



HERMÈS CANADA | MS SOCIETY WELLNESS RESEARCH INNOVATION GRANT (WRIG): REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- 1. Are all applicants who submit a pre-application eligible to submit a full application, or will only highly ranked applicants be invited to submit a full application based on adjudication by a review committee?**

The purpose of the pre-application stage is to carry out a preliminary screen of the applications by MS Society research staff. Pre-applications will **not** be reviewed for scientific merit by a review committee at this stage. Only pre-applications submitted by applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria or whose topic area does not align with the objectives of the RFA may not be invited to submit a full application.

All applicants submitting a full application **must** have previously submitted a pre-application by the posted deadline in order to be eligible.

- 2. Are applicants required to use the MS Wellness Survey in developing their research proposal?**

Yes, the MS Wellness Survey ([click here for detailed results](#)) is a fundamental component of the WRIG, and applicants must address one or more aspects of the survey in order to meet the review criteria for the competition.

In their research proposal, applicants are asked to state the research questions, objectives and significance of the project in terms of addressing the priorities, challenges, and gaps identified by respondents in the MS Wellness Survey. The proposal must clearly explain the reasoning for choosing a specific priority and/or “researcher for a day” MS Wellness Survey question. Applicants must limit the scope of their proposal to the three key wellness topics explored in the survey: **nutrition, physical activity, and emotional wellbeing**, although applicants are permitted to use interdisciplinary approaches and address more than one of these topics in their proposal. Please contact msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca if you are unsure whether your proposed research topic area aligns with the focus of the MS Wellness Survey.

- 3. What is a community innovator?**

A community innovator is defined as an individual, organization or company based in Canada from the public, private or non-profit sector. The purpose of community innovators is to enrich the research study by acting as partners to an academic researcher and contributing specialized skills, services, and/or access to a particular community of interest.

Community innovators must either have a health and/or wellness mandate, such as offering programming, services, education, and/or policy capacity related to wellness, or they must demonstrate the potential to contribute meaningfully to a wellness-related research project by way of specialized expertise such as technological development skills. Community innovators must demonstrate adequate resources to meet its commitment to the research project.

Community innovators can include, but are not limited to:

- Clinical practitioners, such as rehabilitation specialists, dieticians, mental health specialists, occupational therapists, and others who may not have a research appointment but are active in their clinical practice;
- Technology companies that have the capacity to develop technologies, tools and/or services for monitoring and enhancing wellness, such as app developers, wearable technology developers, etc.;
- Community-based organizations and service providers; for example, organizations involved in offering certain services within the community such as facilitating training and workshops that have a health and wellness focus;
- Decision- and policy-makers; for example, local city councillor or municipal planners that can influence community design through a healthy living lens.

Note: Pharmaceutical companies are **not** eligible to apply to this competition as community innovators.

The MS Scientific Research Foundation reserves the right to assess the eligibility of a community innovator and deem an applicant ineligible at any time.

4. Can community innovators apply to the competition as a principal applicant (PA)?

Yes, community innovators are encouraged to apply to the competition as PAs. In this capacity, community innovators would be responsible for the intellectual and creative direction of the research proposal.

However, a community innovator who applies as a PA **must** list at least one academic researcher affiliated with a Canadian institution as a co-principal applicant (Co-PA). Grant funding, once awarded, must be administered only by an eligible academic institution.

5. Is a partnership between an academic researcher and community innovator required to be in place for the pre-application stage?

No, it is not necessary for the PA to have a specific partner secured for the pre-application stage. However, the PA is asked to provide a rationale for pursuing a partnership and give an indication of the sector, discipline, and/or community in which they are seeking partners. Applicants are encouraged to contact the MS Society of Canada at msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca if they require assistance in identifying partners for their application. It is possible that PAs with similar applications may be partnered with another PA to enhance the proposed project and the collaboration effort.

6. Do the PA and Co-PAs need to be based in Canada?

Yes, all PAs and Co-PAs must be based at a Canadian academic institution, organization, company or public agency in order to be eligible.

7. Are partners required to provide cash or in-kind contributions?

It is not necessary for partners to provide cash or in-kind (cash-equivalent) contributions. The MS Scientific Research Foundation will be awarding up to \$40,000 for a grant, and it is at the discretion of the PA and Co-PAs to determine how funds will be distributed amongst themselves. However, the partner is welcome to contribute additional funding. A breakdown of cash and/or in-kind contributions can be included in the Appendix of the full application.

8. What are some ways to engage people living with MS in a research study?

Applicants are encouraged to refer to the community engagement framework adopted by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) [Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research \(SPOR\)](#). CIHR defines community engagement as a program in which stakeholders (in this case, people living with MS) “meaningfully and actively collaborate in one or more of the governance, priority setting, and conduct of research, as well as in summarizing, distributing, sharing, and applying its resulting knowledge (i.e., the process referred to as knowledge translation)”

Successful approaches to engaging people living with MS can include the following roles:

- As research committee members, planning, designing and guiding the project as it progresses;
- As contributors to identifying the relevant research question, study design, recruitment, data collection, and analysis of findings. This ensures that the outcomes important to people living with MS are supported and measured.
- As supporters of participant-friendly research studies, improving access to other people living with MS via peer networks and accessing difficult-to-reach groups.

9. How will full applications be evaluated?

Full applications will be reviewed by an independent review committee consisting of individuals with the appropriate expertise – such as clinicians, accredited health and wellness practitioners, technology experts – as well as people affected by MS. Proposals that demonstrate a high likelihood of leading to immediate, concrete impact on improving wellness and quality of life for people living with MS will be particularly competitive. Please refer to the [RFA](#) under the sections *Review Criteria* and *Scoring* for further details.

10. Can grants be renewed at the completion of the funding term?

No, grants are non-renewable after the completion of the one-year funding term. No cost extensions may be permitted in accordance with MS Scientific Research Foundation [terms, conditions and policies](#). Applicants may be eligible to apply to the MS Society [annual research competition](#) (not currently open), depending on the scale and scope of their proposal.