



For a World Without Myasthenia Gravis

February 21, 2017

Research Funding Announcement

High Impact Pilot Projects on Myasthenia Gravis and Related Neuromuscular Junction Disorders

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America requests submission of proposals to support pilot studies that are highly focused and innovative. A clear plan of how success will be assessed is mandatory, for example funding leads to new grant support, patent application, or alteration in clinical or research practices, with a clear plan that will lead to new federal, pharmaceutical, or private foundation supported investigations.

Proposals that directly respond to the scope of the research agenda of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation, which may be found at www.myasthenia.org – Click here: [Research Agenda](#), will be viewed most favorably. The MGFA will fund highly meritorious projects with a maximum direct cost of \$50,000 per year and a maximum 10% indirect cost rate. Funds may be expended over 2 years from the time of the award, and applicants may apply for one subsequent year to extend the findings of the original proposal based on the results of the initial application, though funding is not guaranteed.

The applicant must provide a detailed budget in the format used for NIH budgets. There are no specific budget restrictions but all aspects of the budget must be clearly justified. If Principal Investigator salary support is requested, then a letter from a department chair or equivalent must accompany the application to assure that the PI is afforded protected research time for the project.

The application consists of a five page research section, which should include specific aims, background/preliminary data, innovation, and approach sections. There is no limit to the reference section. A separate single page section should describe how the funds will be used to develop future support. This section should be as specific as possible, and this future plans section is critical in the review process. A copy of a funding agency

review, which supports the need to obtain preliminary data, would be one example of evidence of specific plan for future support. Such material may be included in an appendix. The application must also contain a **Lay Summary** of up to ½ a page in length or approximately 200 words.

Proposals will be reviewed by the MGFA research committee as well as ad hoc reviewers when required. The RFA is open to established and new investigators. The funding is restricted to principal investigators in academic institutions in the United States and Canada, although collaborators may reside outside North America.

Proposals should be submitted by email to MGFA Chief Executive, Nancy Law (nancy.law@myasthenia.org) no later than **June 1, 2017**. A preliminary review to assure compliance with guidelines will be performed, followed by scientific review. Funding notification is expected by **August 15, 2017** and funds provided by **January 2018**. Two grants are expected to be awarded in 2017, assuming meritorious submissions. Participation in MGFA key activities, such as presentations on their work at the MGFA Scientific Session at the AANEM Annual Meeting and the MGFA National Conference are expected from award recipients.



The research committee of the MGFA is committed to supporting research that will ultimately improve the lives of patients with myasthenia gravis and related neuromuscular junction disorders. The committee has identified 4 broad research priorities of unmet need in the field.

- Biomarkers
 - Early diagnosis
 - Predictors of clinical outcome
 - Predictors of response to immunosuppressive therapy
 - Biomarkers for use in clinical trials
- Mechanisms of disease
 - Basic mechanisms of disease
 - How loss of self-tolerance is sustained throughout the disease course
- Therapeutic strategies
 - Development of new therapeutic targets
 - Targeted therapies that hopefully prevent widespread immunosuppression and off-target side effects
 - Optimizing treatment strategies with existing therapies
- Improving patient outcomes
 - The patient perspective on their disease, its impact on their daily life, and treatment considerations that are most important to them
 - Collateral effects of MG and its' treatment such as associated medical conditions, treatment related side effects, and financial considerations.

Though this research agenda is intended to guide researchers towards topics that are important to the MGFA MSAB, the research committee will accept proposals outside of these priority areas and is committed to supporting the best science.