



RESEARCH AWARD GUIDELINES

The Massage Therapy Foundation (MTF) supports scientific research projects designed to advance the knowledge and practice of massage therapy.

Please read the Massage Therapy Foundation's [Research Agenda](#) prior to application.

Important Dates

Research Award pre-proposal (LOI) submission deadline: March 1 at 11:59pm CST.

LOI Decision Notification: No later than May 1

Invited full application deadline: August 1 at 11:59pm CST.

OBJECTIVES

Awards are granted to support high quality, independent research which contributes significantly and directly to the knowledge of massage therapy and/or its application. Basic, applied, and translational research studies which investigate massage therapy as a wellness, medical, or health/mental health treatment and/or prevention intervention are supported.

FUNDING

Awarded funds must be used for research expenses such as salary support (commensurate with current stipends or salaries), participant costs, equipment and supplies, dissemination expenses; travel and subsistence towards attending the American Massage Therapy Association convention to present project results (required). Any unspent funds must be returned to the Massage Therapy Foundation at the end of the grant period.

Research Award: Larger research grants supporting up to \$300,000 for up to 3 years. Pre-proposals are required (see dates below). Pre-proposals will go through a primary review process. Selected authors will receive an invite to submit a full proposal. Required elements for pre-proposals and full proposals are detailed below.

ELIGIBILITY

Requirements:

- Applicants must demonstrate experience in the relevant field of research;
- The applicant must have access to the necessary resources (including the proposed patient population), facilities, and other resources. Letters of institutional support are required.
- Applicants outside the US are eligible to apply; however, payment of award funds must be accepted by the institution in US dollars.
- Applicants who are the Principal Investigator on a currently-funded MTF project are **not** eligible to apply.
- **Applicants must be presently associated with or have secured the cooperation of university, independent research organization, health center, or other institution (the “Sponsoring Organization”). A Sponsoring Organization must have sufficient facilities as well as human and informational and Institutional Review Board (IRB) resources available to support the proposed research project and to perform the proposed work and expected outcomes (Expected Outcomes).**
- Newer investigators without prior research experience must document support from an experienced investigator willing to act as a collaborator. Collaborators should be actively involved in the development and execution of the proposed research project and should be identified as such in the staffing plan.

Research Grants are not awarded to individuals. Research Grants will not be awarded to Sponsoring Organizations which employ or otherwise have an ownership or contractual relationship with officers or trustees of the Massage Therapy Foundation, members of the Research Proposal Review Committee (“Review Committee”) or any spouses, domestic partners, children, descendant, spouses of descendants or any other individual related to any officers or trustees of the Massage Therapy Foundation or to members of the Review Committee.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Principal Investigators wishing to apply for a Research Grant must complete the application online. The application can be found here: www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/grantportal

HUMAN SUBJECT/ANIMAL PROTECTION

If using human or animal subjects, the applicant will be responsible for obtaining IRB or Institutional Animal Care and use Committee (IACUC) approval. The IRB or IACUC letter of approval for the specified project must be on file with the MTF office before funds can be disbursed. International recipients may not be familiar with or have requirements comparable to the United States IRB process, in which case MTF would require applicants to follow and document the [declaration of Helsinki](#).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Based on cost and schedule of program. Typically, payment is distributed over a 1-3 year period.

AWARD CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The Research Proposal Review Committee will evaluate and score all submitted pre-applications and proposals. Factors that will be taken into consideration include the applicant's experience, availability of resources necessary to complete the study, feasibility and scientific merit of the research plan, environment, appropriateness of the proposed research to the mission of the Massage Therapy Foundation, and the anticipated relationship between the funds provided and expected outcomes.

Only materials submitted within the application will be used in the evaluation of applications. The Research Proposal Review Committee will submit funding recommendation (based on the Committee's scores) to the MTF Executive Committee, which will then forward their recommendations to the AMTA board of directors for final funding decisions. Applicants will be notified of the Executive Committee's decision and that they are being submitted to AMTA. This final step in process may take an additional 90-120 days.

GRANT ACCEPTANCE TERMS

The research grant funds must be used consistent with the budget, location, personnel, and the purpose(s) as described in the applicant's MTF Research Grant application. Any significant variance (more than 10% of total award) in the use of the grant funds or change will require the approval of the MTF Research Grant Review Proposal Committee Chair, MTF President, and potentially representatives from AMTA. The applicant will notify MTF of any circumstances which may preclude the applicant from completing the research project consistent with the methodology set forth in the Grant Application, or by the anticipated completion date. Any significant change without prior approval can result in immediate termination of all funding.

Applicants must submit documentation showing that all reasonable measures will be taken to assure the safety and health of the participant(s) in the research endeavor according to guidelines set by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Principal Investigators and Sponsoring Organizations are required to adhere to the principles set forth in all applicable privacy laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Personal information obtained from participants in the research endeavor shall be used only for the purpose for which it was collected and can be disseminated only with prior consent of the individuals to whom it relates. The approval of the Massage Therapy Foundation on ethical and health acceptability of the proposal will be based on compliance with these principles.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Reporting:

Outcomes evaluation is an essential component of this award. All proposals must identify the goals and appropriate outcomes measures of the research. The outcomes should align with the goals and objectives and statistical analysis plan stated in the applicant's proposal for this award. The reporting schedule should be submitted as follows:

- Register the project at clinicaltrials.gov within thirty days after the Agreement is fully executed and file periodic progress reports thereafter
- Within thirty (30) days of the agreement execution, a one (1) minute video describing the project
- Quarterly, a progress report set by agreement
- Within two (2) months following the completion of the project, a final report with financial report, and a 300 words blog to be submitted to the Massage Therapy Foundation.

Interview:

The grant recipient may be asked to present the findings of the research project via a recorded podcast interview done with MTF staff and/or leadership.

Publication Requirements:

Within six (6) months following the completion of the research project, the grant recipient will be expected to submit a manuscript or a notification of publication describing the funded research in a peer reviewed journal. Recipients are encouraged to consider submission to the International Journal of Massage Therapy and Bodywork – *IJMTB* -. A minimum of one publication of results must be completed.

Abstract Submission/Presentation:

The grant recipient will submit an abstract [online](#) for review by the first abstract deadline immediately following completion of research project. The recipient is responsible for monitoring the MTF website for the abstract deadline. The recipient must be listed as the abstract's author. If selected, the recipient will attend and present the findings of the research project at the next American Massage Therapy Association National Convention and/or the International Massage Therapy Conference which follows the completion of the research project.

Reviewing commitment:

At the end of the granting period, the Primary Investigator will be invited to serve as a reviewer on the Research Granting committee for a minimum of one year.

REQUIRED CONTENT

Pre-proposal (LOI):

- Proposal information: Principal Investigator's name, institution, proposal title (in portal)
- Letter of intent (2 pages limit); include research question, specific aims and objectives, hypothesis, methods and analysis plan, and brief recruitment plan.
- Facilities and resources (1 page limit)
- Estimated budget summary (1 page limit)

Full Application:

- Application Information and project title (must match pre-application if submitted)
- Application Contacts
- Researchers, Collaborators and Key Personnel
- Conflicts of Interest
- Application files
- Abstract
- Research Plan (12 page limit)
- Facilities and resources
- Budget summary
- Budget justification