

2019 APPLICATION GUIDE PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



This guide provides information on the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's Psychosocial Research (PSR) grants. It is the Principal Investigator (PI)/Fellow/Applicant's (hereafter referred to as "Applicant") 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	
March 23, 2018 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Due via proposalCENTRAL
May 2018	Notification of LOI Results
July 13, 2018 5:00 PM (Eastern Time)	Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission Due via proposalCENTRAL
December 2018	Notification of FGA Results
April 2019	Awarded Grants to be Funded

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: OVERVIEW OF FUNDING	3
A. About the Neilsen Foundation	3
B. PSR Portfolio Funding	4
C. Eligibility and Other Requirements	5
PSR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS	6
PSR PILOT GRANTS	8
PSR STUDIES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS	9
PART 2: APPLICATION PROCESS	11
A. Submission Requirements	11
B. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission	13
C. Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission	14
D. Resubmission of an FGA	18
E. Concurrent Grants Across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios	18
F. Additional Information	19
APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTENT REVIEW CRITERIA	20
APPENDIX 2: POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS CRITERIA	22
APPENDIX 3: PILOT GRANTS CRITERIA	24
APPENDIX 4: STUDIES & DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS CRITERIA	26

PART 1: OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

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): The goal of the portfolio is to address gaps in the field and advance novel approaches to improving function and developing curative therapies after SCI. This research is designed to improve understanding and advance the treatment of acute and chronic SCI and includes mechanistic, preclinical, translational and/or clinical studies.
- Psychosocial Research (PSR): The goal of the portfolio is to develop sound data to inform and disseminate best practices that produce better outcomes, improving quality of life for people living with SCI. This research explores the interrelation of behavioral, social and psychological factors that influence participation, health practice, lifestyle, and support systems in community and clinical settings.

Programmatic Grants:

- Creating Opportunity & Independence (CO&I): The goal of the portfolio is to enhance quality of life for individuals and their families living with SCI through grants to support innovative programs/projects that improve participation and independence. Areas of focus include: assistive technology, education, employment, independent living, rehabilitation, and arts, sports and recreation.

Education Grants:

- Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Fellowships (SCIMF): The goal of the portfolio is to support clinical training and to ensure that a sufficient number of physicians are attracted to the field to meet the needs of patients with SCI. SCIMF grants are awarded to ACGME-accredited programs to train physicians specifically in the field of SCI care.

- Neilsen Scholarship Program (NSP): The goal of the portfolio is to support students with SCI in their pursuit of higher education. Funding to selected academic institutions provides 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. PSR Portfolio Funding

PORTFOLIO SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The Neilsen Foundation offers funding for research to better understand the relationship among biological, psychological and social aspects of health and functioning in people living with SCI. Our goals are to identify and prioritize critical gaps in the field and develop more effective interventions to improve health and participation in individuals with SCI across the lifespan. The PSR portfolio does this by funding the development and dissemination of sound data to inform best practices that produce better outcomes and improve quality of life for people living with SCI.

Emphasis is placed on research directed towards:

- Increasing understanding of psychological (behavioral, emotional, cognitive) and social (interpersonal, community, environmental) factors that affect health, functioning and quality of life;
- Testing the effectiveness and/or feasibility of rehabilitation and habilitation interventions to improve psychological and social functioning, including participation in work, school and other community activities;
- Improving measurements of psychological, social and environmental risk factors, protective factors, processes and outcomes; and
- Identifying 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.

PSR topics can address issues that reflect the diversity of people with SCI across the lifespan, including targeted SCI subgroups or specific aspects of psychological, environmental and social support factors that impact health, functioning or quality of life. The PSR portfolio areas of emphasis include, but are not limited to, research on aging, caregiving (formal and informal networks), employment/work, health behaviors and fitness, independent living/lifestyle, self-management/self-care, and technology access. Research can involve qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies.

Examples of relevant research topics that could have widespread impact on the field include:

- Developing more robust outcome measures for PSR;
- Defining psychosocial barriers to and facilitators of health, independent functioning and excellent quality of life; and
- Measuring, evaluating or improving approaches that are patient-centered (i.e., interactions between clinical practitioners and individuals with SCI) and/or consumer-centered (i.e., non-medical interventions for people living with SCI at any stage).

Applications to this portfolio **must** be research-oriented and psychosocial in their focus. The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions 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 complement but are distinct from other Neilsen Foundation grant portfolios. 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 CO&I portfolio. A research study to explore novel interventions aimed at improving neurologic function after SCI would be more appropriate for the SCIRTS portfolio. In comparison, a research study that examines the impact of a community intervention for those living with SCI on people's outlook or overall participation, or as a potential boon or burden to their caregivers, would be well-suited to this PSR grant competition.

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

- PSR Postdoctoral Fellowships
- PSR Pilot Grants
- PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects

C. Eligibility and Other Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

The following applies to all funding categories:

- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or an equivalent terminal professional degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DVM). Non-fellowship applicants must demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an **independent Principal Investigator (PI)**. The Neilsen Foundation encourages submissions from eligible PIs who represent a wide range of disciplines; however, it is required that **relevant SCI expertise** is represented on the proposed research project team.
- The grantee must be a **nonprofit academic/research institution or rehabilitation facility located in the United States or Canada** with a demonstrated capability to conduct grant-funded research.
- The PI is not required to be a citizen of the United States or Canada; however, the PI must be employed by an eligible grantee institution. Each application must include the appropriate endorsement of an institutional official who is responsible for the administration of grant funds (hereafter known as the "Grants Administrator").
- 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 research.
- A PI may only submit one application in a given portfolio cycle (see FINAL REPORT section under PART 2, SECTION C., Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission, below).
- 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, one must serve as the PI; the other(s) should be listed as collaborator(s).

- Multiple PIs from an institution may submit concurrent, independent applications in a given grant cycle. In such cases, each project must be distinct, with non-overlapping Aims.
- The Neilsen Foundation discourages Postdoctoral Fellows and their mentor(s) from submitting concurrent applications *with overlapping Aims* to multiple funding categories within this portfolio.
- It may not be necessary to provide preliminary data. Neilsen Foundation funding may be sought to allow the PI to obtain data to establish a line of research if the proposal provides strong rationale (e.g., support from the literature or use in an indication other than SCI) that justifies testing the hypotheses with the proposed experimental design. However, if feasibility issues add unacceptable risk of failure, reviewers may note that preliminary data to address this risk should be provided.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- All application materials and communications (including IRB/IACUC 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 research 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/organization will retain title to Intellectual Property developed through the study or program/project.
- Human interventional studies funded by the Neilsen Foundation are required to register on ClinicalTrials.gov.
- The Neilsen Foundation strongly encourages data sharing and open access. Grantees are asked to make all scientific reports openly accessible (through the journal website or PubMed Central) no later than one year after publication.

PSR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Overview:

- This funding is designed to encourage specialization in the field of SCI; Fellowships are intended to provide mentored training in SCI research to early-career investigators. The Fellowship Applicant (Fellow) should be mentored (or co-mentored) by an investigator experienced in SCI psychosocial research.
- Fellows must have attained their doctoral degree or an equivalent terminal professional degree by the FGA submission deadline and have held that degree no longer than five years prior to the FGA submission deadline. For Fellows with an MD degree, the five-year period begins after completion of their residency program. Unique circumstances related to this criterion must be

communicated to the Neilsen Foundation for approval prior to submission.

- Criteria for this grant include the qualifications of the Fellow, how the training plan and environment provided by the mentor(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 the PSR grant portfolio.
- A two-page Training Plan is required when submitting an FGA.
- Funding for Fellowships is \$75,000 per year, for up to two years; \$150,000 total costs.

Details for This Funding Category:

- Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to directly support the Fellow. The proposal should be written by the Fellow, with input from the mentor(s).
- Personnel Costs: Funding is designated primarily for the salary plus fringe benefits of the Fellow. No funding for other personnel (e.g., technical staff) is allowed.
- Non-Personnel Costs: The purpose of allowing non-personnel costs in this category is to support the advancement of the Fellow's career. Non-personnel costs may be budgeted to further the Fellow's development in SCI research. The Neilsen Foundation will allow up to \$30,000 over the course of the two-year grant for non-personnel costs, provided total costs do not exceed \$75,000 per year. It is expected that the mentor(s) will make available necessary general office equipment and supplies; however, funds for travel, education, publication costs, supplies and/or equipment can be expended in the categories listed below.
 - Travel: Funds may be used for professional development-related travel for the Fellow. Travel for other personnel is not allowed.
 - Training/Education: Appropriate educational expenses for the fellow, such as relevant coursework and SCI professional memberships, can be included.
 - Publication Costs: Funds may be used to develop the Fellow's manuscript preparation skills. Publication costs are allowed where the Fellow is a contributing author. Allowable costs include open-access fees.
 - Supplies: All project-related items, other than those described below in Equipment, are allowed. A computing device or computer software is considered a supply if the acquisition cost is less than \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.
 - Equipment: An item having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit is considered equipment. All requests must be justified by including a description of how the piece of equipment will support the advancement of the Fellow's career.
- Indirect Costs: The Neilsen Foundation does not allow indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, per capita infrastructure costs, etc.) on its Postdoctoral Fellowships.

PSR PILOT GRANTS

Overview:

- This funding category is intended to support Pilot studies that lay essential groundwork to inform future research, 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 trials. Proposed Pilot projects should indicate how they will establish a new investigational program or take on “risk” balanced by high potential impact.
- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent terminal professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent PI.
- Criteria for Pilot grants include the scientific merit of the project, the innovative nature of the proposed psychosocial research and the likelihood that success will move the SCI field forward.
- Funding for PSR Pilot grants is for up to two years, \$200,000 total costs.

Details for This Funding Category:

- PIs must be independent investigators, actively employed at the grantee institution at the time of FGA submission, and can be at any stage of their research career.
- Criteria for funding junior investigators include evidence of a research background that is relevant to the proposed study and the mission of the Neilsen Foundation.
- If the PI is not in a designated research position, e.g., tenure track, 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 total amount requested for the two-year grant cannot exceed \$200,000, which includes personnel (salary/fringe benefits combined), subcontracts, supplies, equipment, travel, indirect costs, etc. While yearly budget totals may vary over the two-year period, the justification and distribution of the budget should reflect the costs needed to complete the scope of work within the proposed timeline.
- Allowable budget categories include:
 - **PI Salary:** The amount requested for the PI’s support (salary plus fringe benefits) may be up to 20% of the total costs of the grant. For example, if an applicant requests \$200,000, the maximum PI support allowed is \$40,000 total over the two-year period.
 - **Collaborator(s):** A collaborator is an individual who will make a significant contribution or play a significant role in the conduct of the research project. In most cases, the collaborator provides a certain expertise, such as a specific type of SCI research experience. Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with the same institution as the PI; 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 plus fringe benefits) should not exceed 15% of the total yearly cost of the grant. 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. The Neilsen Foundation *does not* fund graduate student tuition or fees; however, stipends/salaries for graduate students can be included. There is no restriction on the percentage of support for other positions.

- Consultants: Consultant costs are allowed and there is no limit on the amount requested. Consultants are generally independent contractors who offer advice or work on specific aspects of a project for a limited period of time.
- Subcontractors: A subcontract may be established by the grantee institution with another site to carry out selected activities of the proposed project. If a subcontract is included in the grant, the combined indirect cost amount for the PI's institution *and* the subcontractor's institution may not exceed 10% of the total cost of the grant.
- Supplies: All project-related items other than those described below in Equipment are allowed. A computing device or computer software is considered a supply if the acquisition cost is less than \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.
- Equipment: Requests for equipment are not encouraged but are allowed if justification is provided. Equipment cannot exceed \$10,000 for the two-year project. An item having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit is considered equipment.
- Travel: Support for conference travel is limited to \$6,000 during the grant term. Adequate justification is required for any additional project-related travel support (e.g., research participant travel, travel to a collaborating site, etc.).
- Publication Costs: Up to \$4,000 is allowed during the grant term. Allowable costs include open-access fees.
- Indirect Costs: The maximum amount allowed for indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, per capita infrastructure costs, etc.) is 10% of the total cost of the grant. For example, if an applicant requests the maximum funding available, the total *indirect cost* allowed is \$20,000 over the two-year period.
- 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 may be used to defray these charges, subject to the 10% of total indirect cost cap.

PSR STUDIES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Overview:

- This funding category is intended to support substantive studies that fill important gaps in the SCI field, that open new areas of SCI psychosocial research, or that develop and evaluate interventions to address psychosocial issues after SCI. Proposed submissions in this category should facilitate, expand or improve the translation of knowledge and/or the adoption of interventions and practices that will have a positive impact for those living with SCI. Based within a psychosocial framework, PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects can range from SCI epidemiological studies to interventions that will enhance clinical treatment, rehabilitation, habilitation and/or other related quality of life subsets.

- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent terminal professional degree and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent PI.
- 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.
- Funding for PSR Study and Demonstration Projects is for up to three years, \$400,000 total costs.

Details for This Funding Category:

- PIs must be independent investigators, actively employed at the grantee institution at the time of FGA submission, and can be at any stage of their research career.
- Criteria for funding junior investigators include evidence of a research background that is relevant to the proposed study and the mission of the Neilsen Foundation.
- If the PI is not in a designated research position, e.g., tenure track, 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 total amount requested for the three-year grant cannot exceed \$400,000, which includes personnel (salary/fringe benefits combined), subcontracts, supplies, equipment, travel, indirect costs, etc. While yearly budget totals may vary over the three-year period, the justification and distribution of the budget should reflect the costs needed to complete the scope of work within the proposed timeline.
- Allowable budget categories include:
 - PI Salary: The amount requested for the PI's support (salary plus fringe benefits) may be up to 20% of the total costs of the grant. For example, if an applicant requests \$400,000, the maximum PI support allowed is \$80,000 total over the three-year period.
 - Collaborator(s): A collaborator is an individual who will make a significant contribution or play a significant role in the conduct of the research project. In most cases, the collaborator provides a certain expertise, such as a specific type of SCI research experience. Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with the same institution as the PI; 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 plus fringe benefits) should not exceed 15% of the total yearly cost of the grant. 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. The Neilsen Foundation *does not* fund graduate student tuition or fees; however, stipends/salaries for graduate students can be included. There is no restriction on the percentage of support for other positions.
 - Consultants: Consultant costs are allowed and there is no limit on the amount requested. Consultants are generally independent contractors who offer advice or work on specific aspects of a project for a limited period of time.

- **Subcontractors:** A subcontract may be established by the grantee institution with another site to carry out selected activities of the proposed project. If a subcontract is included in the grant, the combined indirect cost amount for the PI's institution *and* the subcontractor's institution may not exceed 10% of the total cost of the grant.
- **Supplies:** All project-related items other than those described below in Equipment are allowed. A computing device or computer software is considered a supply if the acquisition cost is less than \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.
- **Equipment:** Requests for equipment are not encouraged but are allowed if justification is provided. Equipment cannot exceed \$10,000 for the three-year project. An item having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit is considered equipment.
- **Travel:** Support for conference travel is limited to \$10,000 during the grant term. Adequate justification is required for any additional project-related travel support (e.g., research participant travel, travel to a collaborating site, etc.).
- **Publication Costs:** Up to \$6,000 is allowed during the grant term. Allowable costs include open-access fees.
- **Indirect Costs:** The maximum amount allowed for indirect costs (i.e., administrative, overhead, per capita infrastructure costs, etc.) is 10% of the total cost of the grant. For example, if an applicant requests the maximum funding available, the total *indirect cost* allowed is \$40,000 over the three-year period.
- **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 may be used to defray these charges, subject to the 10% of total indirect cost cap.

PART 2: APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Submission Requirements

For each cycle, the application process begins with an LOI. FGAs will only be accepted from 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 in 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 in 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 under the “Download Templates & Instructions” section (located in the navigation bar on the left) click on the link “Click here for a list of PDF generators” to view “Converting Your Documents to PDFs.” If you need further assistance, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Service at (800) 875-2562 or via email at pcsupport@altum.com.

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information entered in proposalCENTRAL must include a physical street address for the Applicant’s institution/organization and a current email address for the PI/Applicant. The Neilsen Foundation relies on contact information located in proposalCENTRAL to contact its applicants and grantees. In order to receive important updates, it is the PI/Applicant and grantee institution/organization’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 the application, enter “N/A.”
- It is suggested that the Applicant carefully proofread all sections of the LOI or FGA materials for consistency and accuracy before submitting in proposalCENTRAL.
- The Applicant must verify that all PDF documents 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 Service 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 the 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. 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 in proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) must be used. Further instructions and page limitations will be provided on the LOI template. The Neilsen Foundation LOI template may not be modified by the Applicant. **All original text and formatting must remain on the submitted LOI.**

REQUIRED INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN THE LOI APPLICATION

- Hypotheses and project Aim(s).
- Overview of the experimental design/methods.
- Relevance to the Neilsen Foundation.
- Brief preliminary budget for the entire project period. At the LOI stage, the budget should be broadly categorized. Eligible project costs, such as personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, etc., should directly support the project Aims.
- The Neilsen Foundation accepts submissions from eligible individuals across a wide range of disciplines; however, it is strongly encouraged that relevant SCI, psychosocial and technical expertise are represented on the project team.
- The PI must submit a Biosketch as described in the FGA section below. For Postdoctoral Fellowships, Biosketches are required for both the PI and mentor(s). Biosketches from any major collaborator who provides essential expertise are not required at the LOI stage, but are encouraged. Each Biosketch should be provided as a separate PDF.

- Applicants who are not in a tenure track research or equivalent research/clinical position must supply a co-signed letter indicating that the applicant is an independent investigator and that necessary space and equipment are available for this research (see description of funding categories, above). ***If this assurance is not provided, the LOI will not be considered.***
- Resubmissions: If the LOI is a first resubmission of a previously reviewed but not funded FGA, up to a half-page may be appended to the end of the LOI template to respond to reviewer comments; this half-page does not count in the three-page limit.
- A bibliography is not required at the LOI stage. If the PI chooses to provide references, these can be included as a single page appended at the end of the completed LOI template, in one PDF file.

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 Aims to the Neilsen Foundation, potential impact to the field of SCI research, innovation 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.

See Appendix 1 for a full list of LOI review criteria.

NOTIFICATION OF LOI RESULTS

Applicants will be notified via email whether they are invited to submit an FGA, or if the 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. 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. To check for any missing required information or files before submitting an application, click on the "Validate" button under the "Validate" section (located in the navigation bar on the left).* 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

The FGA template in proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalCENTRAL.altum.com>) must be used. 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 FGA.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR FGAS

In the proposalCENTRAL online application in the Proposal Sections under the "Print Signature Pages" section (located in the navigation bar 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

PI/Applicant AND the Signing Official, upload the PDF in 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 with Attachments” button to view the uploads.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

It is strongly advised that Applicants review additional instructions under Proposal Sections (located in the navigation bar on the left) and templates provided in proposalCENTRAL. Note the following:

Postdoctoral Fellowships

At the FGA stage, Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants must provide: 1) a research plan; 2) a Biosketch for the Fellow; 3) a Biosketch for the mentor(s); 4) a Training Plan; 5) a letter of recommendation from the mentor(s); and 6) two additional recommendation letters.

- Letters of Recommendation

A letter of recommendation from the Fellow’s mentor is required. If the applicant has co-mentors, one letter of recommendation should be provided and signed by both mentors. Two other letters of recommendation must be submitted with the application. It is the Fellow’s responsibility to ensure that the letters of recommendation are submitted by the deadline. The Neilsen Foundation recommends that the Fellow notify his/her references of the deadline and follow up to be sure that the letters are submitted in a timely manner. The proposalCENTRAL system will not allow an application to be submitted until all three letters of recommendation have been uploaded.

- Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Plan

All postdoctoral 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 SCI and psychosocial research. The plan should delineate activities, opportunities and experiences that align with the Fellow’s long-term career goals. The Fellow’s contribution to the mentor’s research program(s) should also be addressed. Additional instructions are provided in proposalCENTRAL as a downloadable PDF document. The plan should be developed collaboratively by the Fellow and mentor(s). The Training Plan document must be signed by both the Fellow and mentor; if co-mentors are listed, their signatures or a letter indicating agreement should also be included. It is the Fellow’s responsibility to ensure that this document is **signed and submitted by the deadline**.

Junior Investigators

Applicants who are not in a tenure track research or equivalent research/clinical position must supply a co-signed letter indicating that the Applicant is an independent investigator and that necessary space and equipment are available for this research (see description of funding categories, above). The same letter submitted with the LOI may be used in the FGA application as long as all information is current. ***If this assurance is not provided, the FGA will not be considered.***

Biosketch(es)

The PI must submit a Biosketch using the 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. **For Postdoctoral Fellowships**, the mentor(s) also **must** provide a Biosketch.

Biosketches for all collaborators and other key personnel must be submitted with the FGA. Key personnel are defined as the PI, collaborators 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.

Each Biosketch must be provided as a separate PDF.

Subcontractors

If the proposed research requires work to be carried out by another institution, the relationship must be disclosed in the Proposal Narrative and Budget sections of the application.

Other Research Support

The PI and collaborators must provide information for all current and pending grants. **For Postdoctoral Fellowships**, both the Fellow *and* the mentor(s) must provide this information. Other key personnel are not required to provide other research support information.

After submitting an application, the PI is required to immediately notify the Neilsen Foundation if he/she submits an application to another funding source, or is notified by another funding source that his/her application has been **conditionally approved** for funding. **Failure to report other funding applications, pending or approved, will jeopardize the applicant's current Neilsen Foundation grant application status.**

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 scientific merit, innovation and relevance to the Neilsen Foundation. Reviewer comments and a summary statement, if applicable, will be available to the PI/Applicant after the current grant cycle results are announced.

See Appendix 2, 3, and 4 for a list of FGA review criteria.

NOTIFICATION OF FGA RESULTS AND AWARD PROCESS

The Neilsen Foundation will notify Applicants whether the application has been approved or declined for funding, via email, approximately five months after the FGA 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 grantee institution/organization. The additional documentation will include but is not limited to: 1) signed Grant Agreement; 2) Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status including copy of the institution/organization's IRS Determination letter; 3) Notice of Other Funding; and 4) IRB/IACUC 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.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD/INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE APPROVALS

Prior to receiving funding for an award, the PI must provide documentation of IRB/IACUC approval for use of human or animal subjects. For multicenter clinical studies, use of a single IRB of record or a central IRB is strongly encouraged.

Important: The IRB/IACUC 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 or IACUC 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/IACUC 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/IACUC approvals are required (e.g., multiple institutions), PIs must provide each approval letter as a separate PDF file.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION DUE DILIGENCE

Per the United States Pension Protection Act of 2006, 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 U.S. IRS Determination letter, which proves the entity's 501(c)(3) designation or tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 170(c)(1).
- *An institution/organization classified as a public charity under Section 509(a)(3) should refer to IRS Notice 2006-109 (dated 12/18/2006) titled "Interim Guidance Regarding Supporting Organizations and Donor Advised Funds," and its subsequent modification in IRS Notice 2014-4. The institution/organization will be required to provide the additional information and documentation specified in Section 3.01 of IRS Notice 2006-109. 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 a U.S. IRS Determination letter, or (ii) a Canadian institution/organization's U.S.-based "friends of" charity, which holds a U.S. IRS Determination letter. If a Canadian institution/organization can satisfy either of these requirements, it must provide a copy of the U.S. IRS Determination letter for such entity (include all pages).
- If a Canadian institution/organization cannot satisfy either of the requirements above, it must be a "registered charity" with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide a copy of the CRA website page that lists the entity's registration. *If a grant is approved for funding, the Neilsen Foundation will require additional information in order to make a determination 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.” The template is available in proposalCENTRAL, under Proposal Sections (located in the navigation bar on the left), “Download Templates & Instructions.” **Note: The entity listed on the “Grantee Verification of Tax-Exempt Status” must be the same as the entity listed on the U.S. 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 report on final progress and expenditures, via proposalCENTRAL. Applicable templates are available on the Deliverables page. PIs/Applicants that do not comply with this requirement, or submit unsatisfactory reports, will not be eligible for future Neilsen Foundation funding until receipt of acceptable required report(s).

D. Resubmission of an FGA

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, but does not guarantee that the LOI will be invited to submit a revised FGA. The LOI must briefly indicate how the PI plans to respond to the previous critiques. This may be up to a half-page and is not counted in the standard LOI page limit.

If the original submission was a Pilot Research Grant, it cannot be “re-submitted” as a PSR Studies and Demonstration Project, which would require significant modification and expansion of the Aims and scope of the work. If the original submission was in the PSR Studies and Demonstration Project category, it may be “re-submitted” as a Pilot grant, with similar Aims but decreased scope.

Aims that were unsuccessful in a resubmission may be submitted in a new grant application in a subsequent cycle, using the standard template (i.e., no response to reviewer comments). A new LOI is required and previous acceptance of similar Aims does not guarantee approval for invitation as an 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 current grant, including submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report, prior to the FGA deadline (see FINAL REPORT section, above).

- **All Neilsen Foundation portfolios:** Non-trainee PIs/Applicants may apply for one grant per cycle per Neilsen Foundation portfolio (i.e., 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.
- **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 Service 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.
- For questions regarding an application's submission status, contact Ehrica Hernandez, Grants Management Associate, at ehrica@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding this portfolio, contact Joy Guihama (PSR Program Officer) at joy@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 1: LETTER OF INTENT REVIEW CRITERIA

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



The Letter of Intent (LOI) review process is intended to identify those LOIs that should be invited to submit a full proposal. To that end, we look at general criteria that apply to all LOIs, specific criteria relevant to each category of applicant (Postdoctoral, Pilot, and Studies and Demonstration Projects) and, to a limited extent, scientific merit. The evaluation of an LOI should be based primarily on relevance to the Neilsen Foundation, innovation and gaps in the field of spinal cord injury (SCI); any notable feasibility issues should also affect LOI scoring. As the LOI format does not allow PIs to provide a great deal of information on methodology, reviewers should not focus on experimental detail, which will be evaluated in the invited grant applications.

IMPACT AND INNOVATION

Based on the potential significance and relevance of the topic, what is the likelihood that the project will exert an influence in the field of psychosocial research that is consistent with the mission of the Neilsen Foundation?

1. Significance

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

- 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 or quality of life for persons with SCI and/or establish novel areas of psychosocial investigation in the field?
- c. Is the proposed research innovative versus incremental?

2. Relevance

The extent to which the project is relevant to the Neilsen Foundation, the field of SCI, and stated goals of the PSR portfolio.

APPROACH

Does the conceptual framework for the proposed study address the stated hypotheses (if applicable) and is it appropriate to the Aims of the project?

1. Feasibility

Does the scope of work appear feasible within the proposed project period, given the investigators' experience and expertise, past progress, and available resources?

2. Categorical Criteria

- a. Postdoctoral Fellowships: Does the LOI address how this training period, mentor(s) and project will increase the skill set of the PI and further their career path in SCI/psychosocial research?
- b. PSR Pilot Grants: 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. PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects: Does this project propose important or cutting-edge ideas, interventions and/or test approaches that have great potential to have impact for those living with SCI?

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Investigator and Theoretical Basis

- a. Does the application address the expertise of the investigators?
- b. Does the application provide adequate theoretical and/or preliminary support for the proposed research? If available, do preliminary data support the hypotheses and feasibility of the research?

2. Research Plan

- a. Is the general design appropriate for solving the stated problems?
- b. For clinical 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

Is the application clearly written and free of excessive typographical/spelling errors? Are supporting materials (e.g., graphs, micrographs, etc.) legibly sized and used appropriately?

BUDGET

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

APPENDIX 2: POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS CRITERIA PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



The purpose of the **Postdoctoral Fellowships** category is to increase an early-career professional's interest in the SCI field and to specifically encourage researchers from related health disciplines (e.g., nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, engineering, therapeutic recreation, public health, psychology, social work, etc.) to undertake training in research areas that benefit the SCI field. Funding for each year of the two-year project is \$75,000 for a maximum total of \$150,000.

OVERALL IMPACT

After considering all of the review criteria, summarize the significant strengths and weaknesses of the application and state the likelihood that Neilsen Foundation funding of this project will allow this Fellow to become an important contributor to the field of SCI psychosocial research.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier in the field?
2. If the Aims of the project are achieved, how would this work change or enhance current methods, technologies, treatments, services, or interventions?
3. How will the Fellow's scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical skills be improved by undertaking this project?

RELEVANCE

1. How is this project relevant to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation?
2. How is this project relevant to the goal of the PSR portfolio?

INVESTIGATOR(S)

1. Are the PI, collaborators, and other contributors well suited to the project?
2. Does the FELLOW have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher?
Does the Training Plan provide the Fellow with the requisite individualized and supervised experiences that will develop his/her research skills, including qualitative methodologies, and serve as a foundation for a productive career?
3. Are the MENTOR/SPONSOR(S)' psychosocial research qualifications, including research support and track record of mentoring, appropriate for the proposed Fellowship?
4. Is there evidence of a match between the research interests of the Fellow and the mentor/sponsor(s) and is there a demonstrated ability and commitment to assist in assuring the Fellow's success?

INNOVATION

1. Does the project challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice/program intervention paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?

2. And/or does this application apply concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions from another field of research to spinal cord injury?
3. And/or is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

APPROACH

1. Is the research plan of high scientific quality and does it relate to the applicant's Training Plan?
2. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific Aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
3. Are there feasibility issues that put the project at risk that preliminary data should alleviate? Or, if the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed adequately?
4. If the project involves clinical research, a) are the plans for protection of human subjects properly described? and b) are the plans for recruitment appropriate?

ENVIRONMENT

1. Is the institutional environment for the scientific development of the Fellow of high quality, and is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering the Fellow's training? Will the research training environment provide the applicant with individualized and supervised experiences that will develop skills needed in preparation for his/her research career?
2. Are the institutional support, physical equipment and other resources available to the investigator(s) adequate for the project proposed?
3. Will the project benefit from unique features of the environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

NON-SCORED CRITERIA

Provide any important or relevant comments on each of the non-scored criterion below.

1. Budget
2. Ethics/Safety; protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring.
3. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
4. Resubmission: When reviewing a resubmission, the committee will evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous scientific review group and changes made to the project, but basing its final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.

APPENDIX 3: PILOT GRANTS CRITERIA PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



The purpose of the **Pilot** category is to support 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 be independent investigators, but can be at any stage of their research career (junior or established). These grants provide up to two years of funding for a maximum total of \$200,000.

OVERALL IMPACT

After considering all of the review criteria, summarize the significant strengths and weaknesses of the application. 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? Does the project scope suit the funding level and does it have the potential to exert a sustained powerful influence and/or be an important contribution to the field of SCI psychosocial research?

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier in the field?
2. If the Aims of the project are achieved, how would this work change or enhance current methods, technologies, treatments, services, or interventions?

RELEVANCE

1. How is this project relevant to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation?
2. How is this project relevant to the goal of the PSR portfolio?

INVESTIGATOR(S)

1. Are the PI, collaborators, and other contributors well suited to the project? Are relevant SCI and psychosocial research expertise represented on the proposed project team?
2. If the PI is a junior investigator, does he/she have appropriate experience, training and facilities to do the proposed work? If the PI is an established investigator, has he/she demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?

INNOVATION

1. Does the project challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice/interventional paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
2. And/or does this application apply concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions from another field of research to SCI?
3. And/or is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

APPROACH

1. Is the project well-suited to the Pilot stage? Is the future applicability of the Pilot project defined (i.e., does this pilot help lay the groundwork for future studies, define next stages or have the potential to impact current practices and approaches)?
2. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific Aims of the project, within the proposed project period and by the project team described? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
3. If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed adequately?
4. If the project involves clinical and/or community-based research:
 - a. Does the project timeline include plans for study start-up time and sufficient subject recruitment?
 - b. Does the start-up plan adequately address regulatory approval, if required?
 - c. Will the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Common Data Elements be used? If not, is justification provided?

ENVIRONMENT

1. Will the institutional environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?
2. Are the institutional support, physical equipment and other resources available to the investigator(s) adequate for the project proposed?
3. Will the project benefit from unique features of their environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

NON-SCORED CRITERIA

Provide any important or relevant comments on each of the non-scored criterion below.

1. Budget
2. Ethics/Safety; protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring.
3. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
4. Resubmission: When reviewing a resubmission, the committee will evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous scientific review group and changes made to the project, but basing its final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.

APPENDIX 4: STUDIES & DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS CRITERIA PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



The purpose of the **Studies and Demonstration Projects** category is to support substantive studies that fill important gaps in the SCI field, that open new areas of SCI psychosocial research, or that develop and evaluate interventions to address psychosocial issues after SCI. Proposed projects in this category should facilitate, expand or improve the translation of knowledge and/or the adoption of interventions and practices that will have a positive impact for those living with SCI. These grants provide up to three years of funding for a maximum total of \$400,000.

OVERALL IMPACT

After considering all of the review criteria, summarize the significant strengths and weaknesses of the application. Does this project address important gaps or propose cutting-edge ideas, interventions and/or test approaches that have great potential to have a positive impact for those living with SCI? Does the project scope suit this funding level and does it have the potential to exert a sustained powerful influence on the SCI field and/or be an important contribution to the field of SCI psychosocial research?

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier in the field?
2. If the Aims of the project are achieved, how would this work change or enhance current methods, technologies, treatments, services, or interventions?

RELEVANCE

1. How is this project relevant to the mission of the Neilsen Foundation?
2. How is this project relevant to the goal of the PSR portfolio?

INVESTIGATOR(S)

1. Are the PI, collaborators, and other contributors well suited to the project? Are relevant SCI and psychosocial research expertise represented on the proposed project team?
2. If the PI is a junior investigator, does he/she have appropriate experience, training and facilities to do the proposed work? If the PI is an established investigator, has he/she demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?

INNOVATION

1. Does the project challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice/program intervention paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
2. And/or does this application apply concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions from another field of research to SCI?
3. And/or is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

APPROACH

1. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific Aims of the project, within the proposed project period and by the project team described? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
2. Are preliminary data provided to support the feasibility of the project? Or, if the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed adequately?
3. If the project involves clinical and/or community-based research:
 - a. Does the project timeline include plans for study start-up time and sufficient subject recruitment?
 - b. Does the start-up plan adequately address regulatory approval, if required?
 - c. Will the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Common Data Elements be used? If not, is justification provided?

ENVIRONMENT

1. Will the institutional environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?
2. Are the institutional support, physical equipment and other resources available to the investigator(s) adequate for the project proposed?
3. Will the project benefit from unique features of their environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

NON-SCORED CRITERIA

Provide any important or relevant comments on each of the non-scored criterion below.

1. Budget
2. Ethics/Safety; protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring.
3. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
4. Resubmission: When reviewing a resubmission, the committee will evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous scientific review group and changes made to the project, but basing its final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.