

## Sleep Contributions to Neurodegeneration (SCN) Grant Program

### Program Objective:

The Alzheimer's Association, Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) and CurePSP are partnering together on this unique funding program to advance an understanding of the role sleep plays in neurodegeneration, including Alzheimer's disease, Lewy body diseases and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy. This funding call will focus on projects aimed to advance our understanding of the impact that sleep and related biology (including circadian rhythms) have as both a contributor to and a consequence of neurodegeneration. Projects funded through this program will aim to tackle the proposed question with a multidisciplinary team and projects that engage in team science approaches will be given preference.

### Program Overview:

Although Alzheimer's and dementia research has made many advances in recent years, the field still faces gaps in our knowledge and ability to translate basic science discoveries into treatments and evidence-based clinical practices for dementia care, across all underlying biology and patient symptoms. Some of these overarching questions focus on understanding of disease causes, need for models and other tools to evaluate disease biology, early and accurate detection and diagnosis procedures and diverse treatment modalities.

Many individuals with diseases that cause dementia or other neurodegenerative outcomes experience sleep disturbances as the disease progresses or have a history of sleep-related issues in their medical histories. Sleep is a complex physiological process that supports numerous basic survival mechanisms, including metabolism and immune system. Sleep also is central to regulating neuroplasticity, memory consolidation, learning and may also be a key mechanism for clearance mechanisms critical for healthy brain function. Sleep is also governed by the circadian clock which may be altered in people living with neurodegenerative disorders

In 2022, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAESM), through the Forum of Neuroscience and Nervous System Disorders convened a workshop focused on sleep and its impact on the central nervous system. Through these two days, there was an emphasis on what is known as well as what is not known. One of the key themes was the synergy of mechanisms across neurodegenerative disorders and the opportunity to leverage studies in this area to better understand the contributions of sleep to neurodegenerative disorders.

To that end, the three partner organizations have come together to frame this funding opportunity to address these opportunities to accelerate our understanding of sleep. The **Sleep Contributions to Neurodegeneration (SCN) Grant Program** solicits projects that aim to address some of the key challenges across neurodegeneration research today as related to sleep and related biology contributions, including a goal of increasing understanding of the biological basis of sleep impairment and sleep signatures across and within neurodegenerative diseases, including contributions to progression, risk and clinical symptoms. Proposed projects must incorporate:

- Systems or wholistic approach of the impact of sleep on neurodegenerative diseases from onset to progression, bringing together the threads of research that touch on sleep related issues.

- Incorporate considerations of co-pathologies and/or comorbidities in the context of sleep related impairment and/or contributions to progression.
- Incorporation of tools for deeper measures of sleep-related impact with passive tools of data collection; this can include “adjacent” physiology (heart rate, body temperature, etc.).
- Incorporation of sleep related biology measures in the context of other ongoing studies; studies that aim to add sleep related measures would be applicable and/or studies that aim to data mine existing data across data sets are of interest.

Successful proposals will take into consideration multidisciplinary and multi-organizational approaches to address these challenging questions.

#### **Funding and award period:**

The maximum grant amount is \$500,000 for the duration of the funding; with anticipated funding ranges to be \$200,000 to \$500,000 depending on the project scope. Budget spending should appropriately align to the specific aims and proposed milestones of the project. 10% indirect costs are allowable for this funding program. The maximum project duration is 2 years, and there is no minimum timeframe. The funding partners anticipated funding 4-6 projects, depending on the budget size requested and approved through the SCN Grant Program. The funding partners will evaluate projects on progress toward specific milestones; continued disbursement of funds is dependent on demonstrated progress toward key milestones.

#### **Eligibility:**

The SCN Grant Program is open to researchers at academic institutions as well as small companies. Both nonprofits and small for-profit organizations are eligible. Partnership between academia and larger companies is allowed. For-profits and non-profits must provide documentation verifying status. The Principal Investigator of the project must be a full-time faculty member or paid employee of the organization submitting the proposal. If the applicant is not a paid employee, they must demonstrate that they are part of the company and a listed employee. Applications from post-doctoral researchers will not be accepted.

Investigators that have received funding from either the Alzheimer's Association, MJFF or Cure PSP and are currently delinquent in submitting required reports to the funding organization are not eligible to apply. For questions about eligibility, please contact the team at [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org).

*Note: Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and Cure PSP grants are generally open to scientists and researchers across the globe; however, as a U.S.-based charity, the Alzheimer's Association, which will be the funding body on behalf of the partners, is subject to, and complies with, U.S. law. As a result, the funding groups cannot award, and will not award, grants in violation of applicable U.S. statutes and regulations. This means, among other things, that the partners cannot, and will not, fund any individual or entity (i) that is subject to U.S. comprehensive or targeted sanctions or if awarding funding would result in a violation of such sanctions, (ii) that is on the U.S. List of Specially Designated Nationals or entities owned or controlled by such persons, or (iii) when doing so is otherwise prohibited by U.S. laws related to combating terrorism.*

#### **Submitting a Letter of Intent:**

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is a required step in the application process. LOIs must be completed online at <https://proposalcentral.com>. First-time users must register and complete a Professional

Profile to begin the LOI process. No hard copies will be accepted. The LOI is completed through the online interactive system; you will need to complete the required sections and upload any

required documents. The main section will have a limit of 10,000 characters, approximately 3 pages, and should include the information below (no figures/graphics or images are allowed):

- Brief project description, including methodology
- Specific aims of the project
- Innovation/novelty of the project
- Project team
- Plan for data management and data sharing

For U.S. entities, the LOI materials will include proof of your organization's not-for-profit status and a W9 signed and dated by the signing official. Non-US entities must provide a W8-BEN-E signed and dated by the signing official. **Your LOI will not be accepted without these documents.** Current awardees of the Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and CurePSP are eligible, provided their current funded grant does not overlap with this proposal.

#### **Evaluation of LOIs:**

All LOIs will be evaluated prior to invitation for a full proposal. Only LOIs that meet program specific guidelines and meet review criteria, including the goals of the SCN program, will be invited to submit full applications. LOIs will be reviewed by a panel of experts with special attention to:

1. Demonstrable innovation/novelty of the proposed project (especially in the context of the PI/PIs' and team's recent work).
2. Alignment with the research priorities of the RFA.
3. Impact of the project on neurodegeneration research.
4. Evidence of methodological rigor that addresses the research question(s) being proposed.
5. While not required, priority will be given to studies that leverage interdisciplinary and/or inter-institutional teams to accomplish the proposed project in a way no one group would be able to do independently.

***Feedback is not provided for LOIs that are not invited to submit a full application.***

#### **Submitting a Full Application:**

For those invited to submit a full application, additional materials will be required. Templates and instructions will be provided after LOI approval.

Full applications will include:

- Executive Summary (1 page)
- Background/Rationale (1 page): should include background and clearly defined hypothesis and/or rationale addressing why the proposed strategy is expected to be fruitful. This should also note the specific aims.
- Work Plan (up to 5 pages): should include goals/specific aims, methods and project plan and should be organized in alignment with the milestones as outlined in the application.

- Project Milestones: workplan should be separated into one-year intervals with specific milestones to be accomplished within that timeframe. Milestones should align with the overall project goals and be designed for easy progress evaluation and for clear determination on whether or not milestones have been met. For each milestone, indicate the relevant Project Aim. (No upload required)
- Principal Investigator(s) and Key Personnel Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch (no more than 5 pages per person); there is no limit on the number of CVs to be included and applicants may wish to include other key members of the team for context to the reviewers of the team's expertise
- Available Resources and Budget Justification (2 pages):
  - Expenses that will not be allowed under this award include: tuition for full degree programs, rent for laboratory/office space, construction or renovation costs, liability insurance, networking and communication fees, and any facilities fees and laboratory/supply costs not directly relevant to the project. If awarded, a full budget of planned expenses will be required.
  - Include a list of tools/models available (if appropriate, list critical tools and models to be used or needed in the course of the research). No indirect costs will be allowed. Budget should be broken down in 1-year increments and should align with project milestones.
- Data Management and Sharing Plan (3 pages): we recommend using the provided amended NIH template. It is expected that data generated through this funding mechanism will include a robust plan for sharing data and an appropriate included budget to accommodate this plan. Data sharing is a key component of the application and will be considered in the review and evaluation. Information on timelines, feasibility, and the platform(s) and/or mechanisms of sharing should be included. Failure to share data appropriately may prevent investigators from being eligible for future funding. When data sharing may be limited, applicants must explain such limitations at the time of application. For any project that is using data and/or samples from an ongoing study, please include information on the approvals and/or use agreements the applicant(s) have for this data use and/or sample access. Please also add in specific requirements for sharing these data with the original study.
- (If applicable) Recruitment Plan (1 page): Only for projects using human research participants.
- Citations/References (1 page): Use the reference style that is most common in the major journal(s)
- W9/W8 Documentation

### **Deadlines and Award Timeline:**

Key Dates for this program include:

- Letter of Intent Launch --- December 11, 2024
- Letter of Intent Deadline--- January 29, 2025
- Letter of Intent Decision Notification – Week of March 17, 2025
- Application Deadline--- May 14, 2025
- Application Review ---- May-June, 2025
- Application Review Panel --- Mid-July
- Award Notifications---- By August 30, 2025

LOIs will be accepted through 5:00 PM EST, January 29, 2025. Letters of Intent will not be accepted after this date. **No exceptions will be made.**

All LOIs must be completed online at <https://proposalcentral.com>. No hard copies or emails will be accepted.

For those invited to submit a full application, the full application must be received by 5:00 PM EST, May 14, 2025. Applications will not be accepted after this date. **No exceptions will be made.** No hard copies or emails will be accepted.

- Award announcements will be made by August 30, 2025.

For More Information, contact: [grantsapp@alz.org](mailto:grantsapp@alz.org)

### **Additional Details**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure and verify that:

- The application is submitted by the receipt date/time deadline. Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from [proposalcentral.com](https://proposalcentral.com) that your application was successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation, click the Proposals tab, and under the "Status" column, make sure it says Submitted and not In Progress, which indicates you have not yet submitted your application.
- The application is complete and accurate before submission. Only a single copy of an application will be accepted. We do not require signatures at the time of submission. The signature page provided is for use should your institution/organization require signatures; we do not override any institutional policies and/or procedures. Please do not submit the signature page with your application.
- Revisions, additional materials, and/or references, manuscripts, appendices, etc., are not allowed and, if attached, will be removed from your application. Up to 3 letters of support (no more than 2 pages each) are allowed. Additional letters will be removed.

### **Multiple and Overlapping Submissions:**

Multiple submissions from one applicant are not permitted. This includes multiple submissions from the same group and/or collaborators.

### **Allowable costs under this award include:**

- Purchase and care of laboratory animals
- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies (**purchases over \$10,000 require prior approval, even if included in the project proposal budget**).
- Computer software - if used strictly for data collection and/or analysis.
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including modest administrative support).
- Research supplies needed for the proposed studies.
- Support for travel to scientific and professional meetings, not to exceed \$1,000 in any given year.
- Open access publications fees are appropriate and reasonable for the project budget.

### **Not allowable as direct costs under this award include:**

- Computer hardware or standard software (e.g., Microsoft Office).not specifically required for the analysis and/or proposed project

- Construction or renovation costs.
  - Tuition for students or for educational training for trainees or faculty.
  - Service contract fees for equipment
  - Construction or renovation costs
  - Tuition
  - Rent for laboratory/office space
- 
- Visa costs and fees
  - Expenses such as Data Network Recharges and Computing and communication device support services. However, data sharing and/or data storage for imaging, sequencing, and other study data is allowed
  - General liability insurance, such as GAEL
  - Wire and currency exchange fees
  - The Alzheimer's Association [Medical and Scientific Advisory Group \(MSAG\)](#), the [International Research Grant Program \(IRGP\) Council members](#), and current employees of the Alzheimer's Association are allowed to be key personnel or collaborators on projects, however they are NOT ALLOWED to receive any salary or compensation. A complete list of MSAG and IRGP Council members can be found on our website [alz.org/grants](http://alz.org/grants)

### **Additional Information**

#### **Ethical/regulatory approvals and reporting requirements**

If awarded for funding, the funding partners will require that any necessary ethical and/or regulatory approvals are kept current, and may require specific reporting throughout the lifetime of the award. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

#### **Human Subject Assurances**

Human subject assurances are not required at the time of application. Investigators have up to 90 days after receipt of their award notification to submit these documents. However, the funding partners encourages investigators to initiate their certification applications on a schedule that recognizes that approvals at many institutions can take more than 90 days. We will accept only certifications that apply specifically to the funded project and must include the name of the awardee. An award letter will not be issued unless the appropriate certifications are in place and include the name of the awardee within 90 days from award notification. The same applies to animal ethical approvals, if applicable.

#### **Annual Scientific and Financial Reports**

Interim Scientific and Financial Reports must be submitted at the end of each reporting period as long as the grant remains active. Virtual check-in calls will be held at the six-month mark for awardees to provide update on progress. Final Scientific and Financial Reports must be filed within 90 days of the grant's end date. All reports must be submitted electronically via [proposalcentral.com](http://proposalcentral.com). All awardees will participate in a final report virtual call to provide presentation of project outcomes. The Financial Report must be approved and signed by someone with financial authority in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the recipient's institution.

#### **Data Sharing:**

The Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and CurePSP require the timely release and the sharing of final research data and other research resources generated from Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and CurePSP funded research studies be shared and administered in accordance with this policy. Examples included in the "final research data" are the data, samples, physical conditions and other supporting materials created or gathered during the course of the work.

The following principles should be followed:

- Share data, tools, and results within the consortia in near real time;
- Make useful datasets and supporting information available to the broader research community every 6 months, at minimum, through an appropriate data-sharing platform and other repositories, noting that not all experimental datasets are useful at early or intermediate stages of generation, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if the funding partners agrees that the data are not yet ready to be shared.
- Use a streamlined data access process for the data sharing platform to allow high throughput management of data access request approvals; make novel tools and research reagents (including, but not limited to, research models, cell lines, plasmids, viral vectors, antibodies, code/analysis methods, etc.) available as quickly as possible to academic and industry researchers either directly, or preferably through an appropriate and accessible distribution platform (e.g. Jackson Laboratory, Addgene, and GitHub) with minimal costs and restrictions.
- Whenever possible, avoid use of reagents, tools, samples, or data that cannot be easily shared; pre-approval for use of animal models that cannot be freely shared is required.
- Rapidly bring research findings and results to the research community through presentations at meetings and open-access publication (e.g. preprint servers, open access journals, or making papers available on the investigator's website).

The teams' commitment and expectations for sharing in a timely manner will be discussed and evaluated during the duration of the project. All project reports should include activities related to the sharing of their findings.

**Recruitment Efforts for Clinical Studies and/or Studies that involve Human Materials:**

Projects involving human participants - whether directly recruiting or using materials from previously conducted studies - must address the appropriate inclusion or exclusion of individuals in the proposed research project.

**Financial Responsibility:**

Funding is awarded to the institution and/or organization, not to the individual principal investigator. The principal investigator or a first-degree relative cannot be listed as the signing official or financial officer, or have checks sent to their attention if awarded.

**Appeals of Scientific Peer Review:**

To maintain a fair and rigorous review system, the SCN Grant Program includes a process for appeal of funding decisions. Appeals will not be considered for the letter of intent stage. Regarding applications, an appeal is intended to address extraordinary circumstances.

Appropriate reasons for initiating an appeal might include:

- Evidence that a reviewer has an undeclared conflict of interest.
- An egregious error or misunderstanding in the review process.
- Active malfeasance or demonstrable lack of due diligence.

The appeal process is not intended to provide a mechanism for routine protest of failure to receive a grant. It is anticipated that funding through the SCN Grant Program will be extremely competitive and is limited by availability of funds.

If an applicant believes an extraordinary circumstance has contributed to failure to receive funding, the principal investigator may send a two-page, double-spaced formal letter of appeal (Word document) to [grantsappeals@alz.org](mailto:grantsappeals@alz.org). Any supporting documents included must be submitted as a PDF. **Appeals must be submitted within 2 weeks from the date your application outcome notification is sent.** Notification of action on the appeal will be made via email, usually within 90 days of the appeal deadline.

**Nondiscrimination and Harassment Statement:**

The Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and CurePSP are committed to providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The Alzheimer's Association, MJFF and CurePSP strictly prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race; creed; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; national origin; ancestry; age; Veteran status; citizenship status; marital status; physical or mental disabilities; pregnancy, gender identity or expression (including transgender status); genetic information; and any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.