Research Funding Announcement

Biomarker Research Grant: Diagnostic and Prognostic Biomarker Development for Myasthenia Gravis and Related Neuromuscular Junction Disorders

Overview

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) requests submission of proposals focused on the identification and validation of clinically useful diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers for myasthenia gravis (MG) and related neuromuscular junction disorders. Objective biomarkers that inform diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment selection are urgently needed.

Biomarkers are needed as objective tools to improve diagnosis and care in MG and related neuromuscular junction disorders by identifying types of pathophysiology to inform clinical care and prognosis, and by predicting which patients are most likely to respond to a given therapeutic class.

The MGFA invites applications addressing these gaps through research focused on the identification, development, and validation of scalable, accessible diagnostic and prognostic tools.

Scope

Eligible research proposals may include, but are not limited to:

- Identification of clinically useful biomarkers; diagnostic, prognostic, predictive, or treatment predictive/responsive that are evaluated across one or more of the recognized MG sub-types, with a clear plan for establishing analytical performance and clinical/biological validity
- Evaluation or development of biomarkers; autoantibody, complement pathway, immune cell/cytokine, or other candidate markers that identify a patient's underlying pathophysiology to inform clinical care and prognosis
- Development of biomarkers that predict individual patient response to a specific MG therapeutic class (for example, complement inhibitors, FcRn blockers, B-cell depleting therapies), supporting precision matching of patient to treatment
- Translation of promising biomarker assays into clinically applicable diagnostic or prognostic tools, including proposals that leverage existing multi-center biorepositories (e.g., MGNet's biosample and immunology-core infrastructure) to accelerate validation
- Replication studies validating the utility and reliability of previously identified candidate biomarkers
- Development of standardized assays or protocols for MG biomarkers
- Integration of multi-modal approaches (e.g., combining serologic, or electrophysiologic data) to improve diagnostic or prognostic accuracy
- Development of objective, biologically grounded measures suitable for use as clinical trial endpoints, complementing functional scales such as the MG-ADL and QMG

Out of Scope

- Projects that do not include a biomarker or diagnostic/prognostic component (e.g., therapeutic proposals evaluated solely on clinical outcome)
- Purely animal-model studies with no plan to test findings in human samples within the award period
- Early-stage discovery work with no plan for translational validation within the award period

Review Criteria

In addition to standard NIH scoring categories, proposals will be evaluated and prioritized on:

A. **Relevance:** the potential of the biomarker, once fully developed, to significantly improve diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment for MG and related neuromuscular junction disorders. Of particular interest are accessible, scalable tools that could be used outside highly specialized centers.

B. **Strength of scientific approach and supporting data:** preliminary data supportive of the application, along with robust scientific rigor.

C. **Feasibility and strength of research plan:** study objectives paired with appropriate methods, a clear statistical analysis plan, and go/no-go decision points for next experimental steps.

D. **Qualifications of applicant/team and resources:** the scientific team can carry out the proposed work, and the environment and resources are suitable to ensure successful completion.

E. **Appropriateness of budget.**

F. **Overall impact**: potential to make an impact in the field of MG biomarkers and move it closer to scalable, accessible tools that improve diagnosis and care.

MGFA intends to fund two (2) meritorious awards of up to $125,000 each, of which no more than $12,500 may be allocated to indirect costs. Funds will be expended over two years from the time of the award.

Instructions

Applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent (LOI) by 11:59pm EDT on October 16, 2026 using the form provided in MGFA's grant portal, ProposalCentral. This form will be found by searching for Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America under "Grant Opportunities." (Note: You must create an account and log in to access and submit all forms.) There, you will find additional documents and details regarding the application process. You will be informed on/by October 20, 2026, if you are invited to submit a full proposal.

The full application consists of:

- **A five-page research proposal**, which must be strictly formatted according to the NIH standard for applications (the format used by the U.S. National Institutes of Health for federal grant review, in which reviewers expect information organized into four specific, labeled sections rather than a free-form narrative): **Specific Aims** (a one-page summary stating the hypothesis and the concrete objectives the project will accomplish), **Significance** (why the problem matters and what gap in knowledge or practice it addresses), **Innovation** (how the proposed approach differs from or improves on existing methods, models, or paradigms), and an **Approach** section (the detailed research plan) which includes preliminary data (any results already in hand that support feasibility), the experimental design, and interpretation sections (how results will be analyzed and what alternative outcomes would mean). The Approach section should explicitly address the planned validation strategy for any proposed biomarker or diagnostic approach, including how seronegative status (i.e., a confirmed absence of the antibody or marker in question) will be confirmed in the study population, and the statistical approach to establishing sensitivity, specificity, or predictive value, as applicable. There is no limit to the reference section (citations may be listed beyond the five-page proposal limit and do not count against it).
- **A separate single page** describing how the funds will benefit the goals of the MGFA, and also describe the plan for future support.
- **A separate Lay Summary** of up to ½ a page in length or approximately 200 words.
- **A detailed budget and budget justification** in the NIH format. All aspects of the budget must be clearly justified.

Applicants are required to include the following. Templated materials are available on the Proposal Central portal.

- Letter of Intent Form [1pg]
- Cover Sheet [2 pg]
- Lay Summary [1/2 pg / 200 words]
- Research Proposal Form [5 pg]
- NIH Budget & Budget Justification [no page limit]
- Development of Future Support [1 pg]
- NIH Bio-sketch Form [5 pg]
- Institutional/Grants Agent Signature Required
- *Letter from Department Chair if PI Salary Support Requested [1 pg]

All components should be submitted via MGFA's grants portal, ProposalCentral, no later than 11:59pm EST on November 18, 2026. A preliminary review to ensure compliance with guidelines will be performed. Submissions that do not follow the required NIH formatting will not be reviewed. Proposals will be reviewed by a study

section comprised of the MGFA research committee as well as ad hoc reviewers when required. Funding notification is expected in December 2026 and funds provided in January 2027.

Recipients will be asked to collaborate with MGFA to amplify and discuss their work and implications for the broader MG community; this may include interviews on their project and its relevance to the MG community for MGFA's lay-oriented website and/or newsletter at both the start and completion of the project.

Eligibility

The RFA is open to established and new investigators. Applications will be accepted from U.S. and international principal investigators with confirmed faculty status. If you are unsure about your status and confirmation necessary, please reach out to Jenny McCue at jmccue@myasthenia.org for clarity and guidance. Applications are not open to for-profit or small business submissions.

Key Dates

Activity	Date
Call for Proposals Opens	September 21, 2026
Letter of Intent Deadline	October 16, 2026
Notification of Invitation to Proceed with Application	October 20, 2026
Application Deadline	November 18, 2026
Funding notification	December 2026
Funding provided	January 2027
Progress Report / Final Study Report	To be determined; details stipulated in Notice of Award letter (typically at 1-year and at the end of the grant award period)

Additional Expectations

Publication and Resource Sharing

In accordance with generally accepted standards applicable to scientific publication, award recipients agree to submit for publication any results arising from this award that would be useful to scientists working on MG-related research, and are encouraged to do so through an open-access option or by depositing an electronic copy in an open repository such as PubMed Central. MGFA further encourages recipients to make available nonproprietary research materials — such as reagents, protocols, or research tools — developed in the course of the funded work, with as few restrictions as possible.

Data Sharing and Management

MGFA supports adherence to the FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability) guiding principles of data stewardship, consistent with the NIH 2023 Data Management and Sharing Policy. Applicants are required to provide a concise Data Management and Sharing plan describing the type of data expected to be generated, how and where it will be preserved and made findable, and how compliance with the plan will be monitored. MGFA recognizes that some data may be proprietary or otherwise restricted; applicants should provide justification for any proposed restrictions on sharing.

Funding Restrictions

MGFA grants are available to scientists and researchers worldwide. However, as a U.S.-based charity, MGFA adheres to U.S. laws and regulations and will not provide funding to any individual or entity that is subject to U.S. sanctions, appears on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals, or is otherwise restricted under U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.

Contacts for Questions

For technical inquiries such as system access or site navigation related to ProposalCentral, please email Jenny McCue at jmccue@myasthenia.org.

More information about how to register and apply using ProposalCentral:

- How to Register as a ProposalCentral user
- How to Create an Application using ProposalCentral
- User FAQs (proposalcentral.com)

For inquiries related to the MGFA, this proposal, or similar, please email jmccue@myasthenia.org.

For more information about the NIH application or scoring guidelines adopted by the MGFA, including templates and examples, refer to grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.html.