

**2023 APPLICATION GUIDE
COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS
CREATING OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE**

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



This guide provides information on the Creating Opportunity & Independence (CO&I) grants, which support nonprofit organizations that provide programs and services that enhance quality of life for individuals and families living with spinal cord injury (SCI).

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES	
January 30, 2023 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)	Letter of Intent (LOI) Due via ProposalCentral
Late March 2023	Notification of LOI Results
April 21, 2023 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)	Full Grant Application (FGA) Due via ProposalCentral
September 2023	Notification of FGA Results
October 2023	Awarded Grants to be Funded

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PART 1: NEILSEN FOUNDATION OVERVIEW

A. About the Neilsen Foundation

The Craig H. Neilsen Foundation is the largest private funder of spinal cord injury research, rehabilitation, clinical training, and programmatic support in the United States and Canada. The Neilsen Foundation partners with scientific, charitable, and educational organizations conducting spinal cord injury research, training in spinal cord medicine, and supports grassroots organizations providing services to assist individuals affected by spinal cord injury. The Neilsen Foundation values diversity, equity, and inclusion and is dedicated to improving the world for persons 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.

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.

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. These are foundational to what we are and aspire to be: Leadership, Inclusion, Excellence, Creativity, and Collaboration.

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Craig H. Neilsen was an American entrepreneur well known for his attention to detail, uncompromising demand for excellence, and an ability to inspire those around him. In his personal life, he was also known for his generosity and led by example with his charitable giving. In 1985, a collision with a semi-truck left Craig with a severe spinal cord injury (SCI), and in 2002, he applied his entrepreneurial spirit to his charitable pursuits and established the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation to improve the quality of life for people living with SCI.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION STANDING PORTFOLIOS

The Neilsen Foundation supports research grants, programmatic grants, and education grants. For information about these standing portfolios, please visit the Neilsen Foundation website at www.chnfoundation.org for application guides and deadlines.

Research Grants:

- Spinal Cord Injury Research on the Translational Spectrum (SCIRTS)
- Psychosocial Research (PSR)

Programmatic Grants:

- Creating Opportunity & Independence (CO&I)

Education Grants:

- Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Fellowships (SCIMF)
- Neilsen Scholarship Program (NSP)

B. CO&I Portfolio

The CO&I Portfolio supports non-profit organizations that provide programs and services to enhance quality of life for individuals and families living with SCI. These grants cover diverse efforts that include discrete projects, program support and capacity building.

PORTFOLIO OBJECTIVES

- Support community integration, participation and independence for individuals living with SCI
- Remove barriers and promote access
- Increase health and wellness in rehabilitation, through transitional stages, and in the community
- Promote self-efficacy
- Address diverse regional needs and available resources

The Neilsen Foundation partners with and supports organizations that have significant impact on their communities, affect people across the lifespan, demonstrate partnerships, and empower individuals with SCI. Grantees are expected to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organization and in the communities they serve.

For information about previously funded CO&I grants, at the bottom of the Neilsen Foundation homepage (<https://chnfoundation.org>), use the *Search Funded Grants* link and enter “COandI” in the search bar. Use “AND” to combine terms, e.g., *COandI AND employment*.

This Application Guide is for CO&I Community Support Grants only. It is the project/program leader’s (hereafter referred to as “Applicant”) responsibility to carefully review the current application guide. Submissions must adhere to the most current guidelines.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS – KEY INFORMATION

Applicants should describe their request for funding of projects, program support, and/or capacity building within this context:

- **“Projects”** are discrete initiatives designed to achieve a specific, identified goal during the funding period. Funding can be requested to develop, launch, or augment solutions that respond to a need or eliminate barriers to participation.
- **“Program support”** funds the activities and services provided by organizations that serve the community. Funding may be requested to support or improve participation by persons with SCI. Priority is given to programs that have broad impact, affect people across the lifespan, demonstrate community partnerships and/or empower people with SCI by providing options and opportunities to achieve greater independence.
- **“Capacity building”** supports an organization’s effectiveness, operations, and potential for long-term sustainability. Funding may be requested for specified needs such as equipment, alterations that promote access, strategic and/or collaborative planning efforts, staff training, and professional development. These funds are for established organizations and not intended to subsidize start-up costs.

Funding Details:

- Funding is annual for up to two years; requested budgets must be from \$25,000–\$200,000. The budget for any year cannot exceed \$125,000. Requests outside of this range will not be considered.
- Salary support for personnel/consultants associated with a project/program is allowed.
- Equipment purchases may not exceed \$100,000 total over the life of the grant.
- Requests for general administrative and overhead costs (i.e., indirect costs) are allowed up to 10% of the total cost, exclusive of large equipment acquisition.
 - Indirect costs are not allowed on purchases of individual pieces of equipment costing \$5,000 or more.
- Support for large, capital construction or renovation will not be provided.
- A subcontract may be established by the grantee organization with another site to carry out selected activities. If included, describe the subcontract in the Proposal and Budget.
- Other costs—Refer to Budget instructions in ProposalCentral and list under “Other:”
 - Budget may include accommodations for people with disabilities.
 - Childcare costs are allowable, up to \$2,500 per year.

Topic Areas:

- Arts, Sports and Recreation: e.g., community partnership initiatives, visual and performing arts programs, equipment, travel funds, event support, or wellness programs.
- 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.
- Education: i.e., programs to promote return to school/university, education readiness, literacy interventions, General Education Development courses, tutoring programs.
 - *Note: For educational activities used as a tool to advance employment, independent living, or rehabilitation, specify the respective programmatic goal, rather than Education.*
- Employment: e.g., vocational training, local employment placement, return-to-work programs, employment initiatives.
- Independent Living: e.g., accessible housing to move people with SCI out of nursing homes, adaptive driving programs, consumer education focused on independent living, transition/reintegration projects, companion animal services, and independent living centers.
- Rehabilitation: e.g., health/wellness literacy, patient/family education, patient assistance funds, and equipment used in inpatient or outpatient programs.

Do not include:

- Academic Scholarships: The Neilsen Foundation supports educational scholarships at select U.S. colleges and universities, by invitation only, through the Neilsen Scholarship Program.
- Conferences: If the sole purpose of a proposal is to support a consumer-based conference, contact the CO&I Program Officer before submitting a LOI.
- Research studies to develop or test treatments for SCI or new medical devices.

Additional Considerations:

- **Focus on SCI:** Applicants must clearly address how the needs of people living with SCI will be served. While it is understood that spinal cord disease/conditions may be closely linked, the Neilsen Foundation's primary area of focus is on traumatic SCI.
- **Impact:** The Neilsen Foundation prioritizes applications that clearly describe the potential to enhance the quality of life of people living with SCI, address barriers, or expand services or opportunities within the grant period or beyond.
- **Feasibility:** Applications should document the experience and expertise needed for success. Any request for more than 50% of the organization's Annual Operating Budget should address the organization's capability to undertake the proposed effort.
- **Collaboration:** Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate community partnerships and should avoid duplication of services. Demonstration of shared community resources is encouraged.
- **Evaluation:** Applications should identify how success of the proposed work will be measured, including but not limited to citing the number of persons with SCI served.
- **Medical supervision, if equipment is requested:** Any organization requesting funding for medical/clinical equipment must provide clear documentation demonstrating medical supervision by clinically trained staff.
- **Other funding:** It is strongly recommended that organizations have or seek to identify additional sources of funding.

C. Eligibility and Other Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

- The grantee must be a **nonprofit organization or rehabilitation facility located in the United States or Canada** with the capability to conduct grant-funded programs or activities.
- Neilsen Foundation grants are not awarded to individuals, private foundations, or non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations.
- The Applicant named in a grant application must have his/her organization's authorization to apply for a grant and is expected to be responsible for conduct of the grant activities.
- Generally, an organization may only submit one CO&I application in each program cycle and may hold only one Neilsen Foundation CO&I Community Support Grant at a time. However, major academic or medical organizations (e.g., universities, large medical or healthcare systems) may submit concurrent applications provided that the proposed projects are distinct.
 - Individuals cannot be the Applicant for more than one submission and cannot have a previously funded Community Support Grant active on the Full Grant Application due date.
 - Concurrent applications from individual members of a given academic or clinical team are discouraged. Discussion with the Program Officer is recommended.
- If two or more people are directing a project, one must serve as the Applicant; the other(s) should be listed as collaborator(s). The Neilsen Foundation does not recognize co-Applicant leadership on its grants.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- All application materials/communications must be in English and budgets must be in U.S. dollars.
- Applicants should carefully review Key Information above to ensure they meet the relevant, specific requirements before submitting either a Letter of Intent (LOI) or Full Grant Application (FGA).
- Grantees are encouraged to apply diversity, equity, and inclusion practices across all programs, not just diversity of SCI-targeted projects, to address the needs of the communities they serve.
- A grant term may be for either one or two years. Funding for the second year of a two-year grant will be contingent on a favorable review of annual progress and expenditures. Approval of final project and final expenditure reports will be required at the end of the grant.
- 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 organization will retain title to Intellectual Property developed through the project/program.

PART 2: APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Submission Requirements

For each cycle, the application process begins with a 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.

ON-TIME 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 complete the application process in ProposalCentral well in advance of all deadlines.

Late submissions will not be considered. Technical difficulties will not be accepted as an explanation for late submissions. If you need assistance to prepare the application or convert to PDF, Neilsen Foundation staff is happy to help.

NEILSEN FOUNDATION TEMPLATES

Applicants must 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.* For example, Applicants should not change margins, delete template text (including instructions), or change font sizes on the form, etc. Modifications may lead to disqualification.

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information entered in ProposalCentral must include a current email address for the Applicant. The Neilsen Foundation relies on the contact information in ProposalCentral to contact its

Applicants and grantees. Be sure that the Applicant name entered in ProposalCentral is consistent with the name listed on the application template.

To ensure all important updates are received, it is the Applicant and grantee organization's responsibility to keep his/her ProposalCentral contact information up to date, along with other organizational contacts (i.e., grants administrator, signing official, and financial officer, if applicable). If the contact information in ProposalCentral is outdated and we are unable to contact the Applicant, we will assume that he/she is no longer interested in funding from the Neilsen Foundation. Applicants are advised to 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 organization. The "Permissions" access level for other contacts can be set as view, edit or administrator.

B. Submission and Review

ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION IS UPLOADED ON-TIME

Refer to page one of this Application Guide for the LOI and FGA deadlines. The ProposalCentral online submission system will automatically close at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on the due date. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

ProposalCentral will not allow an application to be submitted until all required information and files are provided. To check for any missing information or files before submitting, click on the "Validate" button located in the "Validate" section.

FORMAT

LOI and FGA applications must be submitted online, via ProposalCentral. The current templates in ProposalCentral (<https://ProposalCentral.altum.com>) must be used. Further instructions are provided on these templates and in additional instructions under Proposal Sections (located in the navigation bar). **All original template text and formatting must remain on the submitted applications.**

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 may be disqualified.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR FGAS

In the ProposalCentral online application under Proposal Sections, select "Print Signature Pages" (located in the navigation bar), press the "Print Signature Pages" button, and **print only page one (Grant Application) of the PDF file**. The Neilsen Foundation accepts either ink or secure, dated e-signatures (e.g., DocuSign). Signatures that are "typed in" (e.g., in Word or Adobe) using special fonts are not acceptable. When two signatures are required, **both must be provided**. Once this

page is signed by the Applicant AND the Signing Official, upload the PDF in the “Attachments” section.

It is important that the Applicant view the uploaded documents to ensure all PDFs are legible. In the online Proposal Sections, return to “Print Signature Pages” and click on the “Print Signature Pages with Attachments” button to view the uploads.

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 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). *There is no technical support available on weekends or holidays.*

ProposalCentral has a tutorial section on its website that may be helpful in completing the application: <https://ProposalCentral.altum.com/help.asp>. The “ProposalCentral Tutorials” link can also be found by selecting “Contact Us” located in the “Help” dropdown menu.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

LOIs will be reviewed based on relevance to the Neilsen Foundation, potential impact to individuals with SCI, and specific requirements noted in this Application Guide. FGAs are peer-reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation’s Review Board. See the Appendix for a list of FGA review criteria.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Applicants will be notified via email whether they are invited to submit a FGA, or if the LOI has been declined. Only Applicants invited to apply through the current cycle’s LOI process may submit a FGA. Feedback on FGAs will be available to the Applicant after the grant results are announced.

C. Award Process

After review is completed, the Neilsen Foundation will notify Applicants, via email, whether an application has been approved by the Neilsen Foundation’s Board of Directors or declined for funding. Approved FGAs will proceed to the award process.

Applicants whose FGA is approved for funding will be required to submit additional documentation before grant funds are issued, including but not limited to: 1) signed Grant Agreement; 2) copy of the organization’s IRS Determination letter; and, 3) *if applicable*, IRB Approval (see below). Instructions for this additional documentation will be included in the award notification.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

The CO&I portfolio does not support research grants; however, some projects may require human subject protection, e.g., those conducted at academic or medical institutions. If the organization applying for funding deems that the project includes work that requires IRB oversight for use of human subjects, the Applicant must provide documentation of IRB approval no later than three months after the start date of the grant.

Important: The IRB approval notification must be in English or with an English translation provided. The approval notification must be sent from the IRB committee and list the expiration date of the approval, the Applicant's or other key personnel name(s), and include the Neilsen Foundation project title. If the IRB approval is for a broader protocol and the title on the approval notification differs from the Neilsen Foundation title, the notification must mention that the approval also covers the project funded by the Neilsen Foundation. If IRB approvals are required from multiple institutions, Applicants must provide each approval notification 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 grantees. When applying, the Applicant will also need to provide the following:

United States-based organizations:

- A copy of the 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 organization classified as a public charity under Section 509(a)(3) must refer to IRS Notice 2006-109, "Interim Guidance Regarding Supporting Organizations and Donor Advised Funds," and its subsequent modification in IRS Notice 2014-4. The entity will be required to provide the required documentation specified in Section 3.01 of IRS Notice 2006-109. The Neilsen Foundation does not fund entities that are classified as non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations.*

Canada-based organizations:

- The Neilsen Foundation prefers to make grants to (i) a Canadian organization that holds a U.S. IRS Determination letter, or (ii) a Canadian organization's U.S.-based "friends of" charity, which holds a U.S. IRS Determination letter. If a Canadian organization can satisfy either of these requirements, it must provide a copy of the U.S. IRS Determination letter for such entity.
- A Canadian organization that cannot satisfy either of the above requirements must be a "registered charity" with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide a copy of the entity's CRA registration page. *If a grant is approved for funding, the Neilsen Foundation will require additional information to determine that the Canadian organization is the equivalent of a U.S. public charity.*

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

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS

Once the required documentation is accepted by the Neilsen Foundation and our due diligence process is complete, funds will be disbursed to the grantee organization.

FINAL REPORTS

At the end of the grant period, Grantees will be required to report on final progress and expenditures. Applicable templates are available in the Deliverables section in ProposalCentral. Grantees 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

Applicants are allowed to submit a LOI for a project that was not previously funded. A new LOI is required for the resubmission but does not guarantee that the organization will be invited to submit a revised FGA.

E. Concurrent Grants Across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios

Applicants may hold only one Neilsen Foundation Community Support Grant at one time. To be eligible for the current cycle, a grantee must fulfill the obligations of a current grant (i.e., submission of the Final Report and Final Expenditure Report) before the FGA deadline noted on page one.

- **All Neilsen Foundation portfolios:** Non-trainee Applicants may apply for one grant per cycle per 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.

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 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). *There is no technical support available on weekends or holidays.*
- ProposalCentral has a tutorial section on its website that may be helpful in completing the application: <https://ProposalCentral.altum.com/help.asp>. The “ProposalCentral Tutorials” link can also be found by selecting “Contact Us” located in the “Help” dropdown menu.
- For questions regarding an application's submission status contact, Ehrica Hernandez, Grants Management Associate, at ehrica@chnfoundation.org.
- For questions regarding the CO&I portfolio contact, Darrell Musick, Program Officer, at darrell@chnfoundation.org.
- For information about all Neilsen Foundation portfolios, visit our website, www.chnfoundation.org.

Note: Applicants are strongly discouraged from contacting Neilsen Foundation Review Board members during the application process. Such contact will result in disqualification of the LOI or FGA.

APPENDIX: 2023 FULL GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS CREATING OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE

Craig H. Neilsen Foundation



OVERALL IMPACT

Please summarize strengths and weaknesses of the application, and any recommendations you would like provided to the Applicant, based on the following criteria:

SIGNIFICANCE

The extent to which the proposed work, if successfully carried out, will make an important contribution.

1. Are the objectives relevant to the Neilsen Foundation's mission to support programs that improve the quality of life for those living with a spinal cord injury (SCI)?
2. Does the proposed funding help fulfill a significant need in the local and/or broader SCI community?
3. Is the requested support leveraged by other funding, collaborative efforts and/or planning for future activities?

FEASIBILITY

1. Provide an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed plan.
2. Is the scope of the effort suitable for the proposed timeline?
3. Does the work seem reasonable based on the organization's capabilities?

GOALS

1. Will the funding maintain and/or strengthen the organization and its ability to provide services to people with SCI?
2. Does the proposal define clear goals, appropriate for the type of funding being requested?
3. Do the proposed activities provide needed services for the population that will be served?
4. Are the expected outcomes for the population served well defined?

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

1. Is the requested budget appropriate and well-justified, based on the nature and scope of the proposed efforts, to support the anticipated outcomes?

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

1. Is the application complete?
2. Did the Applicant follow the template instructions?
3. Is the application well written and easy to follow?