Research Funding Announcement

Seronegative MG Pilot Grant: Diagnostic and Mechanistic Research for Seronegative Myasthenia Gravis

Overview

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) requests submission of proposals focused specifically on seronegative myasthenia gravis (MG).

Improving how seronegative MG is diagnosed and differentiated is therefore not only a biomarker-discovery problem but a direct patient safety issue.

The MGFA invites applications addressing seronegative MG through research focused on the discovery of new pathogenic mechanisms, the development of more accurate diagnostic approaches including reliable differentiation from mimicking conditions and improved understanding of how seronegative disease should be clinically managed.

The proposal should be within the scope of the research agenda of the MGFA which may be found at www.myasthenia.org and below.

Scope

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

- Discovery of novel autoantibodies or other pathogenic mechanisms underlying seronegative MG, where no known antibody (AChR, MuSK, or LRP4) yet accounts for disease.
- Development of assays or diagnostic algorithms that reliably distinguish true seronegative MG from a false-negative result in a patient who in fact has AChR-, MuSK-, or LRP4-associated disease.
- Evaluation or improvement of LRP4 antibody testing methods, given evidence that detection is inconsistent across laboratories and assay platforms, and characterization of how many patients currently labeled seronegative may in fact be LRP4-positive.
- Development of differential-diagnosis protocols or biomarkers that distinguish seronegative MG from clinically overlapping conditions, including Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome, congenital myasthenic syndromes, and other neuromuscular or muscle disorders to prevent misdiagnosis and unnecessary immunosuppression.
- Investigation of alternative or complementary diagnostic approaches for patients who test negative on standard autoantibody panels
- Characterization of the clinical, prognostic, or treatment-response implications of seronegative disease relative to seropositive MG

Review Criteria

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

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

B. **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.

C. **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. Sourcing of biospecimens must be explained as part of the application; applicants without existing access to relevant samples are encouraged to contact MGFA in advance to discuss whether a collaboration might be facilitated.

D. **Appropriateness of budget.**

E. **Overall impact**: Potential to make an impact in the field of MG 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. For example, a copy of a funding agency review, which supports the need to obtain preliminary data, would be evidence of a specific 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.

Participation in MGFA key activities, such as presentations on funded work at the MGFA Scientific Session at the AANEM Annual Meeting and the MGFA National Conference, are expected from award recipients. Recipients may also be asked for 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 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.