



***For a World Without Myasthenia Gravis***

January 30, 2020

## **Research Funding Announcement**

### **High Impact Clinical Research and Scientific Pilot Projects on Myasthenia Gravis and Related Neuromuscular Junction Disorders**

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America requests submission of proposals to support high impact clinical research and scientific pilot studies that are focused and innovative. A clear plan of how success will be assessed is mandatory. High Impact clinical research proposals should focus on patient outcome measurements or alteration in clinical or research practices that aid in present treatment paradigm. Scientific pilot projects will require a clear plan that will lead to new federal, pharmaceutical, or private foundation supported investigations. The proposal should be within the scope of the research agenda of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation, which may be found at [www.myasthenia.org](http://www.myasthenia.org) – Click here: [Research Agenda](#).

Applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent (LOI) using the form provided by March 19, 2020. You will be informed by April 1, 2020 if you are invited to submit a full proposal.

The MGFA will fund highly meritorious projects with a maximum direct cost of \$50,000 inclusive of a maximum 10% indirect cost rate. Funds may be expended over 2 years from the time of the award. Applicants may reapply for a second round of additional support but will be judged along with new applications, purely on merit. Special funding requests and/or changes to the award period must be approved prior to submission of proposal through the LOI.

For the full proposal, the applicant must provide a detailed budget in the format used for NIH budgets. See the list of forms and links at the end of this announcement. 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 benefit the goals of the MGFA. Pilot grants should also state the plan for future support. 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. 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](mailto:nancy.law@myasthenia.org)) no later than **June 15, 2020**. A preliminary review to assure compliance with guidelines will be performed, followed by scientific review. Funding notification is expected by **October 15, 2020** and funds provided by **January 2021**. Two grants are expected to be awarded in 2020, 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. 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.

Applicants are required to use the following forms. Please click on the links below to access the forms:

- [Letter of Intent](#)
- [Cover Letter](#)
- [Lay Summary Form](#)
- [Research Plan Form](#)
- [NIH Budget Form](#) & [MGFA Budget Justification Form](#)
- [Development of Future Support Form](#)
- [NIH Bio-sketch Form](#)

The Research Funding Application and Review Calendar can be found on the next page.

## Research Funding Application & Review Calendar

| <b>Activity</b>                    | <b>Timing</b>                                      |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Research Funding Announcement      | January 30, 2020                                   |
| Letter of Intent Deadline          | March 19, 2020                                     |
| Application Deadline               | June 15, 2020                                      |
| Applications assigned to reviewers | June 16 to July 1                                  |
| Review of applications             | July 1 <sup>th</sup> to September 20 <sup>th</sup> |
| Funding notification               | October 15, 2020                                   |
| Funding provided                   | January 2021                                       |
| Final Report due                   | January 2022                                       |



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.
- Pediatric treatment strategies, safety concerns, and long term outcome.

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.