



*United States*

## Network of PEDIATRIC MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS Centers

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### **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS: NPMSC Clinical Center Awards**

This announcement invites applications from institutions proposing to serve as Clinical Centers in the US Network of Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis Centers (NPMSC). The network is designed to conduct high-impact research in the area of pediatric demyelinating diseases through multi-institutional collaborations. The NPMSC and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) have identified the need for additional Centers to help expand expertise within the network, reach pediatric patients in areas of the United States not currently served, and enable larger scale research.

### **BACKGROUND**

The NMSS established a nationwide network of six Pediatric MS Centers in 2006 to provide comprehensive evaluation and care to children and teens (up to age 18) with MS and related central nervous system (CNS) demyelinating disorders. To develop an effective patient registry and facilitate the transition of the centers to a research network in 2010, the Data Coordinating and Analysis Center (DCAC) at the University of Utah was added to the network. In 2012 through 2015, five more centers were added to the network. Today, ten network clinical centers are engaged in research to better understand the cause(s) of MS, the characteristics of these disorders in children, and how best to treat children with MS. To learn more about the NPMSC mission, structure, research priorities and current projects, please visit [www.usnpmsc.org](http://www.usnpmsc.org).

### **GENERAL**

The purpose of this award opportunity is to maintain clinical center infrastructure to support NPMSC research projects and activities. This support is not intended to be a substitute for substantial MS research or training support.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Any individual with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Principal Investigator (PI) is invited to work with his/her institution to develop an application for support.

**Principal Investigator:** Each proposal must have a designated principal investigator (PI), holding an M.D. or D.O. degree and board certification in child or adult neurology, who will assume the scientific and administrative oversight for the operation of the collaborative effort. A PI with a Ph.D. degree, collaborating with a board certified neurologist as a Co-PI may also apply. A PI with experience writing grants and working with private foundations and NIH is preferred.

**Eligible Institutions:** The awardee institution is where the principal investigator is located. The awardee institution must be located in the United States and must be a non-profit research and/or

clinical institution such as a university, college, or hospital. Only one application per institution will be accepted.

**Funding:** Each awardee institution will receive base support for research coordinator personnel each project year, assuming the IRB is approved and up to date for the Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis and other Demyelinating Diseases (PeMSDD) database project. Each institution will also be paid capitation based on the number of enrollments each quarter and follow-up visits performed when data are complete, as assessed by the DCAC.

#### PREPARATION AND REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

**Timing:** Deadline for completed applications is July 31, 2023, 11:59PM Eastern Daylight Time with the earliest possible start date of January 1, 2024. Incomplete applications, or applications that arrive after the deadline, will not be accepted. Applications must be sent to all application submission contacts listed below in a single email.

**Term of Award:** The initial term of the award will be 6 months, with anticipated funding for at least one additional year and the possibility of extension contingent upon continuation of NPMSC core funding from the NMSS for infrastructure as well as the performance of the awarded site, based on established performance criteria and scoring system of the network. The primary purpose of this grant is to expand the collaboration of NPMSC to other centers in US to increase the number of recruited patients, to expand collaborative research and grant submission as well as scientific discovery. The awarded centers are expected to 1) recruit minimum of 15 new pediatric patients with demyelination per year as well as follow up data 2) perform data collection, entry, and cleaning for the Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis and other Demyelinating Diseases (PeMSDD) database. Centers will also be expected to participate in other network projects and provide the requested data of recruited patients per the rules of NPMSC. Centers are allowed to have limited data access but any data access, grant proposal or publications using the data from NPMSC requires prior approval of the steering committee. Centers are expected to attend monthly NPMSC Steering Committee Meetings.

**Application Contents:** To facilitate the review of the application, the proposal should be organized in the following manner:

#### 1. **NPMSC Clinical Center Criteria** (4-page maximum with a minimum of 11-point font and 0.5 inch margins top, bottom and sides)

Address how the PI, Co-PI (not required), collaborators, and institution meet each the following four main evaluation criteria that will be considered by the review committee:

- Academic and research contributions and potential to contribute further and obtain grant funding in the area of pediatric MS
- Patient volume and follow-up, including the ability to follow pediatric patients into adulthood
- Representation of a diverse patient population that may include underrepresented groups in geographic areas not currently served by existing clinical centers.
- Community-mindedness (ability to adhere to Network policies and work with others, based on prior network or multicenter collaboration experience)

#### 2. **Supporting Information:**

- A letter of institutional support
- NIH Biosketch for submitting PI and Co-PI (if applicable)

**Review Process:** The review of the applications will be conducted by a special review panel constituted by members of the existing NPMSC Steering Committee and external collaborators/advisors. Award letters for successful applications will be issued after the final approval by the NPMSC Steering Committee (anticipated November 1, 2023), with starting date no sooner than January 1, 2024.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Review of these Center proposals will be based on the vision of the Center to maximize collaborative research and the likelihood that funds will support and address NPMSC priority research areas.

**Application Submission Contacts:**

T. Charles Casper, PI, Data Coordinating and Analysis Center, University of Utah  
[Charlie.Casper@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:Charlie.Casper@hsc.utah.edu)

Melissa Bolton, Program Lead, Data Coordinating and Analysis Center, University of Utah  
[Melissa.Bolton@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:Melissa.Bolton@hsc.utah.edu)

**Q&A Session:**

There will be a webinar question and answer session held on **June 28, 2023 at 10:00 AM MST.**

Zoom link: <https://utah-health.zoom.us/j/97953352734?pwd=MlVOWTRVSG5CN2FCaXNQdGVaWDlWZz09>

Meeting ID: 979 5335 2734

Passcode: 263844