2026 Acute Care Physical Therapy Research Grant Application Guidelines

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Foundation for Physical Therapy Research** is the research funding organization for the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and is a registered 501(c)(3). Our vision is to shape the future of health through physical therapy research. Our mission is fund research and develop researchers to optimize movement and improve the health of society.

Through the generosity of our donors and community of supporters, our sole purpose for the past 46 years has been to fund physical therapy research and researchers through grants, scholarships, and fellowships. Through our investments in PhD students and early career researchers, we are creating a pipeline of highly skilled and capable researchers. They are building our knowledge of and evidence about effective and innovative physical therapy practices, tools, guidelines, and education across the spectrum of our professional specialties.

Our growing number of larger grants allows us to fund both emerging and established researchers who have been helping build the physical therapy evidence base in priority areas and help define the value of physical therapy for patients and clients, health care professionals, and payers.

Through the generosity of our donors, we have created a sustained pipeline for future researchers and of research funding to help launch careers and advance the profession's evidence-based practices.

Research Integrity

The Foundation expects all grant recipients to adhere to the highest ethical standards and to comply with public laws and regulations when undertaking any type of research we support. We expect grant recipients to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Be intellectually honest in proposing, performing, and reporting research;
- Be accurate in representing contributions in research proposals and reports;
- Act without discrimination or bias in all aspects of research;
- Be collegial in scientific interactions, such as communication and sharing of resources;
- Be transparent in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest;
- Ensure the protection of human subjects by conducting research in compliance with the Department of Health and Human Services[1] regulations governing the protection of human subjects, as well as adherence to a project's IRB approval and all the sponsoring institution's research and conduct policies;

- Ensure the humane care of animals by conducting research in compliance with the Public Health Service's policy on humane care and treatment of laboratory animals, if applicable; and
- Adhere to the mutual responsibilities between principal investigators and their research teams.

This grant is generously supported with funds from APTA Acute Care.

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2. GENERAL INFORMATION

Award

The Foundation expects to make one (1) award of **$40,000** for a period of either one or two years. The amount of the award will be the same, regardless of the period of performance. The Foundation reserves the right not to make this award.

All the funded research must be carried out in the United States (U.S.).

The deadline for submitting a completed application on ProposalCentral.com will be **July 31, 2026 at 4:59 p.m. EDT**. The Foundation expects to make research grant awards in December.

3. FUNDING OBJECTIVE

The intent of this grant is to fund high-quality, high priority, real-world acute care physical therapy research carried out in the U.S. that has the most immediate clinical application. Proposed studies should add to or refine the body of knowledge and evidence on which acute care physical therapy practice is based, using recognized investigative designs and methodologies. Clinical trials must be registered.

4. AREAS OF STUDY AND PRIORITIES

This grant supports research directly related to acute care physical therapy practice and relevant to acute care in addressing one or more acute care priorities listed the 2023 APTA Research Agenda. Research plans that fail to explicitly identify at least one bulleted priority will not advance to review.

Highly competitive proposals will demonstrate high potential for successful completion within the time and budget available and some, if not all, of these characteristics:

- Propose research that is justified by the research literature or by knowledge or evidence gaps in the literature;

- Include clearly described conceptual and analytical frameworks that are clearly linked to design and variables;
- Use appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods that are well described and demonstrate competency to apply them;
- Have a well-developed recruitment strategy that explicitly identifies risks to timely recruitment and shows a plan for mitigating risks;
- Evaluate the clinical effectiveness of therapeutic acute care interventions;
- Have clearly defined and measurable outcomes;
- Consider social determinants of health and drivers of health disparities;
- Assess the interaction between patient characteristics and therapeutic methods;
- Have direct, real-world application to improve the evidence-base for acute care clinical practice; and/or
- Have a strong likelihood of leading to funded larger impactful studies.

5. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND SPONSORING INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY

In general, the Foundation reserves the right, on the basis of statutory, regulatory, published policy limitations, changes to donor agreements, or decisions by the Foundation Board of Trustees, under certain programs or types of awards, to limit eligibility to, or exclude from eligibility, classes, or types of entities.

One Principal Investigator must submit the application, whether they are applying as an individual working with a research team and regardless of whether they are naming co-investigators and do so through the legally registered, US-based sponsoring organization or Institution at which they are employed. The Foundation does not allow co-Principal Investigator.

The Principal Investigator must meet these requirements:

- Hold an academic research doctorate. If the principal investigator does not hold a post-professional, academic doctorate, this eligibility can be met one of two ways: Hold a master's or certificate that required least six credit hours in research methodologies or have an expert on the research team who is explicitly responsible for providing the requisite design and methodological skills and experience.
- Be employed by a U.S.-registered, domestically operating, public or private, non-profit, or for-profit organization or institution that is eligible to receive research grants that agrees to act as the Sponsoring Institution.
- Be a member of APTA[1] and of APTA Acute Care at the time of submission and for the life of the grant.
- Possess a license to practice physical therapy in the U.S. or in a U.S. jurisdiction **OR**

[1] You may become an APTA member here.

    - Have met all the requirements for physical therapy licensure in the U.S. or in a U.S. jurisdiction, including having received a passing score on the licensure exam; **OR**
- Possess a physical therapist assistant license in the U.S. or in U.S. jurisdiction **OR**
    - Have met all the requirements for licensure as a physical therapist assistant in the U.S. or in a U.S. jurisdiction, including having received a passing score on the licensure exam.
- CHANGED: Be a U.S. citizen **OR** a permanent resident with a valid Green Card for the life of the grant. *Note: validity may involve renewal or applying for naturalization.*
- Have a substantive research and leadership role on the study, as well as being responsible for its implementation.
- If a prior Foundation award recipient, the Principal Investigator must be in Good Standing with the Foundation.
- If the Principal Investigator currently holds any scholarship award or research grant from the Foundation, that award or grant must be successfully completed and closed prior to the start of this research grant. **No recipient will hold more than one Foundation award or grant at one time.**

Foundation Definition of a Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator is the only investigator named on the research grant along with their Sponsoring Institution. They are the only investigator that signs the Letter of Agreement. They have a major ongoing role in the study and provide overall research leadership, have direct oversight of the research process, and are accountable for the quality of the study. They are fiscally accountable to their institution for the funds awarded. They are responsible for submitting all required reports to the Foundation. They are responsible for disseminating the results of the study through a research brief, submissions to peer-reviewed publications, public presentations, posters, and as appropriate, other channels, such as APTA or Foundation publications.

Considerations for Physical Therapist Assistant Applicants

The Foundation only supports intervention studies in which the interventions are provided by physical therapists, or in which selected components of the interventions are provided by physical therapist assistants under the direction and supervision of physical therapists.

Considerations Regarding a Research Team

The Foundation expects the applicant to be working with a team that contributes the expertise needed to deliver a successful, high-quality study. The composition of the team should satisfy the reviewers that all skills and expertise needed for the successful completion of the study will be available. One of more co-investigators may be named on a research team, but they cannot be assigned role responsibilities reserved for and expected of the principal investigator. The Foundation does not allow co-Principal Investigators. If the applicant is unsure about team composition and roles, they are advised to contact the Foundation (info@foundation4PT.org) prior to submission.

The Sponsoring Institution must meet the following requirements:

- Be legally registered in the U.S. as a domestically operating, public or private, non-profit, or for-profit institution or organization;
- Have an OHRP number and have policies and requirements to protect research team personnel and human and animal subjects;
- Not have a conflict of interest;
- Sign the Letter of Agreement; and
- Be accountable for implementation of the research project, as agreed in the Letter of Agreement, including for the appropriate expenditure and accounting for funds according to Foundation requirements.

Ineligible Applications

In addition to ineligibility due to not meeting one or more of the requirements listed above, there are other conditions that would render an application ineligible.

Academic degree requirements. Research studies that are to be completed in fulfillment of requirements for an academic degree are not eligible to be funded by this grant.

Foundation limit on awards or grants. An applicant is limited to one grant submission per cycle. There can be no overlap of award or grant periods of performance. Any current awards or grants must be completed and closed prior to the start of the period of performance for this grant. This limitation pertains to the principal investigator and not to the sponsoring institution.

Failure to complete award or grant requirements on an existing Foundation scholarship award or research grant. The applicant will not be in Good Standing and will not be eligible to apply for any research grant.

The Principal Investigator cannot be a student. The applicant must have completed any academic degree work by September 1, 2026 to be considered for this grant. This restriction applies to

Principal Investigators who have full-time qualifying employment, but who are also enrolled in a post-graduate degree program that will be ongoing on or after this date.

Product prototype or pre-commercialization testing studies. These types of studies are not eligible for Foundation funding.

The Principal Investigator must be independent and not have a conflict of interest in the design or conduct of the study. The following examples are indicative and not exhaustive: they should have no restrictions from any source that would compromise the independence of the conduct of the study and the reporting of all results; neither the PI nor research team members can have ownership rights or have a financial interest (includes salary) in a company that owns a technology being studied itself or used in a study.

6. REQUIRED APPROVALS, ASSURANCES AND TRAINING

Institutional Review Board or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Approval or Exemption

The Foundation requires all study proposals to be approved or exempted by the Sponsoring Institution's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Uses Committee (IACUC). Should a Sponsoring Institution not maintain an IRB or IACUC, they may contract with a qualified entity. Foundation funds cannot be used to pay for privately contracted approvals or exemptions. The Sponsoring Institution will be responsible for ensuring that any required IRB approval or exemption is maintained for the life of the research project.

The Foundation strongly suggests that applicants consider submitting their request for an IRB approval or exemption by the time the full application is submitted. The Foundation is working to ensure that no award is delayed because IRB approval has not been given or exempted by the time Letters of Agreement are signed. No payments will be made until the duly executed IRB or IACUC approval or exemption has been submitted to the Foundation. All grants are provisional until all required documents are submitted.

If data are to be collected on human subjects, or if data used in the study contain identifiable private information that can be linked to human subjects, the plan must include specific procedures for reviewing the protocol and for securing informed consent of subjects in compliance with federal policy on the protection of human subjects.

Multi-site studies and Collaborators. The IRB approval or exemption must be on the Sponsoring Institution's letterhead and signed by the appropriate institution official. If the proposed research project has more than one site, IRB approval or exemption **must** be obtained for **every** site in the project. Multi-site collaborators may agree to operate under a central IRB issued by the Sponsoring Institution. Site collaborators will have to attest, in their letters of confirmation, that they will either agree to a central IRB and data-sharing agreement or agree to secure their own IRBs with a

data-sharing agreement within two months of the applicant receiving the award. **If invited to submit a full application, The Applicant and any site collaborators will need to confirm how IRBs and data-sharing agreements will be handled expeditiously and without undue delay to the start of the study.**

Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information

The Privacy Rule is a federal regulation under the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) that governs the protection of individually identifiable health information from covered entities through collaborative or contractual agreements. Decisions about whether and how to implement the Privacy Rule reside with the Principal Investigator and their institution.

Assurance Agreement

The Sponsoring Institution must be covered by an assurance agreement indicating compliance with Department of Health and Human Services regulations governing the protection of human subjects.

Conduct of Research and Human Subjects' and Animal Protection Training

The Foundation expects that the applicant and key personnel will have fully complied with their institutions' conduct of research training requirements. If data are to be collected on human subjects, or if data used in the research project contain identifiable private information that can be linked to human subjects, the Principal Investigator and all key personnel involved in the conduct of the study must provide documentation showing full compliance with their institution's conduct of research requirements. The applicant must submit, at a minimum, a certificate of completion for human subjects protection training (initial or refresher) that meets the Sponsoring Institution's IRB requirements. Similar certificates must be provided if the study involves animal subjects. Certificates must be dated within the past three years. **Letters cannot be substituted for certificates.**

7. DATA MANAGEMENT AND SHARING

To ensure that knowledge, including data, produced by the research supported by this grant can be **publicly** accessed, used and built upon, the Foundation supports the goals and approaches taken in the NIH's 2023 Data Sharing Policy. Foundation grant recipients are expected to follow their institution's data sharing policies and reflect them in their application as appropriate. Applicants that do not have any institutional requirements are still expected to include plans to share their data publicly as part of their proposed study. The Foundation does not accept the lack of institutional data-sharing requirements as a reason not to agree to data sharing. The Foundation accepts that there may be data-sharing restrictions imposed by the owners of data sources.

8. OVERVIEW OF LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This section covers only the most salient information and is not exhaustive. If a Principal Investigator or their institution have specific questions, they should contact the Foundation at info@foundation4PT.org.

Letter of Agreement

All Sponsoring Institutions will sign a Letter of Agreement (i.e., contract) with the Foundation on behalf of the Principal Investigator. The Sponsoring Institution will agree to administer grant funds and ensure compliance with all institutional and Foundation requirements.

Indicative terms and conditions include, but are not limited to, use of funds, reporting, payments, changing principal investigators or institutions, changes to approved plans, breach or default, and the rights of the Foundation concerning patents, royalties, and licenses.

Sponsoring Institutions shall not be allowed to refuse any part of whole of any clause or add any whole clause. The Foundation is committed to working with Sponsoring Institutions to reach mutually agreeable text to address legitimate concerns, so long as they will be resolved without undue delay in finalizing the Agreement. The Foundation reserves the right to withdraw a provisional award due to unresolvable disagreements that prevent finalization of the Agreement.

Subcontracting. The Foundation understands the need for and allows the Sponsoring Institution to subcontract implementation of parts of the study with certain restrictions and considerations as illustrated but not limited to the following:

- No fringe benefits, administrative fees, or other indirect charges may be part of any personnel rates and payments to individuals, institutions, or organizations operating under a subcontract.
- Subcontracting arrangements (singular or multiple) that exceed 40% of the total budget may be subject to further review and approval as part of compliance checks prior to application reviewing.
- Subcontracting cannot effectively transfer the burden of responsibility and accountability for implementation of the study itself to an institution not a signatory to the Letter of Agreement. The Foundation does not allow multiple institutions to sign the Agreement.

Applicants are strongly advised to contact the Foundation prior to submission with any questions about subcontracting prior to submission.

Finalizing a Provisional Award

All awards are provisional until the Foundation receives the following required documents or information:

- Letter of Agreement signed by the Sponsoring Institution and the Principal Investigator;
- IRB or IACUC approval(s) or exemption(s) on letterhead and signed by the appropriate official(s);
- A publicity consent form signed by the Principal Investigator; and
- Information required for the electronic transfer of funds.

The first payment of funds will not be made until all these requirements are fully met.

Payment of Funds

Funds will be sent electronically to the US-based and legally registered sponsoring organization or institution for administration through its financial office. Payments will be made according to a schedule in the Letter of Agreement, which will usually be an initial payment and then every six months. After the initial payment, further payments are conditional upon the timely submission of progress reports that fully provide requested information about implementation progress and, for 2-year grants, a first-year financial report.

Use of Funds

Funds are available for research done in the U.S. by legally registered U.S. institutions and eligible researchers.

By means of the application budget form, funds may be requested to meet types of expense reasonably associated with the research project, including salaries and fringe benefits (of employees of the sponsoring institution only), subcontracts (no fringe or indirect costs or fee, and subject to overall budget limitations), necessary consultant contracts, purchase (see below) or rental of equipment, supplies, travel to study sites or study-related conferences, publication costs (if incurred during the grant period, printing or postage, and special services, such as computer time, photographic services, and secretarial or research assistant support. Upon finalization of the award, changes of 10% or more to any part of an application budget must be approved by the Foundation in advance.

Limitations on Use

The following uses of Foundation funds are not permitted under any circumstance:

- **NO INDIRECT (OVERHEAD OR ADMINISTRATIVE) COSTS OR ADMINISTRATIVE FEES ARE ALLOWED. Please make sure your institution and any subcontracted institutions or consultants are fully aware of this restriction before you submit your Letter of Intent. There are no exceptions.**
- No funds may be used for expenses or debts incurred prior to the start of the grant period of performance stated in the finalized, signed Letter of Agreement.

- No award funds will finance cost overruns on the funded project. Unexpended funds must be returned when the grant closes.
- Support for the purchase of major pieces of permanent equipment is limited to **20 percent or less** of the total award unless the Foundation has pre-approved a higher proportion has been given by the Foundation prior to submission.
- Conference travel support is limited to the principal investigator only and subject to travel expense guidelines. Requests for international travel exceptions must be approved in advance.

9. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Overview of the Process

Guidelines for the distribution of funds and criteria for selecting research grant recipients are established by the Foundation Board of Trustees. The Scientific Review Committee (SRC) is appointed by the Board to review and score applications. It uses review criteria similar to the ones used by NIH. As of the 2026 funding cycle, the Foundation criteria have been revised to align with the 2025 NIH revised review criteria where appropriate. The SRC uses the NIH scoring system, where 1 is exceptional and 9 is poor.

The SRC is comprised of successful independent physical therapy researchers with experience mentoring academic doctoral students and candidates and/or postdoctoral fellows. The Board's Research Committee considers the SRC's review results and recommends one applicant for each grant to the Board. If there are no qualifying applicants, no recommendation is made for that grant. The Board then makes a final decision for each of the research grants. The Board reserves the right not to make an award.

Updated Review Criteria for Research Grant Applications

Below are the newly revised review criteria the SRC will use to evaluate all the $40,000 grant applications, as well as the two Paris Patla grants starting with the 2026 applications. The Foundation reserves the right to update and refine the review criteria.

Significance

1. Evaluate the **importance** of the proposed research for advancing knowledge and/or high-quality evidence in the field by assessing how the proposed study results:
   (1) would address an important gap in knowledge or evidence that would likely advance PT practice; (2) would address a critical real-world problem or barrier to progress in the field; or (3) would create a valuable conceptual or technical advance.
2. Evaluate the **rationale** for undertaking the study (1) the rigor of the scientific background for the work (e.g., justification is based on prior literature and/or preliminary data), and (2) whether the applicant includes lived experiences and priorities of stakeholders to justify the proposed study.

Innovation

3. To what extent is the proposed study innovative because:
   - it asks a **new question** that is important to an intervention or its validation; or
   - it uses **novel concepts, methods, or technologies** to shift research or clinical practice.
4. If it is not innovative, does the study pose a question(s) of critical importance to the field?

Approach (Quality)

5. Are the **overall strategy, methodology, and analysis** well-reasoned, well described, and appropriate to answer the research questions, accomplish the specific aims of the project, and result in reproducible findings?

Rigor

6. For experimental designs, is the **sample size** appropriate and well justified for the size of the study and for answering the primary research question? Are power calculations and effect sizes discussed? Are appropriate controls in place?
7. Are **conceptual and analytical frameworks** present and well described?
8. Are **participant characteristics** appropriate for the proposed research strategy, including any biological and socioeconomic variables identified?
9. Is the participant **recruitment and retention** plan well thought out, including inclusion and exclusion criteria and mitigation of risks?
10. Evaluate the **plans** for analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results, including whether limitations, potential problems, alternative strategies are adequately considered.
11. Are the **outcomes** clear, justified, and measurable?

Feasibility

12. Is there very high likelihood that this study will be **successfully completed** in the requested period of performance for the available budget?
13. If there are dependencies, do they present an appropriate alternative plan?

Investigator and Research Team (will be scored)

14. Evaluate whether the Principal Investigator and research team have demonstrated the background, training, and expertise to conduct the proposed work. Career stage is relevant for grants limited to emerging investigators.

Environment (will not be scored)

15. Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the researchers adequate to ensure the successful and on-time execution of the proposed work?
16. If multiple sites are included, are their selection and roles appropriate for the study, and has the approach to securing IRB or IACUC approvals or exemptions and data-sharing agreements been adequately described?

10. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Foundation, consistent with NIH policies and standards, does not consider applications that are substantially developed using artificial intelligence (A.I.) to be considered original work. The Foundation expects applicants to submit original ideas in proposing research training or studies. If A.I. use is found to be substantive and undue, the application will be disqualified from review, and the Foundation may declare that applicant to be Not in Good Standing. Applicants Not in Good Standing cannot apply for or hold any Foundation funding. The Foundation is under no obligation to justify its decision, nor will it be subject to discussion, appeal, or any other form of recourse by the applicant. All risk associated with the use of A.I. rests solely with the applicant. If an award has been issued and the Foundation later discovers substantive and undue reliance on A.I. it reserves the right to revoke the award and take legal actions available under the Letter of Agreement.

11. QUESTIONS

Please sign up for the research grant application FAQs email list to receive important clarifications and updates directly. Please read the application instructions carefully. Please submit any questions you have about these guidelines to info@foundation4PT.org.

End of the 2026 Acute Care Physical Therapy Research Grant Guidelines

FOUNDATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY RESEARCH

2026 Acute Care Physical Therapy Research Grant
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

You must use the Foundation's online application platform on ProposalCentral.com to submit your application.

SET UP AN ACCOUNT

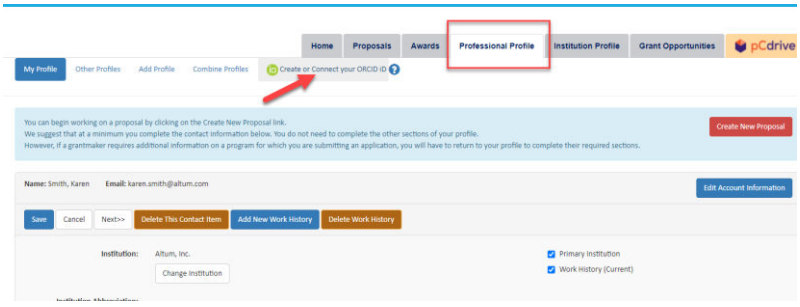
Applicants who already have a ProposalCentral account may skip this section. Select the "Applicant or Awardee" tab before you log in via the ProposalCentral.com website page.

If you do not have an account, go to the ProposalCentral.com website page. Choose the "Applicant or Awardee" tab. You have two options to create your account: Click on "Need an account," then enter your first and last name, email address, create a password, choose a challenge question, and provide the answer to it. The other option is to create an account using your existing ORCID ID[1].

NAVIGATE TO THE APPLICATION

Click on Applicant tab

If you have not linked your ORCID ID to your ProposalCentral account, click on the Professional Profile tab and connect your ID. If you are all set, skip this step, and proceed to click on the "Grant Opportunities" toward the right on the main tabs menu. You must have an ORCID number to enter in the application form.

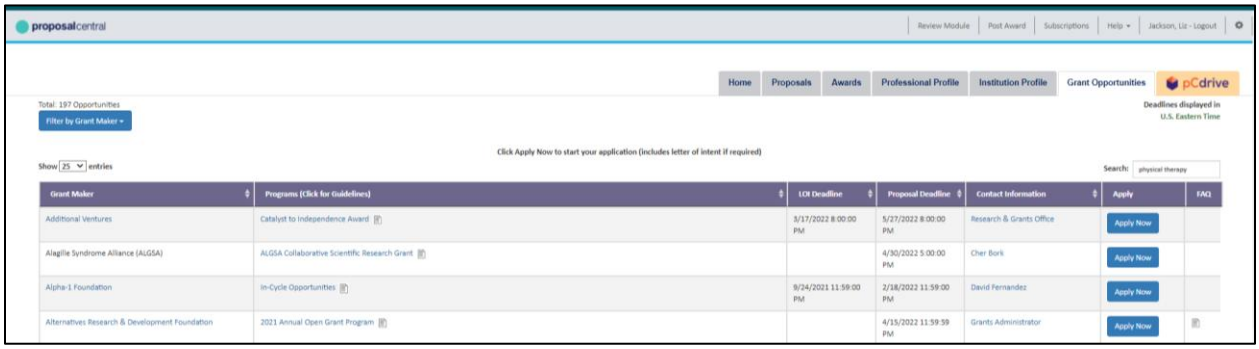


[1] If you want to create one while creating your ProposalCentral account, click on "Login with ORCID" button as your sign in. You will land on the ORCID sign in, where you will click on this link, "Don't have an ORCID ID yet? Register now." Once you have your number, you still need to create your ProposalCentral account and link your ORCID ID before you can use it to log on.

Click on the Grant Opportunities tab

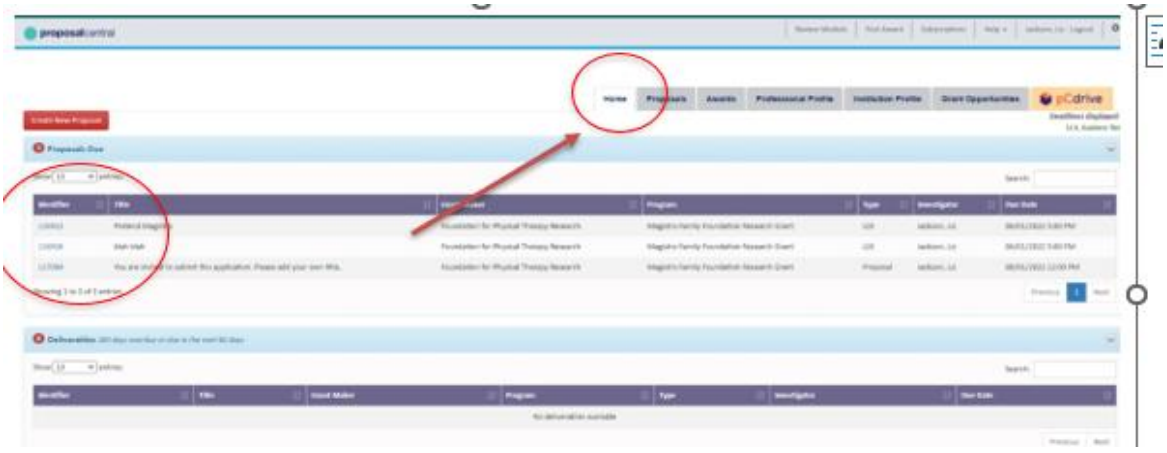
Navigate to the "Grant Opportunities" tab and enter "Foundation for Physical Therapy Research" into the search box. You will get the list of all the 2026 Foundation grants that are open for applications.

Find the Acute Care Physical Therapy Research Grant on the list and click the **"Apply Now"** button. You will be taken to the application.



Saving your Work, Exiting, and Resuming

- Once you have saved the first section of the application (General Information) you will be able to save your content whenever you click "Save" or "Next" on each subsequent page.
- After completing your work for a session, you may exit by clicking the "Exit" button.
- To resume your work, login to ProposalCentral.com, navigate to the "Home" tab and **click on the application identifier number** associated with the application you wish to resume.



When working on your application, you are able to work on sections, save, and return to it an unlimited number of times until you submit it (by clicking "Submit").

Once you have created an application, it cannot be deleted from ProposalCentral. We recommend avoiding creating multiple versions.

Important Points

- **BEFORE YOU START, please review the guidelines for this grant and these instructions. The Foundation updates the guidelines and instructions annually.**
- We strongly encourage you to **use the validate function** in Section 17 as you complete the application. This function checks required information and lists what is missing. You will not be able to submit an application that has errors in it.

WHAT IF YOU MISS THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE

- **Do not just give up.** The important step is that you must log your problem immediately when you have not submitted by the deadline.
- If you think that the problem is with the ProposalCentral application, send an email immediately to **pcsupport@altum.com** AND copy marynusloch@foundation4pt.org. They might not respond or be available to us to discuss the problem until August 3.
- Contact **Mary** immediately and no later than 5:30 p.m. EDT with a description of the problem. We will also monitor info@foundation4pt.org until 5:30 p.m. EDT.
- The Foundation has no obligation to grant extensions. Documenting your problem immediately after the deadline ensures a close review of the circumstances with a possibility that the Foundation might allow a late submission if those circumstances warrant it.

QUESTIONS

For questions about the guidelines or instructions please contact **info@foundation4PT.org**. We are happy to answer by email. If a question would benefit from a call, we will offer to set one up. **We do not take phone calls that have not been scheduled in advance.** When answers might benefit other applicants, we will add the question and our answer to the FAQs.

We strongly encourage applicants to sign up to receive our updates and FAQs via email. Sign up here.

For any technical assistance in using the Foundation's application platform on ProposalCentral, please contact **pcsupport@altum.com** or call them at or call **800-872-2562** or **703-964-5840** between 8:30 a.m. EDT and 5:00 p.m. EDT.

The instructions for the application in ProposalCentral continue on the next page

1. Title and General Information

You must save at least this section for your application to be available again in ProposalCentral.

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *.

Project Title: Provide a title for your project. You may revise it as you wish until you submit.

Environment

This information may be updated as you wish until you submit.

Study settings: Choose one.
Total number of project sites: Provide the number of sites where research will be conducted.
Total number of study participants: Provide the number of people who will be studied.

Start date: Must be January 1, 2027.

You can go to the validate section at any time for confirmation of any missing information that is required. The app does not check for all information, only fields marked with an asterisk and for required attachments. Any errors in supplying required information must be resolved for you to be able to submit.

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2. Download the Guidelines, Instructions, and Required Templates

The instructions are the same as the one you are reading now. The guidelines are also the same as the one available under the application menu on the left of the screen and the one on the website.

The templates available here are only the ones that require you to provide information using that form. Each one is formatted and contains directions for completing it. Other required attachments that do not have templates are listed in Section 14, Attachments (instructions are below in Section 14 of these instructions).

NOTE: You may use the old version of the NIH biosketch that we are providing or use the SciENcv version uploaded as a PDF. Applicant/PIs using SciENcv need to be sure to follow instructions in our PI biosketch template if they do not have an academic doctorate.

This is the list of required attachments that have templates:

Research Plan
Citations and other References
Resources and Environment, Facilities, Equipment and Multi-site
Subjects Protections and Date Management
Applicant/Principal Investigator Biosketch
Research Team Member Biosketch

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3. Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal

This section allows you to give other users access to your grant application. ProposalCentral will automatically assign editing rights to any contact you add in this section

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4. Applicant/Principal Investigator

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *.

The person who creates the application is, by default, the Applicant/Principal Investigator. Contact information from this person's ProposalCentral professional profile (My Profile), including primary institutional affiliation, is loaded automatically to this section of the application.

If the required fields (*) are incomplete or incorrect, changes must be made in the applicant's profile by choosing the "Edit Professional Profile" button and saving those changes before leaving the profile. Once you are back in this section, you must reselect your institutional profile to complete the changes.

Please be sure to enter this information correctly: The inclusion of prefixes or degrees in these fields might come from your profile. If so, please make those corrections there, save, and refresh your information in this section.

(1) Make sure that **NO** prefix (e.g., Dr or Prof) is in your **First name** field; and
(2) Make sure that **NO** license or post-graduate degrees are in your **Last name** field.

Licenses: Provide your active PT or PTA license numbers and indicate the state or U.S. territory of issuance, using a comma to separate them.

APTA Membership: All research grants require applicants to be APTA members at the time of application and for the duration of the grant period. Provide your membership number.

Membership in an Academy: The following grants require the applicant to be a member of the associated sponsoring academy at the time of application and for the duration of the grant period:

Acute Care, Cardiovascular & Pulmonary, Orthopedics, and Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy. Use the dropdown menus to select up to three academies.

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5. Demographic Information, Principal Investigator Only

Completion of this section or any part of it is optional. The Foundation anonymizes this information before using it only for internal grantmaking analysis. Your information is not shared, sold, or made available to anyone for any reason.

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6. Sponsoring Institution Information

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *.

ProposalCentral will automatically load the Principal Investigator's employer as the Sponsoring Institution. It loads institutional details from its database into this section.

Changing the Sponsoring Institution Listed

Press the button, "Change Institution." Initially, the list contains only the following: your current institution, the institutions that you listed in your profile, and any other institutions that include your UserID in their access list In ProposalCentral.

Use the Search option to find other institution profiles available in ProposalCentral. Results you choose from your search will be added to your list of institutions in your profile.

To change the institution, choose from the new list of institutions in your profile and press the button "Change Institution." If, after changing the Institution, you need to update the contact information that appears below it, you can click "Edit Institution Profile" to go directly to that Institution Profile. This button is only available if you have Edit access to the selected Institution Profile. If no button appears, you have to contact the institution and have their authorized person contact ProposalCentral to make the needed changes.

Click "Save" before completing the sections below.

Required Federalwide Assurances

Assurances: This information should populate automatically from your institution's profile. If your Sponsoring Institution does not have FWA or an OHRP or OLAW number, contact the institutional contacts provided under the profile information. Ask them to update that information in the ProposalCentral institutional profile.

If your institution does not have any of those assurances, you must provide the relevant information in #3 in the Subjects Protections and Data Management template (required attachment) to show that your Sponsoring Institution has policies and procedures governing protection of human and/or vertebrate animal subjects that meet all federal and state requirements and has access to and can finance an IRB or IACUC approval or exemption.

You must also confirm that your Sponsoring Institution has workplace protection policies and data protection policies that will apply to the project.

Sponsoring Institution Officials' Information

The Sponsoring Institution authorized signatory will need to e-sign the application, so you must add them as the signing official. The system will give them Edit rights needed to e-sign. This person will be sent an email that includes the ProposalID and confirmation number to be entered to grant them access to e-sign your application in Section 16.

Your financial officer needs to be added here. They will provide budget information for the application and be the person to provide institutional banking information should you be awarded a grant. Their official position title does not have to be "financial officer."

Both these officials must have edit rights.

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7. Research Team

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *.

All biosketches for personnel directly involved in implementing the study are uploaded here, including the PI. Administrative project support staff (not directly involved in the research implementation) do not need to be listed. *Note: do NOT upload biosketches again in Section 14.*

Team members may include co-investigators, site investigators, consultants, collaborators, statisticians or any other individual substantively involved in implementing the project, whether they are paid or not (in-kind) from the grant.

Start by completing your information as PI. This is the only place where you will be describing your roles and responsibilities.

When finished entering a person's information, click "Save" and "Close Window."

Repeat for each team member on the application.

If the person is already registered in ProposalCentral, some information will be automatically loaded into the contact form. Changes that you make to the person's contact information will be

for this application only. The changes do not affect the information in the person's ProposalCentral profile.

The description of main roles and responsibilities and percentage effort are important information for the reviewers. They will be appraising whether all needed expertise is adequately available on your team.

Note: Applicants who do not have an academic doctoral degree and who have not otherwise shown their design and methods training in their biosketch must include a team member whose role includes research design and methods expertise.

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8. Principal Investigator Eligibility

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *.

These questions are based on the eligibility requirements found in the grant guidelines. The PI must answer either "yes" or "does not apply" to all the questions to confirm their eligibility. A "no" response will mean that the applicant is not eligible to apply:

1. Your study explicitly states how it addresses one or more bulleted priorities in the research agenda listed in your grant application. *Note: You may include a priority listed in the guidelines in addition to the APTA research agenda priority or an academy priority, but not in place of the required reference to an agenda.*
2. You meet the definition requirements of being an emerging investigator. This question must be answered yes only if you are applying for the Foundation, Deusinger, Orthopedics or Snyder grants. Otherwise, select "Does not Apply."
3. You are in Good Standing with the Foundation, meaning you have never failed to complete the requirements of any prior scholarship or research grant.
4. You are a U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident with a Green Card that will be valid for the life of the project. Note: validity may involve renewal or applying for naturalization.
   Note: In Section 14, Attachments, you will need to upload the required supporting documents.
5. If you are a student, whether full-time or part-time, in-person, hybrid, or online only, you will have completed all requirements no later than September 1, 2026. This requirement applies even if you meet all other requirements.
6. As Principal Investigator, you will have a substantive research and leadership role and be responsible for the implementation of the project.
7. You are an employee of the Sponsoring Institution named in the application.
8. Your Sponsoring Institution is a legally registered, domestically operating, non-profit or for-profit U.S. organization or institution.
9. Your Sponsoring Institution agrees not to charge **any** indirect (overhead or administrative) costs. *Note: Fringe is allowed for certain personnel. See the budget section.*
10. All the research funded by the Foundation will be carried out entirely in the U.S.

9. Abstracts, Areas of Research, and Requests to be Considered for Other Grants

Abstracts

The instructions for both abstracts are below. They are also in the application.

Lay Abstract*. Please describe your proposed research in easily understandable language, as if you are speaking to someone who has some knowledge of physical therapy but not necessarily of technical terms. Spell out a word once before abbreviating it. Do not include confidential or proprietary information. Do not include citations. Your descriptions and language should be suitable for a non-research audience.

The Foundation may use this information in its publicity if your application is successful. By providing this information, you agree to its public use by the Foundation, with or without changes and without prior approval. **The text box has a character limit of 1,200 characters (approximately 200 words).**

Technical abstract*. Avoid jargon. All abbreviations should be spelled out when first used. Do not include citations. The technical abstract summarizes the major parts of your proposed research: importance and rationale, aims, approach, and expected results. As of this funding cycle, you will not describe your role here. **The text box has a character limit of 1,500 (approximately a half page).**

Areas of Research (Keywords)

This is one of the most important sections of the application. The Foundation uses the ProposalCentral keyword matching feature to match applications with reviewers best suited to review that application. Please select the ones that best capture the main elements of your research. You must select at least three. We encourage you to add more, especially if they can indicate more technical or specialty detail.

Request to be Considered for Other 2026 $40k Research Grants

This section is optional. If your application meets all the requirements other $40k grants being offered this year, you may choose up to three of them. You can only choose from the grants listed. The Research Committee has sole discretion about whether to consider your application for any other grant than the one for which you applied.

10. Budget Period Details and Narrative Justifications

This section is where you will enter all of your budget details by year. If you are applying for a 1-year grant, you will only fill out Period 1. Two-year grants will have a Period 1 and Period 2.

Your budget must equal $40,000.

No indirect (overhead or administrative) costs can be included in the budget. This restriction applies also to subcontracts. There are no exceptions.

The total cost of equipment cannot exceed 20% without pre-submission approval.

The Foundation will allow reasonable fringe benefit costs to be calculated for project employees of the Sponsoring Institution, provided they are already eligible to receive them. Personnel who are not employed by the Sponsoring Institution or who do not qualify for fringe benefits as employees, consultants, or contractors cannot receive them as part of this grant budget.

For two-year grants, any annual adjustments in salary and fringe benefit or wages must be projected in the budget at the time of application. The Foundation will not allow wage increase or benefits adjustments to personnel costs in the second year that are not already in the budget.

The Foundation follows NIH guidance on salary caps.

Insert numbers only. Do not use characters, e.g., dollars signs, percent signs, or commas.

Start Date: Enter 1/1/2027.
End Date: The end date will either be December 31, 2027 or December 31, 2028.
Personnel Costs: Please see above about fringe benefits and salary caps.

- List the research team members for whom you are including a biosketch and research administration personnel. Consultants already employed can be included here. Do not apply fringe to consultants.
- Do not list personnel who will be covered in a subcontract.
- List the name of anyone providing in-kind services. List their cost as zero in the budget. Add information about the amount of time and the costs of the in-kind support being provided in the Budget Justification section. Failure to account for in-kind personnel services for research team members requiring a biosketch is a disqualifying omission.
- If you have a position for which you have not hired, you can list the position title and associated budget for it as a placeholder.
- **Accounting for personnel associated with equipment use:** Add them in the personnel section if they are sponsoring institution employees or break out their costs where they are incurred in the non-personnel costs section. If you choose the latter, it is also presuming they do not qualify for fringe.

Non-Personnel Costs

Equipment: The purchase of major equipment or expensive software must be justified, and the cost cannot exceed 20 percent of the total budget. The justification should explain why such items are essential to project and not otherwise available. **If you want to exceed 20%, you must get pre-approval prior to submission. Failure to secure pre-approval for an exception is a disqualifying omission.**

Supplies or Materials: These are consumable items necessary to carry out the work of the project. Itemize supplies in categories, not individually (e.g., software, copying supplies, imaging, or office supplies). If animals are involved, state species, number, unit cost, cost of care, and other associated costs.

Travel: This line covers two types of costs, and they should be itemized separately: (1) The first is for travel expenses related to the project, such as travel to and from study sites or relevant training for study personnel. (2) The second is for travel by the PI (no other research team members can use travel funds for conference participation) for conferences and meetings relevant to their research area. Budget only for economy fare.

Patient Care Costs: "Care" is a ProposalCentral term. This line pertains to patient-related costs of their participation in the study. Indicate the estimated number of study participants, number of treatments, and cost per treatment, and indicate what charge is for, e.g., parking; stipends, or incentives, which must follow university guidance on type and amount. The charge can be for direct treatment costs. The other place for direct treatment cost is supplies or materials. Either is fine.

Other Expenses: A space for any expense related to the project that does not fall into the above categories. List by expense type. These expenses may include publication fees (incurred during the grant period), computer charges, study location rent or maintenance. Explain in the budget justification section if the label or the total amount needs further explanation or justification.

Subcontracts: Optional to use as needed. No fringe or indirect costs are allowed in subcontracts that include personnel of any type or contracts with individual consultants.

Make sure your total budget equals $40,000.

Budget Justification

A narrative explanation **must be provided** for any costs that are novel or higher than reasonably expected. Examples include, but are not limited to, personnel costs that are above the normal in total, equipment purchases of more than $8,000, or any cost that would not seem to be justified by the information provided in the budget, or other expenses that are not obvious by the description. It can also be where you provide additional information on personnel costs, including in-kind services.

11. Budget Summary

This section is automatically populated based on the budget details provided in the previous section. Any changes you wish to make in the summary section must be entered in Section 10 Budget Period Details.

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12. Other Support

List active and pending support for the Principal Investigator only.

Other support includes all financial resources, whether federal, non-federal, commercial, institutional, or non-profit sources that are available in direct support of the Principal Investigator's research endeavors, including, but not limited to, research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, or institutional awards. Training awards, prizes, or gifts do not need to be included.

If you have no other support to report, check the box under the instructions.

When adding other support, be sure to answer the question about non-duplication or replacement. Make sure this question is answered for any support that was automatically added from your profile.

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13. Required Approvals, Assurances, and Training Certificates

The Foundation presumes that if human subjects and/or vertebrate animals will be studied in your research, you will require Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or IACUC approval or exemption. **Proof of IRB and/or IACUC approval or exemption must be provided to the Foundation for an award to be finalized.**

All awardees are expected to finalize all requirements for their award, including IRB or IACUC approval or exemption, no later than the end of January 2027.

Please note that applicants are instructed NOT to select "Not Applicable" from the dropdown lists.

The Foundation expects the Sponsoring Institution to have Federalwide Assurances, which is confirmed by the OHRP and OLAW numbers that were provided in Section 3, and which should auto populate in this section. It is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Institution to ensure that the research project is operating with all required approvals and protection policies and procedures for human and/or for vertebrate animal subjects and workplace protections for all project personnel.

If your Sponsoring Institution does not have an OHRP or OLAW number, contact info@foundation4PT.org. You will be required to demonstrate how you will obtain IRB and/or IACUC approval or an exemption and how the Sponsoring Institution meets all federal and state laws and regulations covering the protection of human and vertebrate animal subjects and workplace protection policies for all project personnel. You will provide that information in the required Subjects, Protections, and Data Management template.

The Foundation requires that subjects protection training certificates be uploaded for all team members for whom a biosketch is required. **Compile ONE certificate of completion for a course or refresher course within the last 3 years for each team member.** Failure to provide one relevant certificate per key personnel will prevent an application from proceeding to review. Do not substitute training transcripts for required certificates. They will not be accepted. Training not deemed centrally focused on protections will be rejected. If unsure, contact the Foundation. **Upload the compiled certificates for humans into one PDF and upload it using the upload function in the human subjects subsection. Use the same approach if uploading animal protections training certificates in that subsection. *Note: do not upload them again in Section 14.***

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14. Attachments

This section contains both required and supplemental (if applicable) attachments. Required attachments are listed below. They must be uploaded according to the instructions contained in them and not exceed the file size indicated.

Use the "Attach" button to upload both required and supplemental attachments. There will be a dropdown menu to choose the type of attachment you are uploading.

The ones that require you to use a template to complete them can be downloaded from the list in the lower section here or in Section 2 of the application if you have not already done so.

Please follow the instructions below about how to compile and upload these attachments in **Adobe PDF format.**

Required Attachments

Note: Before converting attachments to Adobe PDF, be sure to follow the instructions for deleting information that are included in each template. PDFs that exceed the page limit will fail to be uploaded.

Research Plan: This required attachment must be completed using the template provided, which has been correctly formatted and includes instructions about the information to provide.

Citations and Other References: This required attachment must be completed using the template provided, which has been correctly formatted and includes instructions about the information to provide. You should not have used any citations in your abstracts.

Resources, and Environment, Facilities, Equipment and Multi-site: This required attachment must be completed using the template provided, which has been correctly formatted and includes instructions about the information to provide. If your project will be implemented over multiple sites, the information must confirm that the resources and environment needed at each site will be provided. **Letters of Support (see below) are required any resources, facilities, or equipment will be obtained through collaborative arrangements.**

Subjects Protections and Data Management Plan: This required attachment must be completed using the template provided, which has been correctly formatted and includes instructions about the information to provide.

Applicant/Principal Investigator biosketch: This required attachment is uploaded in the Research Team Section 7. **Do not upload it again in Section 14.** We will accept either the traditional NIH format (provided) or one generated through SciENcv. However, if you use the latter and you do not have an academic doctorate, be sure to include the required information (see the old template) about other types of research design and methods you have received or confirm that there is a PhD, EdD, or DSc for that expertise named on your team. The page limit is 5 pages, regardless of the biosketch format you use.

Research Team Member biosketches: These attachments are uploaded in the Research Team Section 7. **Do not upload them again in Section 14.** We will accept either the traditional NIH format (provided) or one generated through SciENcv. Please use it for all persons named on the research team in Section 7 who are directly involved in the study. The maximum is 5 pages per person. If you include the program director in an investigative role, upload a biosketch for them, otherwise do not include them.

Letters of Support: They are required as indicated below. There are no templates for them. They must be on institutional letterhead and signed by the person submitting the letter. *Do not submit any general letters of support that are not included in the list below.* Letters should reflect one of the required letters listed below and contain the requested information for it. **Three is the maximum number of pages for each type of letter.**

Sponsoring Institution (required for all applicants): The letter must attest that the facilities, equipment, and any programmatic, or administrative personnel listed in the application will be available for the duration of the project and that all listed personnel will have the time indicated in the application to implement it. It should reference multi-site or consortium arrangements if applicable. In other words, all attestations relevant to the institution are captured in this one letter.

Consultants (if applicable): All named consultants must provide a signed letter confirming they will be available to perform the roles stated for them in the application should the applicant be awarded a grant. They should provide the daily rate used to calculate their costs in the budget.

They should confirm that they will not charge any indirect costs.

Consortium investigator and authorized official at the sponsoring consortium institution (if applicable): Both persons must provide respective signed letters on a letterhead confirming that appropriate programmatic and administrative personnel of each consortium organization necessary to complete the project will be available. If the consortium sponsoring institution is the same as the sponsoring institution, this information can be covered in the sponsoring institution letter.

Multisite collaborator/investigator (if applicable): The letter should confirm that the site investigator will provide the services, facilities, and environment detailed in the proposal and should confirm the IRB and data sharing or date use arrangements agreed with the Applicant/Principal Investigator and their Sponsoring Institution. They will confirm that they will provide any reporting required by the Principal Investigator to meet the Foundation's reporting requirements. Agreements to operate under the Sponsoring Institution's central IRB and data sharing or use agreements are preferable. You will need this confirmation from each site.

To submit these letters, organize them by type, scan, and compile them into ONE Adobe PDF file. Name the file "Letters of Support. When you click to attach the file, choose Letters of Support from the Attachment Type dropdown menu. If it is not possible to compile them all, you can upload separate ones using the "Letters of Support" option each time.

Right to work in the U.S. documentation: This is a required attachment for Principal Investigators only. **There is no template for this upload, but the attachment must be a PDF.** As the applicant, you must provide adequate documentation of your right to reside and work in the U.S:

- If you are a U.S. citizen with a current passport, please provide a PDF of the biometric page (the one with your photo).
- If you are a U.S. citizen without a current passport, you must have the relevant official in your institution confirm that your documents have been checked, and your citizenship confirmed. **This confirmation must be on letterhead and signed by the official, with their title provided below their signature.**
- **Your U.S. driver's license is not valid proof.**
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, you must upload a PDF copy of your passport biometric page (the one with your photo) and a copy of your Green Card documentation (valid document, and, if applicable, receipt of renewal application, or receipt of application for naturalization). Please combine this information into one PDF.

Supplemental Material or Information. Applicants can compile this material into **one Adobe PDF file** and upload it. This material should be included if they provide essential details not possible to include in the research plan template due to formats that were incompatible with the template. ProposalCentral only supports certain formats for uploaded information. If you have an incompatible file format, you will not be able to submit it outside of ProposalCentral. ProposalCentral may be able to suggest ways to make files compatible. In general, you need to upload PDFs or Word documents.

15. Data Sharing Plan

The Foundation now requires you to provide a high-level summary of your plan to make your study data publicly available. You may submit an opt-out request with a justification for why none your data can be shared. If some of your data can be shared, you must opt-in to share those data and note what must be excluded and why. Your institution not having a data-sharing plan is no longer a reason to opt out. Just stating that you will respond to individual requests for data is not sufficient. Any institution receiving more than $12m from the NIH is subject to its data-sharing policy, which the Foundation is following.

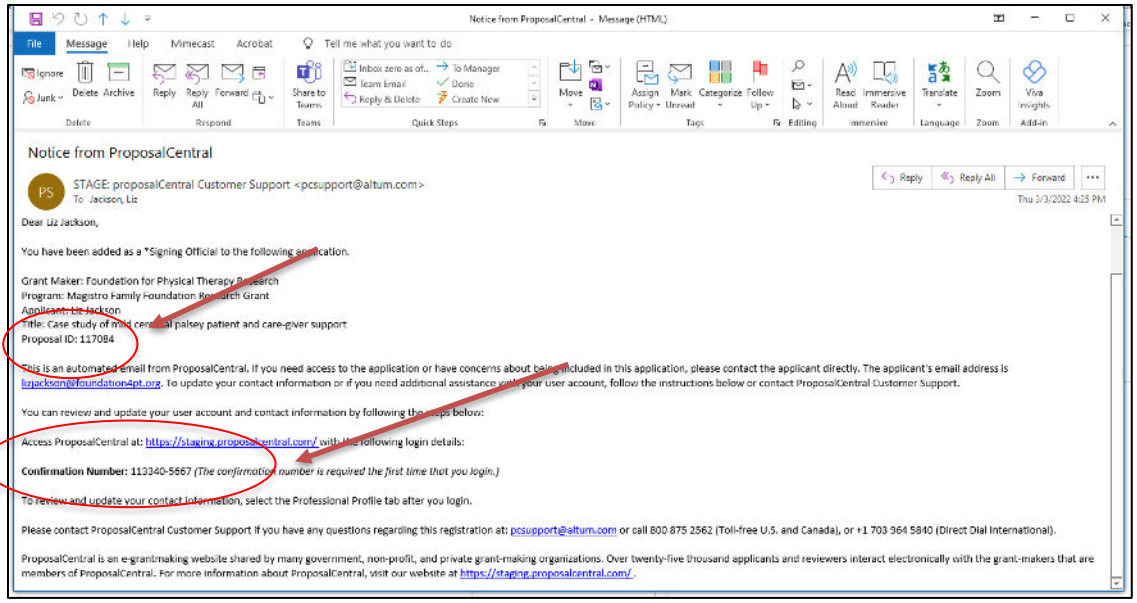
Filling out the form

Opting-in. To opt in to make all or some parts of your data available, choose the "Data Plan" radio button (default). Provide the information requested.

Opting-out. If you have reasons that prevent you from sharing your data, choose the "Data Plan Opt-Out Request" button and scroll down to the section that covers this request. Provide your reasons and be sure to check one of the exemption grounds from the list.

16. Required Signatures and Print

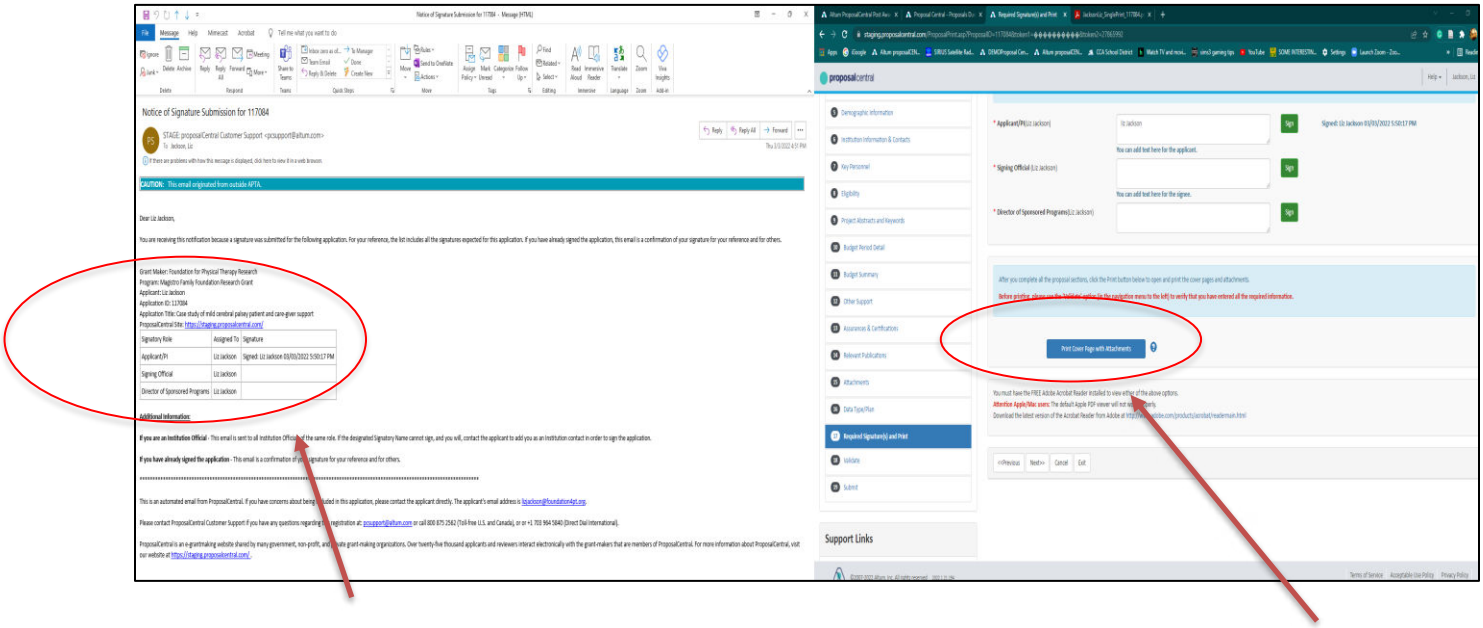
This application requires two signatures for submission: he Applicant/Principal Investigator and an authorized Sponsoring Institution official. You will have added the official in Section 6. They will have received an email at the time that included the ProposalID and confirmation number. They must enter that information to access and e-sign your application.



The Applicant/Principal Investigator will receive an email confirming approval once the official has signed. The box will show who has signed and provide a time stamp.

Confirmation email

Required Signature(s) and Print page



The cover page and attachments can be printed from this section, too.

17. Validate

After the e-signatures have been entered, you may validate your application using the ProposalCentral automatic review function. When you click on "Validate," ProposalCentral will list any required information in the application that is missing.

You remain responsible for checking all information entered and required attachments to ensure they are correct, complete, correctly formatted, and successfully uploaded.

18. Submit

This action can only be done when there are no corrections to be made that showed up during the validate step. Once you click on submit, your application is submitted to the Foundation. If the deadline has not passed, you may access it to make any changes or corrections. However, if the deadline has passed, you can only access if if the Foundation has agreed on the reason and makes it available for revision.

Please sign up on the Foundation website on the research grant webpage to receive our email updates, including FAQs and notifications of changes to the application form or instructions.