutional/organizational commitment.
- **Sustainability:** Applicants should address sustainability beyond Neilsen Foundation funding, including future staff salaries, equipment, maintenance and other necessary costs.
- **Collaboration:** Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate meaningful community partnerships so that duplication of services can be avoided. Demonstration of shared community resources is also encouraged.
- **Project evaluation:** Clear project evaluation measures (beyond simply citing how many persons are served) are required.
- **Medical supervision if medical/clinical equipment is requested:** Any institution/organization requesting funding for medical/clinical equipment that will be used with patients or participants must provide clear documentation demonstrating medical supervision with clinically trained staff.

- **Do not expect ongoing Neilsen Foundation funding:** Grant recipients should not rely on the Neilsen Foundation for annual support of a specific program/project. It is strongly recommended that institutions/organizations have additional sources of funding. *Under no circumstances will the Neilsen Foundation be obligated to continue funding any project.*

Allowable Costs:

- **Grant funding ranges:** Any request of \$50,000 or more must describe other funding sources that have been secured or are pending for the same program/project. Awards of \$75,000 or more are limited to highly innovative projects that serve a large SCI population.
- **Administrative, overhead and operating costs may not exceed 10%.**
- **Do not include requests for staff continuing education:** The Neilsen Foundation considers this the responsibility of the applicant institution/organization.
- **Do not include requests to support capital building projects:** CO&I Project Grants will not support capital building projects, including new building or renovations.

PART 2: LOI AND FGA APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Application Submission Process

For each cycle, the application process begins with an LOI. FGAs will only be accepted from PIs/Applicants invited through the most recent LOI competition.

The Neilsen Foundation uses the web-based grants system, proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>), to review and manage its grants.

TIMELY SUBMISSION

All application deadlines, dates and times are strictly enforced. The online system, proposalCENTRAL, will automatically close at the cycle's stated deadline date and time.

We strongly recommend that you begin the application process on proposalCENTRAL well in advance of all deadlines. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

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

NEILSEN FOUNDATION TEMPLATES

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

NOTE FOR MAC USERS: All Neilsen Foundation documents are created in Microsoft Word. Mac users may experience difficulties; it is strongly recommended that applicants allow ample time to create and submit proposal materials. If you experience difficulty with the templates, 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) to view “Converting Files to PDF.” If you need further assistance, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com.

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information entered on proposalCENTRAL must include a physical street address for the applicant’s institution/organization and a current email address.

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

The Neilsen Foundation recommends that applicants check the ‘Auto Notify’ box in the “Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal” section in proposalCENTRAL, for at least one other contact at the institution/organization. The ‘Permissions’ access level for other contacts can be set as view, edit or administrator.

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

- Respond to all sections of the templates. If a section or question does not apply to your application, enter “N/A.”
- It is suggested that you carefully proofread all sections of your LOI or FGA materials for consistency and accuracy before submitting each on proposalCENTRAL.
- The Applicant must verify that all documents that have been converted to PDF are legible.
- Inaccurate or incomplete submissions will be disqualified without review.

PROTECT YOUR PROPOSAL CENTRAL USERNAME AND PASSWORD

To protect your account information, emails you receive from the proposalCENTRAL email system will no longer contain a link that includes Usernames and Passwords. If you need to forward any emails from earlier cycles to another individual, we recommend that you delete any confidential information that was previously included.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For technical questions regarding the online submission process, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com, during business hours,

Monday–Friday, 8:30 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.

B. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission

DEADLINE

Refer to page one of this Application Guide for the LOI deadline for this cycle. The proposalCENTRAL online submission system will automatically close at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time) on the due date. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

FORMAT

All LOI applications must be submitted online, via proposalCENTRAL. The current LOI template on proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) must be used. Further instructions and page limitations may be provided on the LOI template. **All original text and formatting must remain on the submitted LOI application.**

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR LOI

LOIs will be reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation staff and external peer reviewers. This evaluation will be based on relevance of the proposed project to the Neilsen Foundation, potential impact to individuals with SCI and specific requirements of the funding category. Any notable issues in presentation or feasibility will be taken into consideration, along with the preliminary budget relative to the scope of the proposed project.

NOTIFICATION OF LOI RESULTS

Applicants will be notified via email whether they are invited to submit an FGA, 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 an FGA.

C. Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission

Only applicants invited to apply through the current cycle’s LOI process may submit an FGA. Refer to page one of this Application Guide for the FGA deadline for this cycle. All FGAs must be submitted online, via proposalCENTRAL. *The proposalCENTRAL system will not allow an application to be submitted until all required documents, are uploaded.* The proposalCENTRAL system will automatically close at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time) on the due date. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

FORMAT

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 templates. The Neilsen Foundation application templates may not be modified by the applicant. **All original text and formatting must remain on the submitted application.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR FULL GRANT APPLICATIONS

On the proposalCENTRAL online application in the Proposal Section (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.

It is important to view the uploaded documents to insure all PDFs are legible. In the online Proposal Section, return to “Print Signature Pages” and click on the “Print Signature Pages and Attached PDF Files” button to view the uploads.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

It is strongly advised that applicants review additional instructions under Proposal Sections (grey box on the left) and templates provided on proposalCENTRAL.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR FGA

FGAs are peer-reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation’s Review Board and selected external reviewers. The critique and evaluation of an FGA will be based on merit, innovation and relevance to the Neilsen Foundation. A summary statement, if applicable, will be available to the PI/Applicant after the current grant cycle results are announced.

See Appendix for a list of FGA review criteria.

NOTIFICATION OF FGA RESULTS AND AWARD PROCESS

The Neilsen Foundation will notify applicants whether their application has been approved or declined for funding, via email, approximately six months after the FGA deadline. Only approved FGAs will proceed to the award process.

PIs/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 grantee institution. The additional documentation will include but is not limited to: 1) signed Grant Agreement; 2) Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status form along with a copy of the institution/organization’s most recent IRS Determination letter; 3) Project Summary form; and 4) IRB Approval Letter (see below). Instructions for executing the additional documentation will be included in the award notification, which will be emailed to the applicant via the proposalCENTRAL correspondence link.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

If the project includes work that requires IRB oversight by the institution for use of human subjects, prior to receiving funding for an award, the PI must provide documentation of IRB approval.

Important: The IRB approval letter must be on the institution’s letterhead, in English or with an English translation provided. The approval letter must include the following: 1) name of the IRB Chair; 2) expiration date of the approval; 3) PI’s name (or mentor’s name in the case of postdoctoral fellows); and 4) Neilsen Foundation project title. If the IRB approval is for a broader protocol and the title on the approval letter differs from the Neilsen Foundation title, the letter must mention that the approval also covers the project funded by the Neilsen Foundation. If multiple IRB approvals are required (e.g., multiple institutions), PIs must provide each approval letter as a separate PDF file.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION DUE DILIGENCE

Per the 2006 Pension Protection Act, private non-operating foundations are required to verify the nonprofit status of all prospective grantee institutions/organizations. When submitting an application, the PI/Applicant will also need to provide the following:

United States-based institutions/organizations:

- A copy of the institution/organization's IRS Determination letter that proves the institution/organization's 501(c)(3) designation or tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code 170(c)(1).
- *If the institution/organization is classified as a public charity under Section 509(a)(3), 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 institution/organization will be required to provide additional information as a Supporting Organization that is seeking a grant from a private foundation. The Neilsen Foundation cannot issue grants to certain 509(a)(3), Type III Supporting Organizations.*

Canadian-based institutions/organizations:

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

In conjunction with the documents listed above, the Neilsen Foundation requires that all institutions/organizations complete a Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status form. The template is available on proposalCENTRAL, under Proposal Sections (located in the grey box on the left), Download Templates & Instructions. **Note: The entity listed on the Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status 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 institution/organization'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 the required documentation is received and approved by the Neilsen Foundation, and our due diligence process is complete, funds will be disbursed to the institution/organization by the start date of the grant.

FINAL REPORT

At the end of the grant period, PIs/Applicants will be required to submit a Final Report and Final Expenditure Report via proposalCENTRAL. Both templates are available on the Deliverables page. PIs/Applicants that do not comply with this requirement, or submit unsatisfactory final reports, will not be eligible for future Neilsen Foundation funding until the required reports are received and approved.

D. Resubmission of an FGA

Applicants are allowed to submit an LOI for a project that was not funded in a prior FGA cycle. A new LOI is required for the resubmission, but does not guarantee that the institution/organization will be invited to submit a revised FGA.

E. Concurrent Grants Across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios

- PIs/Applicants may hold only one Neilsen Foundation grant within a given portfolio at one time. A grantee must fulfill the obligations of a currently funded grant, including submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report, prior to the FGA deadline (see FINAL REPORT section, above).
- **For all Neilsen Foundation portfolios:** Non-trainee PIs/Applicants may apply for one grant per cycle per Neilsen Foundation portfolio (“SCIRTS,” “PSR” and “CO&I”), and may hold up to one grant in each of the three portfolios at a time. 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.

F. Additional Information

APPLICATION SUBMISSION CONTACTS

- For technical questions regarding the online submission process, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com, during their business hours, Monday–Friday, 8:30 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, contact Ehrica Hernandez, Grants Management Associate, at ehrica@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding this portfolio please contact Jane Otto (CO&I Program Officer) at jane@chnfoundation.org. For information about other Neilsen Foundation portfolios, visit our website, www.chnfoundation.org.

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

APPENDIX: 2017 PROJECT GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

CREATING OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



OVERALL IMPACT

Following review and optional completion of the sections below, please provide strengths and weaknesses of the application, and any recommendations you would like provided to the applicant.

SIGNIFICANCE

The extent to which the program/project, if successfully carried out, will make an important contribution to the SCI community.

1. Are the project's general objectives relevant to the Neilsen Foundation's mission to support those living with a spinal cord injury?
2. Is this a new project that hasn't been addressed before in the SCI community?
3. Is there a need for this project in the SCI community?

FEASIBILITY/SUSTAINABILITY

1. What is the likelihood that the proposed project can be accomplished in the funding period?
2. Is the program sustainable beyond one-year of funding?
3. Is the funding going to strengthen the program beyond one-year of funding?
4. Will the project happen without Neilsen Foundation grant funding?

GOALS

1. What are the program/project goals?
2. Are the goals clear and measurable?
3. Is the project likely to meet the goals?

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

1. Is the budget requested appropriate for the nature and scope of the project?
2. Is the budget fully justified?
3. Are there concerns about overlap with other funding sources?

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

1. Provide an evaluation of the technical details of the application and explain if needed.
2. Is the application complete?
3. Did the applicant follow the template instructions (i.e., retain the table at the top of page one, retain the instructions and questions, not exceed the page limits, etc.)?
4. Is the proposal well written and easy to follow?