



Application Instructions for Research Grant Letter of Intent (LOI)

Part A: Research/Project Proposal Abstract and Specific Aims

The abstract and Specific Aims pages should be uploaded separately.

- I. **Abstract:** A structured abstract of your proposal suitable for publication is required. Your abstract must include the objective(s), specific aims, design, setting, participants, main outcome measures, analysis plan, hypotheses, and significance of the work, as applicable. All content included in the abstract should be identifiable in other portions of the proposal application. In other words, do not include additional or supplementary information in the abstract. The abstract is a standalone proposal component that should succinctly synthesize the main features of the proposal. Using the structured abstract format above (objective(s), specific aims, design, participants, setting, primary, secondary, and exploratory outcomes and measures, analysis plan, and significance of the work), the abstract should provide a concise statement of the research objective(s) and design indicating clearly the work to be undertaken during the period for which support is requested. Do not include references or citations in abstract.

Limit: One page, 400 words.

- II. **Specific Aims Page** with research question(s) identified and hypotheses as applicable: State the research question or hypotheses to be tested. Describe the broad, long-term objectives and what the proposed project will accomplish, including opportunities for future funding. Please follow National Institute of Health (NIH) guidelines for page formatting (11- or 12-point font, 0.5-inch margins, Times New Roman or Arial).

Limit: One page. Specific Aims page guidance can be found here:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6133727/>

Part B: Research Plan

Your LOI research plan should be a single-spaced word document using 11- or 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font and 0.5" margins. The document may not be more than 3 pages long and should follow the format below. Tables and figures should be embedded as appropriate and are included in the 3-page limit. Per NIH guidelines, there is no formatting requirement for tables/figures beyond legibility. **Appendixes** are only allowed for blank data collection forms, investigator brochure, or informed consent documents. Appendixes with items that should be

included in the body of the proposal (i.e., graphs, diagrams, or text-heavy materials) are not allowed and may result in the application being withdrawn from review as non-compliant.

- I. **Background & Significance:** Provide an explanation of the importance and relevance of the proposed project. Briefly summarize the existing literature and critically evaluate it as it pertains to the proposed project. Identify any knowledge gaps, particularly in regard to massage therapy, that the proposed project is intended to fill. The proposal's alignment with the [Massage Therapy Research Agenda](#) can be included here but should be well developed potentially throughout the whole of the proposal.
- II. **Methods and Procedures:** A detailed methods and procedures study protocol should include all applicable components such as the research design and rationale, the population (inclusion/exclusion criteria) and recruitment description with timeline, power analysis, outcomes and measures, intervention procedures, and data analysis plan.
Discuss any potential difficulties or limitations of the proposed procedures as well as back-up plans should issues arise. Include a description of the research population, any inclusion and exclusion criteria, how subjects will be recruited, consent procedures, potential risks and benefits to subjects, and possible bias/conflict of interest and how it will be avoided.
- III. **Project Timeline, Dissemination, and Future Plans:** Provide a proposed sequence or timetable for completion of the project. Include realistic estimates for training personnel, ordering equipment/supplies, recruiting subjects, data collection and analysis, and writing the final report and dissemination (conference presentations and publication). Include intended venues for dissemination.
- IV. **References:** Use a numbered format, NOT alphabetical (preferred AMA, Vancouver, etc.). References should be listed in a separate, single-spaced document and uploaded to the "References" section of the application (not part of the 3-page limit).

Part C: Financial Data - Section 1: Budget Summary

Present the total cost for each category. List other granting sources from which funds have been sought with the amount and status of request. Per NIH guidelines, the budget summary must indicate a timeline by year of how funds will be used. The budget summary should be presented in a table (Excel or similar and may be saved as a PDF).

- I. Personnel Costs
- II. Professional/technical services contracted
- III. Incentives
- IV. Purchase, rental, or equipment maintenance

- V. Materials, supplies, and incidentals
- VI. Transportation and subsistence (to conduct the research)
- VII. Dissemination travel or publication fees
- VIII. Computing and statistical costs
- IX. Other (itemized in the Budget Justification)
- X. Less funds from other sources
- XI. Total Grant Requested

Funds may not be used for ineligible expenses including but not limited to: rent and utilities; expenses of printing/binding student thesis; consultation fees; proofreading; copyright payments; the production of camera-ready art unless previously specified in Principal Investigator's application; purchase of a typewriter or a computer; costs incurred prior to the granting of the Funds; staff/personal childcare; contingency allowances; and entertainment.

The costs to disseminate research results (professional conference attendance, document production, etc.) may not exceed \$5,000 per budget year, unless otherwise specifically set forth in the approved budget.

Part D: Financial Data - Section 2: Budget Justification

Provide a narrative rationale for each item in the budget. Maximum 4 pages.

Give realistic and exact estimates of cost and narrative rationale for each line item. Provide rationale for any equipment purchased or leased. Indicate the nature of any travel and describe its relevance to the completion of the research project or dissemination of the results. Provide the purpose and destination of each trip and the numbers of individuals for whom the funds are requested.

Indicate the names and tasks of each paid researcher, collaborator, massage therapist, and administrative support staff, the percentage of time spent on each task (FTE), and the amount requested for salary coverage. Percentage of time allotted to each task is based on a 40-hour work week. For example, if a task requires 2 hours of time per week, 2 divided by 40 is equal to 5%. Thus, the amount requested should equal 5% of the individual's salary.

Eligible expenses include: salaries, wages, and/or additional benefits for hourly stipend for those hired to participate in the research project; allowances for the Principal Investigator and collaborators to cover release time from other activities; a stipend for data collection; costs involved in the dissemination of the research; travel and subsistence (using [federal per diem rates](#)). Maintenance costs of equipment used in the course of the project, relevant supplies, and special equipment specific to the research proposal may be considered.

Ineligible expenses include: overhead/indirect costs, rent, utilities purchase of standard equipment such as a computer; massage table; proof reading; copyright payments; photography services; that are not essential to conduct the research unless previously specified in the Grant Proposal; cost incurred prior to the granting of the Grant; contingency allowance(s).

Part E: Key Personnel

- I. **Principal Investigator or Co-Investigators:** Please attach a NIH biosketch for all PIs and Co-PIs. Include a personal statement that highlights research contribution or activities, overall research program, and capacity to successfully implement, complete and disseminate the proposed research. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/forms-directory/biosketch>
- II. **Contractors:** Please provide a complete resume, or C.V. or biosketch for each collaborator. If you have more than one Collaborator, please attach the resumes as one file. Include a personal statement that highlights research contribution or activities, overall research program, and capacity to successfully implement, complete and disseminate the proposed research. The CV should include a list of past or current research activities, including the title, role on the project, and source of funding.
- III. **Massage Therapists (Interventionalists):** Please provide a complete resume or CV (3 pages limit per person) for each Massage Therapist. If you have more than one Massage Therapist, please attach the resumes of the three most senior contributors to the design and execution of the study as a single file.

Part F: Facilities and Resources

- I. **Facilities:** Describe research and participant capacity of each partnering facility. Per the NIH, the information about facilities and other resources is used to assess the capability of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. Identify the facilities to be used (Laboratory, Animal, Computer, Office, Clinical, and Other). If appropriate, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity, and extent of availability to the project. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable to the proposed work. Provide any information describing the Other Resources available to the project (e.g., machine shop, electronic shop) and the extent to which they would be available to the project.
- II. **Letters of Support:** Include letters of support from partnering organizations demonstrating the agreement to the study's access to the target population and/or capacity to support the study's needs.

NOTES:

- No equipment shall be purchased which was not approved in the initial Grant proposal.
- Travel and subsistence requests must be based on local rates of accommodation.

