

Getting Your Psychosocial Research Funded: Perspectives from Funders and Opportunities for Investigators (poster 1 of 3)

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INTRODUCTION:




Applying for and obtaining funding for SCI/D research is a challenge for any study, but particularly for research aimed at addressing psychosocial issues and outcomes. Financial resources are limited for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the competition for these monies needing to be spread across all disability groups. In the United States and Canada, there are several resources available to obtain funding specifically for Spinal Cord injury and Spinal Cord Disorders (SCI/D), however, even among these agencies, these funds are limited and the competition is considerable. In this series of three posters, some of the key agencies and organizations, both governmental and private, are described, illustrating funding opportunities to include in some cases international investigators and some of the “keys to success” in applying for funding.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNDING:



Funding for psychosocial research after SCI/D includes projects involving the study of human behavior and outcomes with the main focus being on psychological and social wellbeing and experiences of persons with SCI/D, their partners, caregivers, and families. Examples of psychosocial research includes studies on social support, loneliness, resilience, adjustment and coping, social participation and social integration. A number of clinical trials have psychosocial outcomes as their primary or secondary endpoints. This trend is increasing with the growth of patient centered approaches to care.

Some of the funders discussed here offer different grant mechanisms to conduct psychosocial research. Some identify priorities for this type of research while others are open to ideas from the field. All have a rigorous peer review system to evaluate the quality and impact of the project in advancing knowledge about SCI/D. Many of these projects evolve from international collaborations among investigators at meetings like this one.

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	National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation (NIDILRR) in Administration for Community Living (ACL)	U.S. Department of Defense Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (SCIRP)*	National Institutes of Health/ NCMRR/NICHD/ NINDS and other Institutes
Agency Characteristics	US Federal	US Federal	US Federal
Types of Research Supported and Priorities	<p>Studies that advance long-term outcomes that promote the capacity for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in society, such as independence, community participation, and employment.</p> <p>Research studies that explore the complex interactions among personal, societal, and environmental factors. These focuses can be cross-disability, or specific disability types and populations</p>	<p>Studies addressing social isolation, loneliness, and depression, as well as resilience, self-efficacy, sexuality and intimacy, and interactions between people living with SCI and their care-partners, are especially encouraged.</p>	<p>NIH supports basic, translational and clinical research. Applicants are encouraged to review the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Research Plan on Rehabilitation Theme B for psychosocial priorities.</p>
Psychosocial Research Funding Mechanism and Programs	Psychosocial research supported in all NIDILRR funding mechanisms	Psychosocial research supported in all SCIRP funding mechanisms	Psychosocial Research is supported by Parent Announcements. The NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research also posts targeted FOAs - Homepage Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (nih.gov) Funding opportunities addressing research on neurological health disparities and equity may also be relevant to psychosocial outcomes. Office of Global Health and Health Disparities National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (nih.gov)
Funding Available	\$118 M/year	\$ 40 M/year	No upper limit; in FY21 funding for SCI was about \$100 million (Source: NIH RCDC)
Number of Awards Funded during the past year	80 awards funded in FY22 276 awards in active portfolio in FY21 1,400 unique projects in FY21	29 in FY21 153 awards in active portfolio	SCI-relevant awards funded during the past year: 67 new/competing awards in FY21, 226 total awards in FY21 (Source: NIH RCDC)
Research Impact Who benefits? How?	Projects should impact people with disabilities, including those with the greatest support needs and related systems and environments that they interact with. Applications should include input of disabled individuals throughout the proposed work.	Projects should provide an understanding of critical factors promoting psychosocial well-being leading to implementation of potential treatments and interventions. Applications should directly address, or show clear relevance to, the needs of Service Members and Veterans.	PIs are encouraged to engage with stakeholders to identify priority areas and meaningful outcomes. Applications that address the needs of anyone with a SCI are accepted.
Mechanisms for Foreign Investigators Funding	<p>Foreign organizations are not eligible to apply for or receive NIDILRR grants.</p> <p>Foreign organizations may receive NIDILRR funding as subawardees on grants made to organizations in the U.S.</p> <p>Foreign investigators may serve as investigators on NIDILRR grants, either as employees of grantee organizations in the U.S. or as employees of foreign subawardees.</p> <p>U.S.-based foreign investigators may apply for and receive Switzer Research Fellowship Grants. All applicants must have a US Social Security Number in order to apply.</p> <p>Foreign investigators are eligible for Fulbright scholar participation with NIDILRR.</p>	Foreign investigators are eligible to be named as PI on an application.	Most NIH research mechanisms (R series) are open to Foreign Institutions, but most training and career development (Fs and Ks) require US citizenship or green cards. Applicants are encouraged to review each FOA for eligibility.
Contact Information	<p>NIDILRR-Mailbox@acl.hhs.gov</p> 	<p>help@eBRAP.org *Information accurate as of August 2022</p> 	<p>Theresa Cruz cruzth@mail.nih.gov Linda Bambrick linda.Bambrick@nih.gov</p> 

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	Craig H Nielsen Foundation Psychosocial Research Program California, U.S.A	PRAXIS Spinal Cord Institute Vancouver, Canada
Organization Characteristics	Private Funder	Canadian Not for Profit, supported by Federal, Provincial and Fundraising
Types of Research Supported and Priorities	Funding supports programs and scientific research about the interrelation of behavioral, social, psychological, and other factors that affect quality of life for the spinal cord injury community.	Projects that aim to ensure evidence-informed equitable and optimal care across the SCI continuum.
Psychosocial Research Funding Mechanisms and Programs	<p>Postdoctoral Fellowships Early-career mentored training to increase professional interest and encourage researchers to undertake training in psychosocial research focused on SCI.</p> <p>Pilot Grants Psychosocial research that lays groundwork to inform future studies, tests feasibility of novel methods, and/or collects psychosocial data to enhance larger scale studies.</p> <p>Studies and Demonstration Projects Substantive research to fill important gaps in the SCI field, opens new areas of psychosocial research, and/or develops and evaluates interventions to address psychosocial issues after SCI.</p>	Psychosocial research can be supported in all Praxis funding mechanisms (e.g. RFAs, Registry etc.)
Funding Available	<p>Postdoctoral Fellowships: Two-year Fellowships up to \$100,000/year</p> <p>Pilot Grants: Two-year grants up to \$300,000 total costs</p> <p>Studies and Demonstration Projects: Three-year grants up to \$550,000 total costs.</p>	Varies each year based on Praxis approved budgets
Number of Awards Funded During the Past Year	13 New PSR Grants Approved for the 2022 Cycle (~\$4 million total costs)	Psychosocial considerations incorporated into 8 Praxis funding mechanisms, with a total of 41 individual grants.
Research Impact Who benefits? How?	The Nielsen Foundation goals are to identify and prioritize critical gaps in the field and develop more effective interventions to improve health and participation in individuals with SCI across the lifespan.	Projects must meaningfully engage individuals living with SCI and demonstrate an impact on health outcomes
Mechanisms for Foreign Investigators Funding	The applicant organization must be a nonprofit academic/research institution or rehabilitation facility located in the US or Canada. The Principal Investigator is not required to be a citizen of the United States or Canada; however, must be employed by an eligible grantee institution. Collaborators and/or consultants do not need to be affiliated with the same institution as the PI.	Foreign investigators are allowed to collaborate with Canadian PIs
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Pearls of Wisdom

Before getting started, always talk to the contact person for the agency if one is available to discuss the feasibility of your idea within a specific program. When this is not possible, do some research to find out what had been funded in the past by this agency or organization. Use the International SCI Data Sets where possible (see: <https://www.iscos.org.uk/international-sci-data-sets>). Whenever possible, get consumers or people with SCI/D involved in the development and refinement of your proposed ideas. After all, your study should benefit them first of all. Address every scoring criterion that is required as reviewers will look closely at this information. Make sure you review your budget and proposal preparation guidelines and follow each step very carefully. Have others read your application and give you feedback for content and clarity.

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