PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
2025 APPLICATION GUIDE

This guide is intended to help you through the PSR grant application process. The Principal Investigator (PI)/Fellow/Applicant should carefully review and use *the current* guidelines, as they are updated annually.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES	
February 29, 2024 **5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**	Letter of Intent (LOI) Due via ProposalCentral
May 2024	Notification of LOI Results
July 11, 2024 **5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**	Full Grant Application (FGA) Due via ProposalCentral
December 2024	Notification of FGA Results
April 2025	Awarded Grants to be Funded

This Application Guide is intended specifically for the following grant funding categories:
- PSR Postdoctoral Fellowships
- PSR Pilot Grants
- PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects

Applicants should carefully review this guide. Our staff invite questions relating to submission of either a LOI or FGA. Contact the Program Officer via email at constanza@chnfoundation.org or refer to Part 3 below for additional contact details.

To learn more about previously funded PSR grants, use the *Search Funded Grants* link at the bottom of the Neilsen Foundation homepage (www.chnfoundation.org), and enter "PSR" in the search bar. To combine two related searches, use "AND" (e.g., *PSR AND resilience)*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: PSR Portfolio

A. Overview

The PSR Portfolio supports research to develop and disseminate sound data that inform best practices and produce better outcomes and improve quality of life for people living with SCI. PSR explores the interrelation of behavioral, social, and psychological factors that influence participation, health practice, lifestyle, and support systems in community and clinical settings.

PORTFOLIO 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. Applications to this portfolio **must** be research-oriented and psychosocial in their focus. 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. Submissions are accepted across a wide range of disciplines; however, it is strongly encouraged that relevant SCI and psychosocial expertise be represented on the project team.

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 measurement of psychological, social, and environmental risk factors, protective factors, processes, and outcomes.

- 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.

Applications 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/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:
- Defining psychosocial barriers to and facilitators of health, independent functioning, and excellent quality of life.

- Measuring, evaluating, or improving approaches that are patient-centered (e.g., 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).

- Developing more robust outcome measures for PSR.

PSR grants complement but are distinct from other Neilsen Foundation 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 study to explore novel interventions aimed at improving neurologic function after SCI would be more appropriate for the SCIRTS portfolio. In comparison, a 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.

B. Eligibility and Other Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

The following applies to all funding categories:

- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or an equivalent professional degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DVM). Postdoctoral applicants should follow instructions in the "PSR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS" section regarding degree completion.
  - 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 organization must be a nonprofit academic/research institution or rehabilitation facility located in the United States or Canada with the capability to conduct grant-funded research.
  - The Applicant named in a grant application must be employed by and deemed eligible by the grantee organization to apply for a grant and is expected to be responsible for conduct of the research. The Applicant is not required to be a citizen of the United States or Canada.
  - 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 non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations.
- A PI may submit only one application in a given cycle in this portfolio (see CONCURRENT GRANTS section under PART 3, SECTION B., below).
- The Neilsen Foundation does not recognize Co-Principal Investigators—if two or more investigators are working together on a research project, name only one as the Applicant; the other(s) should be listed as collaborator(s). Collaborators and/or consultants do not need to be affiliated with the same institution as the PI; a subcontract may be used to support a domestic or international collaborator or consultant.
- 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 Applicant to obtain data to establish a line of research if the proposal provides strong rationale (i.e., 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 an unacceptable risk of failure, reviewers may note that preliminary data to address this risk should have been provided.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- All application materials and communications (including IRB/IACUC approvals, where applicable) must be in English and budgets must be in U.S. dollars.

- Grantees are encouraged to apply Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) practices across all programs and promote DEIA within their organization and the communities they serve. Proposals that highlight expansion of DEIA as part of the proposed work and/or within their organization's practices may be prioritized in review.

- Applicants should carefully review the requirements specific to each funding category to ensure they meet the relevant requirements before submitting either a Letter of Intent (LOI) or Full Grant Application (FGA).

- For multi-year awards, annual funding will be contingent on a favorable review of annual progress and expenditure reports. Acceptance of final research and final expenditure reports is 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 both the LOI and FGA.

- The grantee organization will retain title to Intellectual Property developed with Neilsen Foundation funding.

- Human interventional studies funded by the Neilsen Foundation must be registered on ClinicalTrials.gov.

- Rigor, transparency, and reproducibility in research are fundamental to scientific progress. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed experimental design, methodology, and analysis ensure well-controlled and unbiased results, and provide plans for reporting (See Part 2, Section C., Publication and Data Sharing). Any concerns with the rigor of research upon which the proposed study is based may also be addressed.

  o The Neilsen Foundation strongly encourages data sharing consistent with FAIR Data Principles (https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/) and open access. Grantees are asked to make all reports and datasets openly accessible no later than one year after publication.

- Childcare cost reimbursement should adhere to the Grantee's institutional guidelines or, in the absence of such guidance, may include expenses for care of children up to age 13, or children up to age 18 who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care. The Neilsen Foundation does not review the eligibility of dependents or caregivers.

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.

- Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to directly support the Fellow. The proposal should be written by the Fellow, with input from the mentor(s).

- A two-page Training Plan is required when submitting a FGA.

- Criteria for Fellowships 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 portfolio.

- Funding for each year of the two-year project is up to $100,000 for a maximum total cost of $200,000.

Details for This Funding Category:

- Fellows should have attained their doctoral degree or an equivalent terminal professional degree by no later than two months after the FGA submission deadline.

  o If the degree is expected within two months after the FGA submission date, a letter from the thesis advisor addressing the likelihood of degree completion is required. This letter should be uploaded as a separate .pdf file in the "Proposal Narrative & Other Attachments" section on ProposalCentral.

- Fellows cannot have held their terminal professional degree longer than five years prior to the FGA submission deadline. For Fellows with a 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.

Allowable budget categories include:

- <u>Personnel Costs:</u> Fellowship budgets should cover 100% of the salary and fringe support for the Fellow. No funding for other personnel (e.g., technical staff) is allowed.

- <u>Non-Personnel Costs:</u> The purpose of allowing non-personnel costs in this category is to support the advancement of the Fellow's career in SCI research. The Neilsen Foundation will allow up to $35,000 over the course of the two-year grant for non-personnel costs, provided the Fellow's salary and fringe are fully covered and total costs do not exceed $100,000 per year. It is expected that the mentor(s) will make available necessary general office equipment and supplies; however, funds for travel, publication costs, supplies, and/or equipment can be expended in the categories listed below.

  o <u>Travel:</u> Funds may be used for professional development-related travel for the Fellow. Travel for other personnel is not allowed.

  o <u>Training/Education:</u> Appropriate educational expenses for the Fellow, such as relevant coursework and SCI professional memberships, can be included.

- o Publications: Publication costs are allowed where the Fellow is a contributing author. Allowable costs include open-access fees; all publications resulting from Neilsen Foundation grant funding should be publicly available.

- o Supplies: All 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.

- o 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. Requests are expected not to exceed $10,000 for the two-year project. All requests must be justified by including a description of how the piece of equipment will support the advancement of the Fellow's career.

- o Other Costs: Refer to Budget instructions in ProposalCentral and list under "Other:"
  - Childcare costs are allowable, up to $2,500 per year.
  - Budget may include accommodations for a Fellow with a disability. Accommodation expenses are not subject to the limit on non-personnel costs.

- 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 is intended to support pilot studies that lay essential groundwork, 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 "risk" balanced by high potential impact.

- Applicants must have a doctoral degree or other equivalent terminal professional degree, be beyond the postdoctoral level (i.e., Instructor, Assistant Professor, or equivalent research position) at the time of the FGA submission, and demonstrate appropriate experience to serve as an independent PI.

- Criteria for these 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, for a maximum total cost of $300,000.

Details for This Funding Category:

- Applicants 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.

- Junior investigators should provide evidence of a strong research background that is relevant to the proposed study. For investigators who are not in a tenure track position (e.g., Instructor, Research Assistant), a Letter of Assurance from the institution's Director or Department Chair is recommended at the LOI and FGA stage. Such a letter should confirm the Applicant's position as independent and affirm that all needed space and equipment are available to the PI.

- The total amount requested for the two-year grant cannot exceed $300,000, 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 25% of the total yearly cost of the grant.

- 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 25% 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) who will contribute directly and substantively to the project. There is no restriction on the percentage of salary support for other positions. Fringe benefit rates exceeding 50% of salary must be fully explained and may not be fully funded. The Neilsen Foundation does not fund graduate student tuition or fees; however, stipends/salaries for graduate students can be included.

- Consultants: Consultants are generally independent contractors who offer advice or work on specific aspects of a project for a limited period of time. The Neilsen Foundation supports the use of [Knowledge Translation Guiding Principles](#) for the conduct of SCI research partnerships. Including persons with lived experience and/or knowledge translation expertise to research teams is encouraged.

- Subcontracts: 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: 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. Requests must be justified and are expected not to exceed $10,000 for the two-year project. If equipment needs exceed this amount, a compelling explanation must be provided.

- Travel: Support for conference travel is limited to $8,000 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).

- Publications: Up to $4,000 is allowed during the grant term for publication costs, including open-access fees, high-resolution and color figures.
- Other Costs: Refer to Budget instructions in ProposalCentral and list under "Other:"
  - Accommodations for people with disabilities.
  - Childcare costs up to $2,500 per PI/staff person, per year.
  - Data sharing/curation costs.
- 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. Indirect costs are not allowed on individual pieces of equipment costing $5,000 or more.
- 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% total indirect cost cap.

PSR STUDIES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Overview:

- This funding 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 work 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 outcomes.
- 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 and collaborators.
- Funding for PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects is for up to three years, for a maximum total cost of $550,000.

Details for This Funding Category:

- Applicants 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.
- Junior investigators should provide evidence of a strong research background that is relevant to the proposed study. For investigators who are not in a tenure track position (e.g., Instructor, Research Assistant), a Letter of Assurance from the institution's Director or Department Chair is recommended at the LOI and FGA stage. Such a letter should confirm the Applicant's position as independent and affirm that all needed space and equipment are available to the PI.

- The total amount requested for the three-year grant cannot exceed $550,000, 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:

- <u>PI Salary:</u> The amount requested for the PI's support (salary plus fringe benefits) may be up to 20% of the total yearly cost of the grant.

- <u>Collaborator(s):</u> 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 20% of the total yearly cost of the grant. Support for collaborators beyond this limit may be requested with strong justification.

- <u>Other Personnel:</u> This category includes other key project staff (e.g., project coordinator, statistician, community interviewer) who will contribute directly and substantively to the project. There is no restriction on the percentage of salary support for other positions. Fringe benefit rates exceeding 50% of salary must be fully explained and may not be fully funded. The Neilsen Foundation does not fund graduate student tuition or fees; however, stipends/salaries for graduate students can be included.

- <u>Consultants:</u> Consultants are generally independent contractors who offer advice or work on specific aspects of a project for a limited period of time. The Neilsen Foundation supports the use of [Knowledge Translation Guiding Principles](#) for the conduct of SCI research partnerships. Including persons with lived experience and/or knowledge translation expertise to research teams is encouraged.

- <u>Subcontracts:</u> 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.

- <u>Supplies:</u> 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.

- <u>Equipment:</u> 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. Requests must be justified and are expected not to exceed $10,000 for the two-year project. If equipment needs exceed this amount, a compelling explanation must be provided.

- <u>Travel:</u> Support for conference travel is limited to $8,000 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).

- Publications: Up to $4,000 is allowed during the grant term for publication costs, including open-access fees, high-resolution and color figures.
- Other Costs: Refer to Budget instructions in ProposalCentral and list under "Other:"
  - Accommodations for people with disabilities.
  - Childcare costs up to $2,500 per PI/staff person, per year.
  - Data sharing/curation costs.
- 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. Indirect costs are not allowed on individual pieces of equipment costing $5,000 or more.
- 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% total indirect cost cap.

PART 2: APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESSES

A. Submission Requirements

The 2025 application process begins with submission of a LOI from an eligible organization.

ON-TIME SUBMISSION

All application deadlines, dates, and times are strictly enforced. The online system used to review and manage grants, [ProposalCentral (https://proposalcentral.altum.com/)](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/), will automatically close at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on the deadline listed on Page 1. We strongly recommend that you complete the ProposalCentral application process well in advance of all deadlines.

If you need assistance as you prepare the application, contact Neilsen Foundation staff and they will be happy to assist you. Late submissions will not be considered, including those due to technical difficulties at the deadline.

ProposalCentral will not allow an application (LOI or FGA) 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.

APPLICATION TEMPLATES

Applicants are required to use the most recent templates provided in [ProposalCentral](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/) for the current LOI and FGA processes. *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 template. Modifications may lead to disqualification.

Completed LOI and FGA applications must be submitted online, via ProposalCentral. Additional instructions are provided on the template and in ProposalCentral under Proposal Sections (located in the navigation bar). *All original text and formatting must remain on the submitted application.*

APPLICANT INFORMATION

The Neilsen Foundation relies on accurate ProposalCentral contact information to communicate with its applicants and grantees, so the Applicant must enter accurate contact information in ProposalCentral, including a *current* email address. The name entered in ProposalCentral should be consistent with the name listed on the application template.

To ensure receipt of important information, the Applicant and other organization contacts (e.g., grants administrator, signing official, financial officer) must keep their ProposalCentral information up to date. If the ProposalCentral contact information is not current and we are unable to contact the Applicant, we will assume that they are 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.

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, and verify that all PDF documents are legible.
- Inaccurate or incomplete submissions will be disqualified.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For technical questions regarding the online submission process, contact ProposalCentral Customer Service at (800) 875-2562 during business hours, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time), or via email at pcsupport@altum.com. *There is no technical support available on weekends or holidays.*

ProposalCentral has a "Grant Applicant Tutorials" (https://ProposalCentral.altum.com/help.asp) section on its website that may be helpful in completing the application. The tutorials link can also be found by selecting "Contact Us" located in the "Help" dropdown menu.

B. Letter of Intent (LOI) Content and Review

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.

- Resubmissions: Applicants are allowed one resubmission of a previously reviewed but not funded FGA. Up to a half-page of additional text may be included at the end of the LOI 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 based on relevance of the proposed Aims to the Neilsen Foundation, potential impact on the field of SCI research, innovation, and specific requirements of the funding category.

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 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.

C. Full Grant Application (FGA) Submission and Review

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

FGAs will only be accepted from Applicants invited through the most recent LOI competition.

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

Postdoctoral Fellowships
At the FGA stage, Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants must provide the following: 1) research plan; 2) Biosketch for the Fellow; 3) Biosketch for the mentor(s); 4) training plan; 5) letter of recommendation from the mentor(s); 6) two additional recommendation letters; and 7) thesis advisor's letter, if appropriate.

- 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. ProposalCentral will allow an application to be submitted with only one letter uploaded; however, the Neilsen Foundation will not review an application without all three reference letters. 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 their references of the deadline and follow up to ensure that the letters are submitted before the deadline.

- 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. 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 Training Plan Instructions are provided in ProposalCentral as a downloadable PDF document in the "Download Templates & Instructions" section. 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.**

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.

Subcontracts

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 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 an application to another funding source is submitted or notification is received from another funding source that a substantially similar 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**.

Publication and Data Sharing

The PI is expected to ensure that publications resulting from the grant are publicly available, e.g., through open-access journals or PubMed Central. It is expected that data generated from the funding will be shared according to FAIR Data Principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and

Re-useable) (https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/) on a curated open platform; contribution of datasets to the Open Data Commons for SCI (https://odc-sci.org/) is strongly encouraged. Summary results of clinical trials also should be reported on ClinicalTrials.gov. Sharing costs should be listed as "Other Expenses" in the Budget Period Detail and explained under Additional Justification in the Budget Summary section.

REQUIRED SIGNATURES FOR FGA

In ProposalCentral 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 PI/Applicant AND the Signing Official, upload the PDF in the "Proposal Narrative & Other 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.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR FGA

FGAs are peer-reviewed by members of the Neilsen Foundation's Review Board. The critique and evaluation of a 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 Applicant after the current grant cycle results are announced.

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

D. Award Process

After review is completed, the Neilsen Foundation will notify Applicants, via email, whether an application has been approved by the Neilsen Foundation Board of Directors or declined for funding, approximately five months after the FGA deadline.

Applicants approved for funding will be required to submit additional documentation before grant funds are issued, including but not limited to: 1) signed Research Grant Agreement; 2) Notice of Other Funding & Conflict of Interest; and 3) IRB/IACUC Approval (see below). Instructions for executing the additional documentation will be included in the award notification.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)/INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC) 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 multi-center clinical studies, use of a single IRB of record or a central IRB is strongly encouraged.

Important: The IRB/IACUC approval notification must be in English or with an English translation provided. The approval notification must be sent from the IRB or IACUC committee and list the expiration date of the approval, the PI's or other key personnel name(s), and include the Neilsen

Foundation project title. If the IRB/IACUC 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 multiple IRB/IACUC approvals are required from multiple institutions, PIs must provide each approval notification as a separate PDF file.

ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND DUE DILIGENCE

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. Application materials/communications must be in English and budgets must be in U.S. dollars.

Per the United States Pension Protection Act of 2006, the Neilsen Foundation, a private non-operating foundation, is required to verify the nonprofit status of all prospective grantees. When applying, the Applicant must 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).

- *Organizations 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. <u>The organization will be required to provide additional documentation as specified in Section 3.01 of IRS Notice 2006-109.</u> An organization that is classified as a non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organization is not eligible for Neilsen Foundation funding.*

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. A Canadian organization that satisfies either of these requirements must provide a copy of the entity's U.S. IRS Determination letter.

- 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, or internal documents noting the organization's nonprofit status, in lieu of, <u>OR</u> in addition to, the U.S. IRS Determination letter.

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 term, 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).

E. Resubmission

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. Up to a half-page of text is allowed and is not counted in the standard LOI page limit.

If the original submission was a PSR 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 a FGA.

PART 3: 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, inclusion, and accessibility, 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 [Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's website (www.chnfoundation.org)](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. Concurrent Grants Across Neilsen Foundation Portfolios

Applicants may hold only one Neilsen Foundation grant within any portfolio 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.
- **Fellowship/Training grants:** Postdoctoral Fellows _may not apply_ for a non-training Neilsen Foundation grant. Fellowship budgets are intended to cover 100% of the salary and fringe support for the Fellow so they may focus on a defined training program specific to the needs of their research interests. Postdoctoral Fellows _may not hold_ multiple concurrent grants in different Neilsen Foundation portfolios; however, funded Fellows may be listed as participants on other grants, within or outside the Neilsen Foundation, without salary or fringe support on those grants.

C. Contact 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.*

- For questions regarding an application's submission status, contact Ehrica Hernandez, Grants Management Associate, at ehrica@chnfoundation.org.

- For questions regarding the PSR portfolio, contact Constanza Svidler, Program Officer, at constanza@chnfoundation.org.

- For information about our portfolios, visit the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's 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.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
FGA ADDENDUM: SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Optional supporting material, as listed below, <u>may</u> be included. All supporting material should be uploaded as a <u>single</u> PDF file, separate from the Proposal Narrative and other required application materials.

Optional supporting materials <u>may</u> include the following:
- Up to two related manuscripts that are submitted, in press, or published
  <u>Note</u>: Figures included in these manuscripts are allowed.

- IRB/IACUC Approval Letter, if applicable and available
  <u>Note</u>: Local IRB/IACUC approval is **not** required at the time of submission.

- Letters of general and/or community support of the project
  <u>Note</u>: This does not refer to the Letter of Assurance for non-tenured faculty, which may be submitted with the PI's Biosketch where indicated in ProposalCentral.

Supporting materials **cannot** be used as a continuation of the Proposal Narrative itself (do not include additional preliminary data, figures, diagrams, tables, or respond to questions posed in the Proposal Narrative template).

Do not include URLs in the Proposal Narrative or in supporting or other materials to provide additional information. It can confer an unfair competitive advantage and enable tracking that could compromise confidentiality of reviews.

Upload all supporting documents as a <u>single</u> FGA Addendum PDF file; do not upload each page or document separately.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTENT REVIEW CRITERIA

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 and creativity in its approach to 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 Applicants to provide a great deal of information on methodology, reviewers should <u>not</u> 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. <u>Postdoctoral Fellowships:</u> 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. <u>PSR Pilot Grants:</u> 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. <u>PSR Studies and Demonstration Projects:</u> 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?

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
APPENDIX 2: POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS CRITERIA

The purpose of the **Postdoctoral Fellowships** category is to increase an early-career professional's interest in the SCI field and to 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 $100,000 for a maximum total of $200,000.

OVERALL IMPACT
After considering all 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(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(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?

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS
(Administrative topics considered separately from the Overall Score)
1. Budget
2. Overlapping Funding
3. Ethics/Safety – protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring
4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Statement – In addition to providing the required institutional DEIA statement, applicants are allowed to include additional information regarding their effort to promote DEIA.
5. COI Disclosure – Applicants must disclose any real or perceived COIs. If you have questions or concerns regarding COIs, please discuss with a Program Officer.
6. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
7. Resubmission – When reviewing a resubmission, evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous review group and changes made to the project, but basing your final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
APPENDIX 3: PILOT GRANTS CRITERIA

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 $300,000.

OVERALL IMPACT
After considering all 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?
3. If the PI is a junior investigator, do they have appropriate experience, training, and facilities to do the proposed work? If the PI is an established investigator, have they 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 or next steps that rely on the Pilot data being sought discussed (i.e., does this research help lay the groundwork for future studies or describe plans for the dissemination and translation of knowledge that will 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?

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

(Administrative topics considered separately from the Overall Score)

1. Budget
2. Overlapping Funding
3. Ethics/Safety – protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring
4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Statement – In addition to providing the required institutional DEIA statement, applicants are allowed to include additional information regarding their effort to promote DEIA.
5. COI Disclosure – Applicants must disclose any real or perceived COIs. If you have questions or concerns regarding COIs, please discuss with a Program Officer.
6. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
7. Resubmission – When reviewing a resubmission, evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous review group and changes made to the project, but basing your final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH
APPENDIX 4: STUDIES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS CRITERIA

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 $550,000.

OVERALL IMPACT
After considering all 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, do they have appropriate experience, training, and facilities to do the proposed work? If the PI is an established investigator, have they 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? Is the future applicability or next steps of the project discussed (i.e., does this research help lay the groundwork for future studies or describe plans for the dissemination and translation of knowledge that will impact current practices and approaches)?
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?

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

(Administrative topics considered separately from the Overall Score)

1. Budget
2. Overlapping Funding
3. Ethics/Safety – protection of human subjects, including safety and data monitoring
4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Statement – In addition to providing the required institutional DEIA statement, applicants are allowed to include additional information regarding their effort to promote DEIA.
5. COI Disclosure – Applicants must disclose any real or perceived COIs. If you have questions or concerns regarding COIs, please discuss with a Program Officer.
6. Other/Additional Comments for the Applicant
7. Resubmission – When reviewing a resubmission, evaluate the application as now presented, taking into consideration the responses to comments from the previous review group and changes made to the project, but basing your final score on the overall merits of the current proposal.