

I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Program Announcement for the Department of Defense

Defense Health Program

Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs

Multiple Sclerosis Research Program

Early Investigator Research Award

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HT9425-23-MSRP-EIRA

**Assistance Listing Number: 12.420 Military Medical
Research and Development**

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW DATES AND TIMES

- **Pre-Application Submission Deadline:** 5:00 p.m. Eastern time (ET), July 24, 2023
- **Application Submission Deadline:** 11:59 p.m. ET, October 6, 2023
- **Confidential Letters of Recommendation Submission Deadline:** 5:00 p.m. ET, October 12, 2023
- **End of Application Verification Period:** 5:00 p.m. ET, October 12, 2023
- **Peer Review:** December 2023
- **Programmatic Review:** February 2024

This program announcement must be read in conjunction with the General Application Instructions, version 802. The General Application Instructions document is available for downloading from the Grants.gov funding opportunity announcement by selecting the “Package” tab, clicking “Preview,” and then selecting “Download Instructions.”

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II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

II.A. Program Description

Applications to the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Multiple Sclerosis Research Program (MSRP) are being solicited by the U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA) using delegated authority provided by United States Code, Title 10, Section 4001 (10 USC 4001). The execution management agent for this program announcement is the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command (USAMRDC). The MSRP was initiated in 2009 to provide support for *pioneering concepts and high-impact research* that are relevant to the prevention, etiology, pathogenesis, assessment, and treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS) to ultimately lessen its personal and societal impact. Appropriations for the MSRP from FY09 through FY22 totaled \$113.1 million (M). The FY23 appropriation is \$20.0M.

The proposed research must be relevant to active-duty Service Members, Veterans, military beneficiaries, and/or the American public.

II.A.1. FY23 MSRP Early Investigator Research Award Focus Areas

All applications submitted to the FY23 MSRP Early Investigator Research Award (EIRA) program announcement must address one or more of the following Focus Areas:

- **Central Nervous System Repair, Protection, and Regenerative Potential in MS**

Supports innovative mechanistic studies and translational approaches to promote axonal protection, regeneration, or remyelination in MS and/or relevant experimental models of demyelination. Examples of acceptable studies include, but are not limited to:

- Obstacles to repair and approaches to overcome and achieve remyelination. Factors to be considered include extrinsic or intrinsic factors (e.g., mechanical, sex, aging, inhibitory signaling), trophic and inhibitory factors, and lifestyle factors
- Cell-cell interactions within the central nervous system
- Epigenetic regulation of cells within the central nervous system
- Drugs, biologics, and cell-based therapies that target the central nervous system
- Identification of factors that promote protection and repair
- Innate immune-mediated mechanisms within the central nervous system
- Development of imaging and non-imaging outcome measures of repair
- Development of new models that reflect disease progression

Note: Studies addressing developmental myelination, dysmyelination, basic mechanisms of demyelination, or peripheral immunomodulatory therapeutic strategies that limit tissue injury secondarily **will not** be considered for funding.

- **Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS**

Supports studies to identify and/or validate correlates of disease activity and progression using **pre-existing** specimens and/or data acquired from well-characterized, adequately controlled, and sufficiently powered patient cohorts.

- Examples of acceptable cohorts for study include controlled clinical trials, observational studies, and registries.
- Analyses may utilize existing clinical data and outcome measures, specimens, and/or imaging data.
- Correlates include clinical outcome measures, patient self-reported measures, and imaging and non-imaging biomarkers.
- Careful consideration should be given to potential confounders in the study population (e.g., disease-modifying therapies).

Inclusion of information regarding the quality of the specimens, replication plan, assay validation, or context of use will be given special consideration.

Note: The study must leverage **pre-existing** specimens and/or data that are available at the time of application submission; ongoing specimens and/or data collection from participants in the pre-existing cohort is allowed. However, the recruitment of new subjects is not permitted.

- **Biology and Measurement of MS Symptoms**

Supports studies of MS symptoms, which may include pain, fatigue, depression, anxiety, loss of bladder control, impaired mobility, and cognitive, motor, visual, or sexual dysfunction, etc. Examples of acceptable studies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Mechanisms underlying symptoms of MS.
- Development of measurements for future interventional studies to alleviate symptoms.
- Development and/or validation of outcome measures and tools for symptoms including wearables and/or remote data capture.
- Observational studies on the prevalence or significance of symptoms including the contribution of comorbidities, lifestyle behaviors, and health disparities. Careful consideration should be given to potential confounders in the study population (e.g., disease-modifying therapies), controls, and/or accurate measures of symptoms.

Note: Studies of disease-modifying therapies that secondarily impact MS symptoms *will not be* considered for funding under this Focus Area.

- **Factors Contributing to or Associated with MS Etiology, Prodrome, Onset, and Disease Course**

Supports studies to identify the role of various factors in MS etiology, prodrome, onset, activity, disease worsening, and progression. Examples of factors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Infections (such as Epstein-Barr Virus and SARS-CoV-2) and/or vaccines
- Genetics and/or epigenetics
- Environment
- Demographics (including, but not limited to, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, age)
- Comorbidities
- Health behaviors
- Socioeconomics and access to care

II.A.2. Award History

The MSRP EIRA mechanism was first offered in FY21. Since then, 20 EIRA applications have been received, and 9 have been recommended for funding. The overall funding rate is 45%.

II.B. Award Information

The EIRA supports MS-focused research opportunities for individuals in the early stages of their careers, under the guidance of one or more designated Mentors. This opportunity allows for early-stage investigators to develop a research project, investigate a problem or question in MS research, and further their intellectual development as an MS researcher of the future. *All application components for the EIRA are expected to be written by the Principal Investigator (PI), with appropriate direction from the Mentor(s).*

Key features of the award mechanism are as follows:

- **Principal Investigator:** The postdoctoral investigator is considered the PI of the application and must exhibit strong potential for, and commitment to, pursuing a career as an investigator at the forefront of MS research; however, the PI is not required to have previous MS research experience.
- **Mentor(s):** Applications must include at least one Mentor, appropriate to the proposed research project, who has experience in MS research and mentoring as demonstrated by a record of active funding, recent publications, and successful mentorship. The primary

Mentor can be a junior faculty member, in which case the PI is encouraged to include a secondary Mentor with a more robust track record in MS research and mentorship. The selected Mentor(s) should also demonstrate a clear commitment to the development of the PI toward independence as an MS researcher.

- **Researcher Development Plan:** The PI must outline an individualized, MS-focused Researcher Development Plan, which should include a clearly articulated strategy for acquiring the necessary skills, competence, and expertise that will enable the PI to successfully complete the proposed research project and foster the PI's development as an independent MS researcher. An environment appropriate to the proposed mentoring and research project must be clearly described, although any deficiencies of resources and/or mentorship at the PI's institution can be mitigated through collaboration(s) with other institutions. If the PI will be utilizing resources at another institution to successfully complete the proposed project, then the PI is strongly encouraged to designate a secondary Mentor at the collaborating institution.
- **Research Project:** The proposed research project should address the critical needs of the MS community as outlined in the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#) above. The scientific rationale and experimental methodology should demonstrate in-depth analysis of the research problem presented. The feasibility of the research design and methods should be well-defined, and a clear plan should be articulated as to how the proposed goals of the project can be achieved. Describe the anticipated outcomes (short-term gains) from the proposed research and how they will be used as a foundation for future research projects. Explain the anticipated long-term gains from the proposed research project, including how the new understanding may ultimately contribute to the goal of advancing MS research and/or patient care.
- For the “**Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS**” Focus Area, applications *must* demonstrate access to the relevant specimens and/or data of the proposed cohort. Refer to [Attachment 10: Letter\(s\) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data](#), for more details.
- *For projects involving animal models of MS:* Applicants should be prudent in the choice of animal model(s) for their proposed research project. Applicants must justify the relevance of their proposed animal model(s) to the specific aspect of human MS to be studied.

The types of awards made under the program announcement will be assistance agreements. An assistance agreement is appropriate when the federal government transfers a “thing of value” to a “state, local government,” or “other recipient” to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law of the United States instead of acquiring property or service for the direct benefit and use of the U.S. government. An assistance agreement can take the form of a grant or cooperative agreement. The level of involvement on the part of the Department of Defense (DOD) during project performance is the key factor in determining whether to award a grant or cooperative agreement. If “no substantial involvement” on the part of the funding agency is anticipated, a grant award will be made (31 USC 6304). Conversely, if substantial involvement on the part of the funding agency is anticipated, a cooperative agreement will be made (31 USC 6305), and the award will identify the specific substantial involvement. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration, participation, or

intervention in the research to be performed under the award. The award type, along with the start date, will be determined during the negotiation process.

The anticipated total costs budgeted for the entire period of performance for an FY23 MSRP EIRA should not exceed **\$320,000**. Refer to [Section II.D.5, Funding Restrictions](#), for detailed funding information.

Awards will be made no later than September 30, 2024. For additional information refer to [Section II.F.1, Federal Award Notices](#).

The CDMRP expects to allot approximately \$1.9M to fund approximately six EIRA applications. Funding of applications received is contingent upon the availability of federal funds for this program as well as the number of applications received, the quality and merit of the applications as evaluated by scientific and programmatic review, and the requirements of the government. Funds to be obligated on any award resulting from this funding opportunity will be available for use for a limited time period based on the fiscal year of the funds. It is anticipated that awards made from this FY23 funding opportunity will be funded with FY23 funds, which will expire for use on September 30, 2029.

Research Involving Human Data, Human Anatomical Substances, Human Subjects, or Human Cadavers: All DOD-funded research involving new and ongoing research with human data, human anatomical substances, human subjects, or human cadavers must be reviewed and approved by the USAMRDC Office of Human and Animal Research Oversight (OHARO), Office of Human Research Oversight (OHRO), prior to research implementation. This administrative review requirement is in addition to the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee (EC) review. Local IRB/EC approval at the time of application submission is **not** required; however, local IRB/EC approval is necessary prior to OHRO review. Allow up to 3 months to complete the OHRO regulatory review and approval process following submission of **all required and complete** documents to the OHRO. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 1, and the OHARO web page https://mrhc.health.mil/index.cfm/collaborate/research_protections/hrpo for additional information.

As of January 20, 2020, U.S. institutions engaged in non-exempt cooperative research **must** rely on a single IRB to review and approve the portion of the research conducted at domestic sites in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46.114(b) (45 CFR 46.114[b]). If the proposed, non-exempt research involves more than one U.S.-based institution, a written plan for single IRB review arrangements must be provided at the time of application submission or award negotiation. The lead institution responsible for developing the master protocol and master consent form should be identified and should be the single point of contact for regulatory submissions and requirements.

Clinical trials are not allowed under this funding opportunity. A clinical trial is defined as a research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include a placebo or another control) to evaluate the effects of the interventions on biomedical or behavioral health-related outcomes.

Studies that do not seek to measure safety, effectiveness, and/or efficacy outcome(s) of an intervention are not considered clinical trials.

Clinical research encompasses research with patient samples, data, and interaction with patients that may or may not be considered a clinical trial. **For the purposes of this funding opportunity, research that meets the definition of a clinical trial is distinct from clinical research.** Clinical research is observational in nature and includes: (1) Research that does not seek to evaluate the effects of interventions. Research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as data, tissues, specimens, and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator (or colleague) directly interacts with human subjects, but does not seek to assess the effects of an intervention, qualifies as clinical research. Patient-oriented research may include but is not limited to: (a) mechanisms of human disease, (b) diagnostic or detection studies (e.g., biomarker or imaging), (c) health disparity studies, and (d) development of new technologies.

(2) Epidemiologic and behavioral studies that do not seek to study the safety, effectiveness, and/or efficacy outcomes of an intervention. (3) Outcomes research and health services research that do not fit under the definition of clinical trial. Excluded from the definition of clinical research are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues that cannot be linked to a living individual.

Note: Studies that meet the requirements for exemption under [§46.104\(d\)\(4\) of the Common Rule](#) are not considered clinical research as defined by CDMRP. Exemption category 4 refers to secondary research for which consent is not required. Applicants wishing to apply for funding for a clinical trial should utilize the FY23 MSRP Clinical Trial Award mechanism (**Funding Opportunity Number HT9425-23-MSRP-CTA**).

Guidelines for Animal Research: All projects should adhere to a core set of standards for rigorous study design and reporting to maximize the reproducibility and translational potential of preclinical research. The standards are described in SC Landis et al., 2012, A call for transparent reporting to optimize the predictive value of preclinical research, *Nature* 490:187-191 (www.nature.com/nature/journal/v490/n7419/full/nature11556.html). While these standards are written for preclinical studies, the basic principles of randomization, blinding, sample-size estimation, and data handling derive from well-established best practices in clinical studies. Projects that include research on animal models are required to submit Attachment 9, Animal Research Plan, as part of the application package to describe how these standards will be addressed. Applicants should consult the ARRIVE guidelines 2.0 (Animal Research: Reporting *In Vivo* Experiments) to ensure relevant aspects of rigorous animal research are adequately planned for and, ultimately, reported. The ARRIVE guidelines 2.0 can be found at <https://arriveguidelines.org/arrive-guidelines>.

All research funded by the FY23 MSRP EIRA involving new and ongoing research with animals must be reviewed and approved by the USAMRDC OHARO Animal Care and Use Review Office (ACURO), in addition to the local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) of record. IACUC approval at the time of submission is *not* required. **Allow at least 3 to 4 months for ACURO regulatory review and approval processes for animal studies.** Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 1, for additional information.

II.C. Eligibility Information

II.C.1. Eligible Applicants

II.C.1.a. Organization: All organizations, including foreign organizations, foreign public entities, and international organizations, are eligible to apply.

Government Agencies Within the United States: Local, state, and federal government agencies are eligible to the extent that applications do not overlap with their fully funded internal programs. Such agencies are required to explain how their applications do not overlap with their internal programs.

As applications for this program announcement may be submitted by extramural and intramural organizations, these terms are defined below.

Extramural Organization: An eligible non-DOD organization. Examples of extramural organizations include academic institutions, biotechnology companies, foundations, federal government organizations other than the DOD, and research institutes.

Intramural DOD Organization: A DOD laboratory, DOD military treatment facility, and/or DOD activity embedded within a civilian medical center. ***Intramural Submission:*** An application submitted by a DOD organization for an intramural investigator working within a DOD laboratory or military treatment facility or in a DOD activity embedded within a civilian medical center.

The USAMRAA makes awards to eligible organizations, not to individuals.

II.C.1.b. Principal Investigator

The PI must:

- Possess a doctoral degree (or equivalent) from an accredited organization, and
- Have 4 years or less of postdoctoral research experience at the time of application submission (excluding clinical residency, clinical fellowship training, or extended medical leave); and
- **Commit at least 50% of the effort toward the proposed MS research project.**
- **Can only receive one EIRA.**

Only postdoctoral fellows are eligible for this award. Faculty members and all other non-postdoctoral positions are not eligible to apply.

An eligible PI, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or citizenship status, must be employed by or affiliated with an eligible organization.

The CDMRP strongly encourages all PIs to participate in a digital identifier initiative through Open Researcher and Contributor ID, Inc. (ORCID). Registration for a unique ORCID identifier can be done online at <https://orcid.org/>.

II.C.2. Cost Sharing

Cost sharing/matching is not an eligibility requirement.

II.C.3. Other

Organizations must be able to access **.gov** and **.mil** websites in order to fulfill the financial and technical deliverable requirements of the award and submit invoices for payment.

For general information on required qualifications for award recipients, refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 3.

Refer to [Section II.H.2, Administrative Actions](#), for a list of administrative actions that may be taken if a pre-application or application does not meet the administrative, eligibility, or ethical requirements defined in this program announcement.

II.D. Application and Submission Information

Submission of applications that are essentially identical or propose essentially the same research project to different funding opportunities within the same program and fiscal year is prohibited and will result in administrative withdrawal of the duplicative application(s).

Inclusion of classified research data within the application and/or proposes research of which the anticipated outcomes may be classified or deemed sensitive to national security concerns may result in application withdrawal. Refer to the General Application Instructions Appendix 2, Section E.

II.D.1. eBRAP and Grants.gov

The electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal (eBRAP) (<https://ebrap.org>) is a secure web-based system that allows PIs to submit their pre-applications, view and verify extramural full applications submitted to Grants.gov (<https://grants.gov>), receive communications from the CDMRP, and submit documentation during award negotiations and throughout the period of performance. eBRAP also allows intramural organizations to submit full applications following pre-application submission.

Grants.gov is a federal system required to be utilized by agencies to receive and process extramural grant applications. Full applications may only be submitted to Grants.gov after submission of a pre-application through eBRAP.

Contact information for the eBRAP Help Desk and the Grants.gov Contact Center can be found in [Section II.G, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts](#).

Extramural Submission:

- Pre-application content and forms must be accessed and submitted at eBRAP.org.
- Full application packages must be accessed and submitted at Grants.gov.

Intramural DOD Submission:

- Pre-application content and forms must be accessed and submitted at eBRAP.org.
- Full application packages must be accessed and submitted at eBRAP.org.

Note: Applications from an intramural DOD organization or from an extramural federal government organization may be submitted to Grants.gov through a research foundation.

II.D.2. Content and Form of the Application Submission

Submission is a two-step process requiring both ***pre-application*** (eBRAP.org) and ***full application*** (eBRAP.org or Grants.gov) as indicated below. The submission process should be started early to avoid missing deadlines. There are no grace periods. Full application submission guidelines differ for extramural (Grants.gov) and intramural (eBRAP.org) organizations (refer to [Table 1, Full Application Guidelines](#)).

The application title, eBRAP log number, and all information for the PI, Business Official(s), performing organization, and contracting organization must be consistent throughout the entire pre-application and full application submission process. Inconsistencies may delay application processing and limit or negate the ability to view, modify, and verify the application in eBRAP. If any changes need to be made, the applicant should contact the eBRAP Help Desk at help@eBRAP.org or 301-682-5507 prior to the application submission deadline.

II.D.2.a. Step 1: Pre-Application Submission Content

During the pre-application process, eBRAP assigns each submission a unique log number. This unique eBRAP log number is required during the full application submission process.

To begin the pre-application process, first select whether the submitting organization is extramural or intramural, then confirm your selection or cancel. **Incorrect selection of extramural or intramural submission type will delay processing.**

If an error has been made in the selection of extramural versus intramural and the pre-application submission deadline has passed, the PI or Business Official must contact the eBRAP Help Desk at help@eBRAP.org or 301-682-5507 to request a change in designation.

All pre-application components must be submitted by the PI through eBRAP (<https://eBRAP.org/>).

The applicant organization and associated PI and Mentors(s) identified in the pre-application should be the same as those intended for the subsequent application submission. If any changes

are necessary after submission of the pre-application, the applicant must contact the eBRAP Help Desk at help@eBRAP.org or 301-682-5507.

PIs with an ORCID identifier should enter that information in the appropriate field in the “My Profile” tab in the “Account Information” section of eBRAP.

The pre-application consists of the following components, which are organized in eBRAP by separate tabs (refer to the General Application Instructions, Section II.B, for additional information on pre-application submission):

- **Tab 1 – Application Information**

Submission of application information includes assignment of primary and secondary research classification codes, which may be found at <https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review and confirm the codes prior to making their selection.

- **Tab 2 – Application Contacts**

Enter contact information for the PI. Enter the organization’s Business Official responsible for sponsored program administration (the “person to be contacted on matters involving this application” in Block 5 of the Grants.gov SF424 Research & Related Form). The Business Official must be either selected from the eBRAP list or invited in order for the pre-application to be submitted.

Select the performing organization (site at which the PI will perform the proposed work) and the contracting organization (organization submitting on behalf of the PI, which corresponds to Block 5 on the Grants.gov SF424 Research & Related Form), and click on “Add Organizations to this Pre-application.” The organization(s) must be either selected from the eBRAP drop-down list or invited in order for the pre-application to be submitted.

It is recommended that applicants identify an Alternate Submitter in the event that assistance with pre-application submission is needed.

- **Tab 3 – Collaborators and Key Personnel**

Enter the name, organization, and role of all collaborators and key personnel associated with the application.

[FY23 MSRP Programmatic Panel members](#) should not be involved in any pre-application or application. For questions related to panel members and pre-applications or applications, refer to [Section II.H.2.c, Withdrawal](#), or contact the eBRAP Help Desk at help@eBRAP.org or 301-682-5507.

- **Tab 4 – Conflicts of Interest**

List all individuals other than collaborators and key personnel who may have a conflict of interest in the review of the application (including those with whom the PI has a personal or professional relationship).

- **Tab 5 – Pre-Application Files**

Letter of Intent (LOI) (one-page limit): Provide a brief description of the research to be conducted. LOIs are used for program planning purposes only (e.g., reviewer recruitment) and will not be reviewed during either the peer or programmatic review sessions. An invitation to submit is *not* required.

- **List of Individuals Providing Confidential Letters of Recommendation:** Enter contact information for three individuals who will provide letters of recommendation. The three letters of recommendation must include one from the primary Mentor and two from the secondary Mentor(s) (if applicable) or independent researchers who have had interaction with the PI. Each individual will receive an email generated from eBRAP containing specific instructions on how to upload their letter.

- **Tab 6 – Submit Pre-Application**

This tab must be completed for the pre-application to be accepted and processed.

II.D.2.b. Step 2: Full Application Submission Content

The CDMRP cannot make allowances/exceptions to its policies for submission problems encountered by the applicant organization using system-to-system interfaces with Grants.gov.

Each application submission must include the completed full application package for this program announcement. The full application package is submitted by the Authorized Organizational Representative through Grants.gov (<https://grants.gov/>) for extramural organizations or through eBRAP (<https://ebrap.org/>) for intramural organizations. See Table 1 below for more specific guidelines.

II.D.2.b.i. Full Application Guidelines

Extramural organizations must submit full applications through Grants.gov. Applicants must create a Grants.gov Workspace for submission, which allows the application components to be completed online and routed through the applicant organization for review prior to submission. Applicants may choose to download and save individual PDF forms rather than filling out webforms in Workspace. A compatible version of Adobe Reader **must** be used to view, complete, and submit an application package consisting of PDF forms. If more than one person is entering text into an application package, the *same version* of Adobe Reader software should be used by each person. Check the version number of the Adobe software on each user's computer to make sure the versions match. Using different versions of Adobe Reader may cause submission and/or save errors – even if each version is individually compatible with Grants.gov. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III, and the “Apply For Grants” page of

Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>) for further information about the Grants.gov Workspace submission process. Submissions of extramural applications through eBRAP may be withdrawn.

Do not password protect any files of the application package, including the Project Narrative.

Table 1. Full Application Submission Guidelines

Extramural Submissions	Intramural DOD Submissions
Application Package Location	
<p>Download application package components for HT9425-23-MSRP-EIRA from Grants.gov (https://grants.gov) and create a Grants.gov Workspace. Workspace allows online completion of the application components and routing of the application package through the applicant organization for review prior to submission.</p>	<p>Download application package components for HT9425-23-MSRP-EIRA from eBRAP (https://ebrap.org).</p>
Full Application Package Components	
<p>SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance Form: Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.1, for detailed information.</p>	<p>Tab 1 – Summary: Provide a summary of the application information.</p> <p>Tab 2 – Application Contacts: This tab will be pre-populated by eBRAP; add Authorized Organizational Representative.</p>
<p>Descriptions of each required file can be found under Full Application Submission Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachments • Research & Related Personal Data • Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) • Research & Related Budget • Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form • Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form • Additional Application Components 	<p>Tab 3 – Full Application Files: Upload files under each Application Component in eBRAP. Descriptions of each required file can be found under Full Application Submission Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachments • Key Personnel • Budget • Performance Sites • Other <p>Tab 4 – Application and Budget Data: Review and edit proposed project start date, proposed end date, and budget data pre-populated from the Budget Form.</p>
Application Package Submission	
<p>Create a Grants.gov Workspace. Add participants (investigators and Business Officials) to Workspace, complete all required forms, and check for errors before submission.</p>	<p>Submit package components to eBRAP (https://ebrap.org).</p> <p>Tab 5 – Submit/Request Approval Full Application: After all components are uploaded and prior to the full application submission</p>

Extramural Submissions	Intramural DOD Submissions
<p>Submit a Grants.gov Workspace Package. An application may be submitted through Workspace by clicking the “Sign and Submit” button on the “Manage Workspace” page, under the “Forms” tab. Grants.gov recommends submission of the application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to allow time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> If either the Project Narrative or the budget fails eBRAP validation or needs to be modified, an updated Grants.gov application package must be submitted via Grants.gov as a “Changed/Corrected Application” with the previous Grants.gov Tracking ID <i>prior to</i> the application submission deadline. <i>Do not password protect any files of the application package, including the Project Narrative.</i></p>	<p>deadline, enter your password in the space provided next to “Enter Your Password Here” and press the “Submit Full Application” button. eBRAP will notify your Resource Manager/ Comptroller/Task Area Manager or equivalent Business Official by email. <i>Do not password protect any files of the application package, including the Project Narrative.</i></p>
<u>Application Verification Period</u>	
<p>The full application package submitted to Grants.gov may be viewed and modified in eBRAP until the end of the application verification period. During the application verification period, the full application package may be modified <i>with the exception of the Project Narrative and Research & Related Budget Form.</i></p>	<p>After eBRAP has processed the full application, the organizational Resource Manager/Comptroller/ Task Area Manager or equivalent Business Official and PI will receive email notification of this status and will be able to view and modify application components in eBRAP. During the application verification period, the full application package may be modified <i>with the exception of the Project Narrative and Research & Related Budget Form.</i> Your Resource Manager/ Comptroller/Task Area Manager or equivalent Business Official should log into eBRAP to review and to approve prior to the application verification deadline.</p>
Further Information	
<p>Tracking a Grants.gov Workspace Package. After successfully submitting a Workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the “Confirmation” page that is generated after submission.</p>	<p>Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV, for further information regarding eBRAP requirements.</p>

Extramural Submissions	Intramural DOD Submissions
Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III, for further information regarding Grants.gov requirements.	

The full application package must be submitted using the unique eBRAP log number to avoid delays in application processing.

II.D.2.b.ii. Full Application Submission Components

- **Extramural Applications Only**

SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance Form: Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.1, for detailed information.

- **Extramural and Intramural Applications**

Attachments:

Each attachment to the full application components must be uploaded as an individual file in the format specified and in accordance with the formatting guidelines listed in the General Application Instructions, Appendix 4.

For all attachments, ensure that the file names are consistent with the guidance. Attachments will be rejected if the file names are longer than 50 characters or have incorrect file names that contain characters other than the following: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, and period. In addition, there are file size limits that may apply in some circumstances. Individual attachments may not exceed 20 megabytes (MB), and the file size for the entire full application package may not exceed 200 MB.

- **Attachment 1: Project Narrative (six-page limit): Upload as “ProjectNarrative.pdf”.** The page limit of the Project Narrative applies to text and non-text elements (e.g., figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, drawings) used to describe the project. Inclusion of URLs (uniform resource locators) that provide additional information to expand the Project Narrative and could confer an unfair competitive advantage is prohibited and may result in administrative withdrawal of the application.

Describe the proposed project in detail using the outline below. *The Project Narrative is expected to be written by the PI while also showing evidence of appropriate direction from the Mentor(s).*

- **Principal Investigator:** The application should describe the PI’s career goals, demonstrating a strong personal commitment to pursuing an independent career as a leader at the forefront of MS research. Describe how the proposed research project and mentoring experience will promote the PI’s development toward becoming an independent MS researcher.

- **Mentor(s):** Describe each Mentor’s background and experience in MS research. Explain how they will assist the PI throughout the period of performance in developing independence in MS research. Provide details on the amount and types of interactions between the Mentor(s) and the PI. Describe the track record of the Mentor(s) for mentoring early-stage investigators in MS research.

- **Research Project:** Describe the proposed research project, including the background, hypothesis/objective, specific aims, experimental design, methods, and analyses. The application must provide a sound scientific rationale for the proposed project and its feasibility as established through a critical review and analysis of published literature and/or logical reasoning. Preliminary data are not required, but may be included to support the scientific rationale and feasibility of the study. Address potential problem areas and present alternative methods and approaches. Include a statistical analysis plan for the proposed research, if applicable.

- **Focus Areas:** Briefly describe how the proposed research is relevant to one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#).
 - ***In addition, for research addressing the “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS” Focus Area:***
 - ❖ ***The study must leverage pre-existing specimens and/or data that are available at the time of application submission. Collection of a single set of specimens and/or data collected at one additional time point from participants in the existing cohort is allowed. [Attachment 10: Letter\(s\) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data](#) is required.***
 - ❖ Describe the proposed pre-existing cohort, including the type of specimens and/or data available.
 - ❖ Describe the size of the pre-existing cohort, including the intervention and control groups, and the expected statistical power of the study.
 - ❖ Explain how the cohort is appropriate for the study objective.
 - ❖ State when subject accrual and data/sample acquisition ended for the cohort.
 - ❖ If applicable, describe any additional specimens and/or data to be collected from participants in the pre-existing cohort at one additional time point and the value these specimens and/or data will add to the research.
 - ❖ If applicable, outline the recruitment process for previous participants in the cohort. Estimate the likely rates of recruitment, enrollment, and completion, and the expected statistical power of the results obtained from these additional data.
 - ❖ Outline plans and opportunities for eventual validation and independent replication of results in follow-up studies.

- **Attachment 2: Supporting Documentation: Combine and upload as a single file named “Support.pdf”.** Start each document on a new page. If documents are scanned to PDF, the lowest resolution (100 to 150 dpi) should be used. The Supporting Documentation attachment should not include additional information such as figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, or drawings. These items should be included in the Project Narrative.

There are no page limits for any of these components unless otherwise noted. Include only those components described below; inclusion of items not requested or viewed as an extension of the Project Narrative will result in the removal of those items or may result in administrative withdrawal of the application.

- **References Cited:** List the references cited (including URLs, if available) in the Project Narrative using a standard reference format that includes the full citation (i.e., author[s], year published, title of reference, source of reference, volume, chapter, page numbers, and publisher, as appropriate).
- **List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols:** Provide a list of abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols.
- **Facilities, Existing Equipment, and Other Resources:** Describe the facilities and equipment available for performance of the proposed project and any additional facilities or equipment proposed for acquisition at no cost to the award. Indicate whether government-furnished facilities or equipment are proposed for use. If so, reference should be made to the original or present government award under which the facilities or equipment items are now accountable. There is no form for this information.
- **Publications and/or Patents:** Include a list of relevant publication URLs and/or patent abstracts. If articles are not publicly available, then copies of up to five published manuscripts may be included in Attachment 2. Extra items will not be reviewed.
- **Letters of Organizational Support:** Provide a letter (or letters, if applicable) signed by the Department Chair or appropriate organization official, confirming the laboratory space, equipment, and other resources available for the project. Letters of support not requested in the program announcement, such as those from members of Congress, do not impact application review or funding decisions.
- **Letters of Collaboration (if applicable):** Provide a signed letter from each collaborating individual or organization demonstrating that the PI has the support or resources necessary for the proposed work. If an investigator at an intramural organization is named as a collaborator on an application submitted through an extramural organization, the application must include a letter from the collaborator’s Commander or Commanding Officer at the intramural organization that authorizes the collaborator’s involvement.

- **Transcripts:** Include a copy of the *PI*'s transcripts from all graduate institutions attended. All foreign-language transcripts must be accompanied by a certified English translation. The government reserves the right to request official transcripts during award negotiations. Diplomas are not acceptable in lieu of academic transcripts. If an institution does not provide academic transcripts (i.e., a record of courses completed, grades and credit hours earned, and indication of completion of degree), complete and include the Academic Statement (available for download on the “Full Announcement” page in [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)) in place of the transcript.
- **Intellectual Property:** Information can be found in the 2 CFR 200.315, “Intangible Property.”
 - **Intellectual and Material Property Plan (if applicable):** Provide a plan for resolving intellectual and material property issues among participating organizations.
 - **Commercialization Strategy (if applicable):** Describe the commercialization plan. The plan should include intellectual property, market size, financial analysis, strengths and weaknesses, barriers to the market, competitors, and management team. Discuss the significance of this development effort, when it can be anticipated, and the potential commercial use for the technology being developed.
- **Data and Research Resources Sharing Plan:** Describe how data and resources generated during the performance of the project will be shared with the research community. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 2, Section K, for more information about the CDMRP expectations for making data and research resources publicly available.
- **Data Management Plan (two-page limit):** Describe the data management plan in accordance with Section 3.c, Enclosure 3, [DoD Instruction 3200.12](#).
 - For Extramural Applications: Refer to General Application Instructions, Section III.A.2, Attachments Form, Attachment 2, Supporting Documentation, for more detailed information.
 - For Intramural Applications: Refer to General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.1, Application Component – Attachments, Attachment 2, Supporting Documentation, for more detailed information.
- **Attachment 3: Technical Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as “TechAbs.pdf”.** The technical abstract is used by all reviewers. Abstracts of all funded research projects will be posted publicly. **Do not include proprietary or confidential information.** Use only characters available on a standard QWERTY keyboard. Spell out all Greek letters, other non-English letters, and symbols. Graphics are not allowed.

Applicants should note that programmatic reviewers may not have access to the full application and therefore rely on the technical abstract for appropriate description of the

project's key aspects. Therefore, clarity and completeness within the space limits of the technical abstract are highly important.

Technical abstracts should be written using the headings below:

- **Background:** State the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Area\(s\)](#) to be addressed. **Describe how the proposed research project directly addresses one or more of the FY23 EIRA Focus Areas.** Present the ideas and reasoning behind the proposed research project.
 - **Hypothesis/Objective:** State the hypothesis to be tested or the objective to be reached. Provide evidence or rationale that supports the hypothesis/objective.
 - **Specific Aims:** State the specific aims of the proposed research project.
 - **Study Design:** Describe the study design including appropriate controls.
 - **Impact:** Explain how the proposed research project will produce results that are likely to translate, whether in the short or long term, to advancing MS research and/or patient care.
- **Attachment 4: Lay Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as “LayAbs.pdf”.** The lay abstract is used by all reviewers. Abstracts of all funded research projects will be posted publicly. ***Do not include proprietary or confidential information. Do not duplicate the technical abstract.*** Use only characters available on a standard QWERTY keyboard. Spell out all Greek letters, other non-English letters, and symbols. Graphics are not allowed.

Lay abstracts should be written using the outline below. Minimize use of acronyms and abbreviations, where appropriate. The lay abstract is an important component of the application review process because it addresses issues of particular interest to the consumer community.

- Describe the objectives and rationale for the proposed research project in a manner that ***will be readily understood by readers without a scientific or medical background.***
- State the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Area\(s\)](#) the proposed project addresses. ***Describe how the proposed research project directly addresses one or more of the FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Area(s).***
- Describe the applicability of the research to advance MS patient care:
 - What types of patients could it potentially help and how?
 - What are the potential clinical applications, benefits, and risks?
 - What is the projected time it may take to achieve a patient-related outcome?

- If the research is too basic for short-term clinical applicability, describe how the outcomes of the proposed project will advance the field of MS research.
- **Attachment 5: Statement of Work (SOW) (three-page limit): Upload as “SOW.pdf”.** The suggested SOW format and examples specific to different types of research projects are available on the eBRAP “Funding Opportunities & Forms” web page (<https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>). Recommended strategies for assembling the SOW can be found at <https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>.

For the EIRA mechanism, refer to the “*Suggested SOW Strategy Generic Research*” document for guidance on preparing the SOW and use the blank SOW format titled “Suggested SOW Format”. The SOW must be in PDF format prior to attaching.

- **Attachment 6: Impact Statement (one-page limit): Upload as “Impact.pdf”.**

Explain why the proposed research project is important and what impact it will have on one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#). Describe the potential impact(s) under two separate headings:

- **Short-term impact:** Detail the anticipated outcome(s) that will be directly attributed to the results of the proposed research project related to one or more of the FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas.
- **Long-term impact:** Explain the anticipated long-term gains from the proposed research project, including how the new understanding will ultimately contribute to the goal of advancing MS research and/or patient care related to one or more of the FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas.
- **Attachment 7: Researcher Development Plan (one-page limit): Upload as “ResearchDev.pdf”.**
 - Clearly articulate a strategy for acquiring the necessary skills, competence, and expertise to successfully complete the proposed research project.
 - Indicate how the individualized Researcher Development Plan will provide the PI with an opportunity to develop a research project, investigate a problem or question in the field of MS, and effectively prepare them for a career as an independent MS researcher.
 - Describe how the Researcher Development Plan is supported by the environment and mentorship, including a description of ongoing MS research at the institution. Include a description of the environment of any collaborating institutions that will augment the lack of specific resources at the PI’s primary institution (if applicable). If the PI will be utilizing resources at another institution to successfully complete the proposed project, then the PI is strongly encouraged to designate a secondary Mentor at the collaborating institution. Include information on collaborations with other investigators, seminars, workshops, and other opportunities to interact with leaders in the MS field. ***Do not reference or include members of the [FY23 MSRP Programmatic Panel](#).***

- **Attachment 8: Eligibility Statement (one-page limit): Upload as “Eligibility.pdf”.** Provide a letter signed by the PI and the Department Chair, Dean, or equivalent official, to verify that the eligibility requirements have been met by the application submission deadline. The letter should provide the date (month/year) the PI completed/will complete requirements for their doctoral degree, and the date (month/year) the PI began/will begin postdoctoral research in the proposed setting.
- **Attachment 9: Animal Research Plan (three-page limit) (required if proposed research project involves animals): Upload as “AnimalPlan.pdf”.** If the proposed research project involves animals, the applicant is required to submit a summary describing the animal research that will be conducted. Applicants should not submit a verbatim replica of the protocol(s) to be submitted to the IACUC as the Animal Research Plan. The Animal Research Plan should address the following points for each proposed animal study:
 - Briefly describe the research objective(s) of the animal study. Explain how and why the animal species, strain, and model(s) being used can address the scientific objectives and, where appropriate, the study’s relevance to human biology.
 - Explain why the proposed model(s) is superior to other available animal models for the proposed research strategy.
 - Summarize the procedures to be conducted. Describe how the study will be controlled.
 - Describe the randomization and blinding procedures for the study, and any other measures to be taken to minimize the effects of subjective bias during animal treatment and assessment of results. If randomization and/or blinding will not be utilized, provide justification.
 - Provide a sample size estimate for each study arm and the method by which it was derived, including power analysis calculations.
 - Describe how data will be handled, including rules for stopping data collection, criteria for inclusion and exclusion of data, how outliers will be defined and handled, statistical methods for data analysis, and identification of the primary endpoint(s).
- **Attachment 10: Letter(s) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data, if applicable: Upload as “Access.pdf”.** If the application addresses the Focus Area of “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS”, or if the application addresses more than one Focus Areas and one of them is “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS”, provide a confirmation letter signed by the appropriate Institution Official who has the authority to confirm access to the proposed cohort specimens and/or data necessary to carry out the study.

The study must leverage *pre-existing* specimens and/or data that are available at the time of application submission; ongoing specimens and/or data collection from participants in

the pre-existing cohort is allowed. However, *the recruitment of new subjects is not permitted.*

- **Attachment 11: Representations, if applicable (extramural submissions only): Upload as “RequiredReps.pdf”.** All extramural applicants must complete and submit the Required Representations template available on eBRAP (<https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>). For more information, see the General Application Instructions, Appendix 5, Section B, Representations.
 - **Attachment 12: Suggested Collaborating DOD Military Facility Budget Format, if applicable: Upload as “MFBudget.pdf”.** If a military facility (Military Health System facility, research laboratory, medical treatment facility, dental treatment facility, or a DOD activity embedded with a civilian medical center) will be a collaborator in performance of the project, complete a separate budget, using “Suggested Collaborating DOD Military Facility Budget Format”, available for download on the eBRAP “Funding Opportunities & Forms” web page (<https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>), including a budget justification, for each military facility as instructed. The costs per year should be included on the Grants.gov Research & Related Budget Form under subaward costs. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.8, for detailed information.
- **Extramural and Intramural Applications**

To evaluate compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681[a] et seq.), the DOD is collecting certain demographic and career information to be able to assess the success rates of women who are proposed for key roles in applications in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (STEM) disciplines. To enable this assessment, each application must include the following forms completed as indicated.

Research & Related Personal Data: For extramural submissions (via Grants.gov), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.3, and for intramural submissions (via eBRAP), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.2, for detailed information.

Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded): For extramural submissions (via Grants.gov), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.4, and for intramural submissions (via eBRAP), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.3, for detailed information.

- **PI Biographical Sketch (five-page limit):** Upload as “Biosketch_LastName.pdf”. The suggested biographical sketch format is available on the “Funding Opportunities & Forms” web page (<https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>) in eBRAP. The National Institutes of Health Biographical Sketch may also be used. All biographical sketches should be submitted in uneditable PDF format.

- PI Previous/Current/Pending Support (no page limit): Upload as “Support_LastName.pdf”.
 - For extramural submissions, refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.4, for detailed information.
 - For intramural submissions, refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.3, for detailed information.
- Key Personnel Biographical Sketches (five-page limit each): Upload as “Biosketch_LastName.pdf”.
 - Include mentor’s (and co-mentor’s, if applicable) biographical sketch.
- Key Personnel Previous/Current/Pending Support (no page limit): Upload as “Support_LastName.pdf”.
 - Include mentor’s (and co-mentor’s, if applicable) previous/current/pending support.
 - For extramural submissions, refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.4, for detailed information.
 - For intramural submissions, refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.3, for detailed information.

Research & Related Budget: For extramural submissions (via Grants.gov), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.5, and for intramural submissions (via eBRAP), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.4, for detailed information.

Budget Justification (no page limit): Upload as “BudgetJustification.pdf”. The budget justification for the entire period of performance must be uploaded to the Research & Related Budget after completion of the budget for Period 1.

Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form: For extramural submissions (via Grants.gov), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.6, and for intramural submissions (via eBRAP), refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.5, for detailed information.

- **Extramural Applications Only**

Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form (if applicable): Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.7, for detailed information.

- **Extramural Subaward:** Complete the Research & Related Subaward Budget Form through Grants.gov. (Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.7, for detailed information.) Verify subaward budget(s) and budget justification forms are

present in eBRAP during the application verification period. If these components are missing, upload them to eBRAP before the end of the application verification period.

- **Intramural DOD Collaborator(s):** Complete the “Suggested Collaborating DOD Military Facility Budget Format” and upload to Grants.gov attachment form as [Attachment 12](#). (Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section IV.A.4, for detailed information.) Each Intramural DOD Collaborator should include costs per year on the Grants.gov Research & Related Budget Form under subaward costs.

Additional Application Components

In addition to the complete application package, EIRA applications also require the following components:

- **Three Confidential Letters of Recommendations**

The letters of recommendation should be provided on letterhead, signed, and uploaded as PDF files to eBRAP by the [Confidential Letters of Recommendation Submission Deadline](#). The PI should monitor whether the letters have been received in eBRAP by viewing the status in the “Pre-Application Files” tab of the pre-application. The PI will not be able to view the letters.

- ***The confidential letter of recommendation from the Mentor*** should include a description of the Mentor’s commitment to the PI’s career development, mentorship in MS research, and ability to supervise the PI’s research project. Mentor letters should also address the following (two pages per letter recommended):
 - The PI’s potential for a highly productive career as an independent MS researcher.
 - Details of the proposed interactions of the Mentor with the PI during the PI’s research project.
 - The mentoring environment, including ongoing MS research in the Mentor’s laboratory and in the organization as a whole, resources available, and how this environment will promote the development of the PI as a MS researcher.
 - The degree to which the PI participated in the project development and application preparation, and the degree to which the PI will participate in the execution of the application, if funded.
- ***Additional confidential letter(s) of recommendation:*** The remaining letter(s) should describe the PI’s unique qualifications and accomplishments that highlight their potential for success in pursuing a career in MS research. Specifically, each letter should offer the writer’s perspective on (two pages per letter recommended):
 - The PI’s qualifications, characteristics, and achievements.

- The PI’s potential for productivity and desire for establishing a successful and independent career in MS research.
- The relevance of the proposed research project to developing the PI’s career in MS research.
- The suitability of the Mentor(s) and the research environment for providing the PI with a solid foundation to support an independent career in MS research.

II.D.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

The applicant organization must be registered as an entity in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>) and receive confirmation of an “Active” status before submitting an application through Grants.gov. *As of April 2022, all federal awards including, but not limited to, contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements will use the UEI generated through SAM.gov.* Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III, for further information regarding Grants.gov requirements.

II.D.4. Submission Dates and Times

All submission dates and times are indicated in [Section I, Overview of the Funding Opportunity](#). Pre-application and application submissions are required. The pre-application and application submission process should be started early to avoid missing deadlines. There are no grace periods. Failure to meet either of these deadlines will result in submission rejection.

Applicant Verification of Full Application Submission in eBRAP

For Both Extramural and Intramural Applicants: eBRAP allows an organization’s representatives and PIs to view and modify the full application submissions associated with them. Following retrieval and processing of the full application, eBRAP will notify the organizational representatives and PI by email to log into eBRAP to review, modify, and verify the full application submission. eBRAP will validate full application files against the specific program announcement requirements, and discrepancies will be noted in an email to the PI and in the “Full Application Files” tab in eBRAP. eBRAP does not confirm the accuracy of file content. Application viewing, modification, and verification in eBRAP are strongly recommended, but not required. It is the applicant’s responsibility to review all application components and ensure proper ordering as specified in the program announcement. ***If either the Project Narrative or the budget fails eBRAP validation or needs to be modified, an updated full application package must be submitted prior to the application submission deadline. The Project Narrative and Research & Related Budget Form cannot be changed after the application submission deadline.*** Other application components may be changed until the end of the application verification period. Verify that subaward budget(s) and budget justification forms are present in eBRAP during the application verification period. If these components are missing, upload them to eBRAP before the end of the application verification period. After the end of the application verification period, the full application cannot be modified.

Extramural Submission: The full application package submitted to Grants.gov may be viewed and modified in eBRAP until the end of the application verification period. During the application verification period, the full application package, *with the exception of the Project Narrative and Budget Form*, may be modified.

Intramural DOD Submission: After eBRAP has processed the full application, the organizational Resource Manager/Comptroller/Task Area Manager or equivalent Business Official and PI will receive email notification of the status and will be able to view and modify application components in eBRAP. During the application verification period, the full application package, *with the exception of the Project Narrative and Budget Form*, may be modified. The Resource Manager/Comptroller/Task Area Manager or equivalent Business Official should log into eBRAP to review and to approve the application package prior to the application verification deadline.

For All Submissions: Verify that subaward budget(s) with budget justification are present in eBRAP during the application verification period. If these components are missing, upload them to eBRAP before the end of the application verification period.

II.D.5. Funding Restrictions

The maximum period of performance is **2** years.

The application's total costs (including direct costs and indirect costs) budgeted for the entire period of performance should not exceed **\$320,000**. If indirect cost rates have been negotiated, indirect costs are to be budgeted in accordance with the organization's negotiated rate.

All direct and indirect costs of any subaward or contract must be included in the total direct costs of the primary award.

The applicant may request the entire maximum funding amount for a project that may have a period of performance less than the maximum **2** years.

For this award mechanism, the applicant may request direct costs for (not all-inclusive):

- Costs for the PI to travel to one scientific/technical meeting per year. The intent of travel costs to scientific/technical meeting is to present project information or disseminate project results from the FY23 MSRP Early Investigator Research Award.

The applicant must not request funds for:

- Clinical trial costs
- Equipment
- Mentor salary

For extramural awards with an intragovernmental component, direct transfer of funds from an extramural award recipient to a DOD or other federal agency is not allowed except under very

limited circumstances. Funding to intramural DOD and other federal agencies will be managed through a direct funds transfer. Intramural applicants are responsible for coordinating through their agency's procedures the use of contractual or assistance funding awards or other appropriate agreements to support extramural collaborators.

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.5, for budget regulations and instructions for the Research & Related Budget. *For federal agencies or organizations collaborating with federal agencies, budget restrictions apply as are noted in the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.5.*

II.D.6. Other Submission Requirements

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 4, for detailed formatting guidelines.

II.E. Application Review Information

II.E.1. Criteria

II.E.1.a. Peer Review

To determine technical merit, all applications will be evaluated according to the following **scored criteria**, which are of equal importance:

- **Principal Investigator**
 - How the PI's achievements (as reflected by academic performance, awards, honors, and/or previous publications and funding) indicate the potential for a successful career as an MS researcher.
 - To what extent the PI's stated career goals demonstrate a strong personal commitment to pursuing an independent career as a leader in MS research.
 - To what extent the letters of recommendation from the Mentor(s) and others support the PI's potential for a highly productive career as a MS researcher.
 - Whether the PI's proposed level of effort is appropriate for successful completion of the proposed work.
- **Mentor(s)**
 - Whether there is at least one Mentor who is an established MS researcher, as evidenced by a demonstrated record of active funding and recent publications in MS research.
 - How the Mentor's (and secondary Mentor's, if applicable) own experience in MS and their research program and committed resources, support the ability to supervise the PI's research project.

- To what extent the track record(s) of the Mentor(s) in previously mentoring early-stage investigators indicates the potential for successful mentoring of the PI in MS research.
- Whether the Mentor letter(s) indicate(s) a high level of commitment to the PI's development as an MS researcher.
- Whether the quality of the application suggests that the Mentor(s) provided appropriate guidance in its preparation.
- **Research Project**
 - How the scientific rationale supports the project and its feasibility as demonstrated by a critical review and analysis of the literature, MS-relevant preliminary data (if included), and/or logical reasoning.
 - Whether the experimental design and the statistical plan, if applicable, are appropriate for the research proposed.
 - How well the hypotheses or objectives, aims, experimental design, methods, and analyses are developed.
 - How well the application acknowledges potential problems and addresses alternative approaches.
 - If applicable, to what degree the intellectual and material property plan is appropriate.
 - How well the animal study (or studies) is designed to achieve the objectives, including the choice of model and endpoints/outcome measures to be used.
 - How well the study (or studies) is designed to achieve reproducible and rigorous results, including controls, sample size estimation, blinding, randomization, and data handling.
 - ***In addition, for research addressing the “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS” Focus Area, the following criteria also apply:***
 - How well the application demonstrates access to the proposed pre-existing cohort specimens and/or data.
 - To what extent the proposed pre-existing cohort is appropriate for the objective of the study.
 - To what extent the proposed pre-existing cohort is well-characterized and adequately controlled.
 - To what extent the statistical power of the study is appropriate, given the size of the cohort.

- Whether subject accrual and sample/data acquisition for the preexisting cohort was complete at the time of submission.
 - If applicable, to what extent the plan to recruit previous participants in the cohort for follow-up studies is adequate.
- **Researcher Development Plan and Environment**
 - How well the application has outlined an individualized plan that will enable the PI to acquire the necessary skills, competence, and expertise to successfully complete the proposed research project.
 - How well the individualized Researcher Development Plan will provide the PI with an opportunity to develop a research project, investigate a problem or question in MS research, and effectively prepare the PI for a career as an independent MS researcher.
 - To what extent the scientific environment at the primary institution (and collaborating institution(s), if applicable) is appropriate for the proposed research and career development activities, including professional interaction with established MS researchers.
 - To what extent the research requirements are adequately supported by the availability and accessibility of facilities and resources (including collaborative arrangements and/or intellectual property plans as applicable).
 - **Impact**
 - To what extent the anticipated short-term outcomes will be directly attributed to the results of the proposed research project related to one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#).
 - To what extent the anticipated long-term gains from the proposed research project, including how the new understanding will ultimately contribute to the goal of advancing MS research and/or patient care, is related to one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#).

In addition, the following **unscored** criteria will also contribute to the overall evaluation of the application:

- **Budget**
 - Whether the **total** costs exceed the allowable total costs as published in the program announcement.
 - Whether the budget is appropriate for the proposed research.

- **Application Presentation**

- To what extent the writing, clarity, and presentation of the application components influence the review.

II.E.1.b. Programmatic Review

To make funding recommendations and select the application(s) that, individually or collectively, will best achieve the program objectives, the following criteria are used by programmatic reviewers:

- Ratings and evaluations of the peer reviewers
- Relevance to the mission of the DHP and FY23 MSRP, as evidenced by the following:
 - Adherence to the intent of the award mechanism
 - Program portfolio composition
 - Programmatic relevance to one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#)
 - Relative impact

II.E.2. Application Review and Selection Process

All applications are evaluated by scientists, clinicians, and consumers in a two-tier review process. The first tier is **peer review**, the evaluation of applications against established criteria to determine technical merit, where each application is assessed for its own merit, independent of other applications. The second tier is **programmatic review**, a comparison-based process in which applications with high scientific and technical merit are further evaluated for programmatic relevance. Final recommendations for funding are made to the Commanding General, USAMRDC. *The highest-scoring applications from the first tier of review are not automatically recommended for funding. Funding recommendations depend on various factors as described in [Section II.E.1.b, Programmatic Review](#).* Additional information about the two-tier process used by the CDMRP can be found at <https://cdmrp.health.mil/about/2tierRevProcess>.

All CDMRP review processes are conducted confidentially to maintain the integrity of the merit-based selection process. Panel members sign a statement declaring that application and evaluation information will not be disclosed outside the panel. Violations of confidentiality can result in the dissolving of a panel(s) and other corrective actions. In addition, personnel at the applicant or collaborating organizations are prohibited from contacting persons involved in the review and approval process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process. Violations of these prohibitions will result in the administrative withdrawal of the organization's application. Violations by panel members or applicants that compromise the confidentiality of the review and approval process may also result in suspension or debarment from federal awards. Furthermore, the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information of one party to another third party is a crime in accordance with 18 USC 1905.

II.E.3. Integrity and Performance Information

Prior to making an assistance agreement award where the federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in 2 CFR 200.1, over the period of performance, the federal awarding agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is available in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS).

An applicant organization may review FAPIIS, accessible through SAM, and submit comments to FAPIIS on any information about the organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently available in FAPIIS.

The federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when determining a recipient's qualification prior to award, according to the qualification standards of the Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations (DoDGARs), Section 22.415.

II.E.4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

All application review dates and times are indicated in [Section I, Overview of the Funding Opportunity](#).

Each PI and organization will receive email notification of posting of the funding recommendation in eBRAP. Each PI will receive a peer review summary statement on the strengths and weaknesses of the application.

II.F. Federal Award Administration Information

II.F.1. Federal Award Notices

Awards supported with FY23 funds are anticipated to be made no later than September 30, 2024. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 2, for additional award administration information.

After email notification of application review results through eBRAP, and if selected for funding, a representative from the USAMRAA will contact the Business Official authorized to negotiate on behalf of the PI's organization.

Pre-Award Costs: An institution of higher education, hospital, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization may, at its own risk and without the government's prior approval, incur obligations and expenditures to cover costs up to 90 days before the beginning date of the initial budget period of a new award. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Section III.A.5.

Only an appointed USAMRAA Grants Officer may obligate the government to the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of the government should be inferred from discussions

with any other individual. **The award document signed by the Grants Officer is the official authorizing document.**

Federal Government Organizations: Funding made to federal government organizations (to include intramural DOD organizations) will be executed through the Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request (MIPR) or Funding Authorization Document (FAD) process. Transfer of funds is contingent upon appropriate safety and administrative approvals. Intramural applicants and collaborators are reminded to coordinate receipt and commitment of funds through their respective Resource Manager/Task Area Manager/Comptroller or equivalent Business Official.

II.F.1.a. PI Changes and Award Transfers

Changes in PI are not allowed, except under extenuating circumstances that will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the Grants Officer.

An organizational transfer of an award will not be allowed in the last year of the (original) period of performance or any extension thereof.

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 2, Section B, for general information on organization or PI changes.

II.F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Applicable requirements in the DoDGARs found in 32 CFR, Chapter I, Subchapter C, and 2 CFR, Chapter XI, apply to grants and cooperative agreements resulting from this program announcement.

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 2, for general information regarding administrative requirements.

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 5, for general information regarding national policy requirements.

Refer to full text of the latest [DoD R&D General Terms and Conditions](#) and the [USAMRAA General Research Terms and Conditions: Addendum to the DoD R&D General Terms and Conditions](#) for further information.

Certification Regarding Disclosure of Funding Sources. The proposing entity must comply with Section 223(a) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which requires that the PI, Partnering PIs (if applicable), and all key personnel:

- Certify that the current and pending support provided on the application is current, accurate, and complete;
- Agree to update such disclosure at the request of the agency prior to the award of support and at any subsequent time the agency determines appropriate during the term of the award; and

- Have been made aware of the requirements under Section 223(a)(1) of this Act.

False, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties (18 USC 1001).

II.F.3. Reporting

Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 2, Section A, for general information on reporting requirements. *If there are technical reporting requirement delinquencies for any existing USAMRAA-sponsored awards at the applicant organization, no new awards will be issued to the applicant organization until all delinquent reports have been submitted.*

Annual progress reports as well as a final progress report will be required.

The Award Terms and Conditions will specify if additional and/or more frequent reporting is required.

Award Expiration Transition Plan: An Award Expiration Transition Plan must be submitted with the final progress report. Use the one-page template “Award Expiration Transition Plan,” available on the eBRAP “Funding Opportunities & Forms” web page (<https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm>) under the “Progress Report Formats” section. The Award Expiration Transition Plan must outline whether and how the research supported by this award will progress and must include source(s) of funding, either known or pending.

Awards resulting from this program announcement may entail additional reporting requirements related to recipient integrity and performance matters. Recipient organizations that have federal contract, grant, and cooperative agreement awards with a cumulative total value greater than \$10M are required to provide information to FAPIIS about certain civil, criminal, and administrative proceedings that reached final disposition within the most recent 5-year period and that were connected with performance of a federal award. These recipients are required to disclose, semiannually, information about criminal, civil, and administrative proceedings as specified in the applicable Representations (see General Application Instructions, Appendix 5, Section B).

II.G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

II.G.1. eBRAP Help Desk

Questions related to program announcement content or submission requirements as well as questions related to the pre-application or intramural application submission through eBRAP should be directed to the eBRAP Help Desk, which is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET (closed on most U.S. federal holidays). Response times may vary depending upon the volume of inquiries.

Phone: 301-682-5507

Email: help@eBRAP.org

II.G.2. Grants.gov Contact Center

Questions related to extramural application submission through Grants.gov portal should be directed to the Grants.gov Contact Center, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (closed on U.S. federal holidays). Note that the eBRAP Help Desk is unable to provide technical assistance with Grants.gov submission.

Phone: 800-518-4726; International 1-606-545-5035

Email: support@grants.gov

Sign up on Grants.gov for “send me change notification emails” by following the link on the “Synopsis” page for the program announcement or by responding to the prompt provided by Grants.gov when first downloading the Grants.gov application package. If the Grants.gov application package is updated or changed, the original version of the application package may not be accepted by Grants.gov.

II.H. Other Information

II.H.1. Program Announcement and General Application Instructions Versions

Questions related to this program announcement should refer to the program name, the program announcement name, and the program announcement version code 802a. The program announcement numeric version code will match the General Application Instructions version code 802.

II.H.2. Administrative Actions

After receipt of pre-applications or applications, the following administrative actions may occur:

II.H.2.a. Rejection

The following will result in administrative rejection of the application:

- Letter of Intent was not submitted.
- Project Narrative exceeds page limit.
- Preproposal Narrative is missing.
- Researcher Development Plan ([Attachment 7](#)) is missing.
- For studies utilizing animal models, [Attachment 9: Animal Research Plan](#) is missing.
- For studies addressing the “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS” Focus Area, [Attachment 10: Letter\(s\) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data](#) is missing.

- Application addresses developmental myelination, dysmyelination, blood-brain barrier permeability, basic mechanisms of demyelination, or peripheral immunomodulatory therapeutic strategies that limit tissue injury secondarily.
- Project Narrative is missing.
- Budget is missing.

II.H.2.b. Modification

- Pages exceeding the specific limits will be removed prior to review for all documents other than the Project Narrative.
- Documents not requested will be removed.

II.H.2.c. Withdrawal

The following may result in administrative withdrawal of the pre-application or application:

- An FY23 MSRP Programmatic Panel member is named as being involved in the research proposed or is found to have assisted in the pre-application or application processes including, but not limited to, concept design, application development, budget preparation, and the development of any supporting documentation. *A list of the FY23 MSRP Programmatic Panel members can be found at <https://cdmrp.health.mil/msrp/panels/panels23>.*
- The application fails to conform to this program announcement description.
- Inclusion of URLs, with the exception of links in References Cited and Publication and/or Patent Abstract sections.
- Page size is larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches (approximately 21.59 cm x 27.94 cm).
- To preserve the integrity of its peer and programmatic review processes, the CDMRP discourages inclusion of any employee of its review contractors having any role in the preparation, research or other duties for submitted applications. For FY23, the identities of the peer review contractor and the programmatic review contractor may be found at the CDMRP website (<https://cdmrp.health.mil/about/2tierRevProcess>). Applications that include names of personnel from either of these companies may be administratively withdrawn.
- Personnel from applicant or collaborating organizations are found to have contacted persons involved in the review or approval process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process.
- Applications from extramural organizations, including non-DOD federal agencies, received through eBRAP may be withdrawn.
- Applications submitted by an intramural DOD organization may be withdrawn if the intramural organization cannot coordinate the use of contractual, assistance, or other

appropriate agreements to provide funds to extramural collaborators. For the “Central Nervous System Repair, Protection, and Regenerative Potential in MS” Focus Area, the application is for a study addressing developmental myelination, dysmyelination, basic mechanisms of demyelination, or peripheral immunomodulatory therapeutic strategies that limit tissue injury secondarily.

- For the “Biology and Measurement of MS Symptoms” Focus Area, the application is for a study of disease-modifying therapies that secondarily impact MS symptoms.
- For the “Correlates of Disease Activity and Progression in MS” Focus Area, the application does not demonstrate access to the relevant specimens and/or data of the proposed cohort (in [Attachment 10: Letter\(s\) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data](#)).
- The invited application proposes a different research project than that described in the pre-application.
- A clinical trial is proposed. The PI does not meet the eligibility criteria.
- The application does not address one or more of the [FY23 MSRP EIRA Focus Areas](#).
- Application includes classified research data and/or proposes research of which the anticipated outcomes may be classified or deemed sensitive to national security concerns.

II.H.2.d. Withhold

Applications that appear to involve research misconduct will be administratively withheld from further consideration pending organizational investigation. The organization will be required to provide the findings of the investigation to the USAMRAA Grants Officer for a determination of the final disposition of the application.

II.H.3. Application Submission Checklist

Application Components	Action	Completed
SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance (extramural submissions only)	Complete form as instructed	
Summary (Tab 1) and Application Contacts (Tab 2) (intramural submissions only)	Complete tabs as instructed	
Attachments	Project Narrative: Upload as Attachment 1 with file name "ProjectNarrative.pdf"	
	Supporting Documentation: Upload as Attachment 2 with file name "Support.pdf"	
	Technical Abstract: Upload as Attachment 3 with file name "TechAbs.pdf"	
	Lay Abstract: Upload as Attachment 4 with file name "LayAbs.pdf"	
	Statement of Work: Upload as Attachment 5 with file name "SOW.pdf"	
	Impact Statement: Upload as Attachment 6 with file name "Impact.pdf"	
	Researcher Development Plan: Upload as Attachment 7 with the file name "ResearchDev.pdf"	
	Eligibility Statement: Upload as Attachment 8 with file name "Eligibility.pdf"	
	Animal Research Plan: Upload as Attachment 9 with file name "AnimalPlan.pdf" if applicable	
	Letter(s) Confirming Access to Specimens and/or Data: Upload as Attachment 10 with file name "Access.pdf" if applicable	
	Representations (extramural submissions only): Upload as Attachment 11 with file name "RequiredReps.pdf"	
	Suggested Collaborating DOD Military Facility Budget Format: Upload as Attachment 12 with file name "MFBudget.pdf" if applicable	
Research & Related Personal Data	Complete form as instructed	

Application Components	Action	Completed
Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	Attach PI Biographical Sketch (Biosketch_LastName.pdf) to the appropriate field	
	Attach PI Previous/Current/Pending Support (Support_LastName.pdf) to the appropriate field	
	Attach Biographical Sketch (Biosketch_LastName.pdf) for each senior/key person to the appropriate field	
	Attach Previous/Current/Pending (Support_LastName.pdf) for each senior/key person to the appropriate field	
Research & Related Budget (extramural submissions only)	Complete as instructed. Attach Budget Justification (BudgetJustification.pdf) to the appropriate field	
Budget (intramural submissions only)	Suggested DOD Military Budget Format, including justification	
Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form	Complete form as instructed	
Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form, if applicable	Complete form as instructed	
Additional Application Components	Action	Completed
Confidential Letters of Recommendation	Confirm upload to eBRAP	

APPENDIX 1: ACRONYM LIST

ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting <i>In Vivo</i> Experiments
ACURO	Animal Care and Use Review Office
CDMRP	Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHP	Defense Health Program
DOD	Department of Defense
DoDGARs	Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations
eBRAP	Electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal
EC	Ethics Committee
EIRA	Early Investigator Research Award
ET	Eastern Time
FAD	Funding Authorization Document
FAPIIS	Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System
FY	Fiscal Year
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LOI	Letter of Intent
M	Million
MB	Megabytes
MIPR	Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request
MS	Multiple Sclerosis
MSRP	Multiple Sclerosis Research Program
OHARO	Office of Human and Animal Research Oversight (previously Office of Research Protections)
OHRO	Office of Human Research Oversight (previously Human Research Protection Office)
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID, Inc.
PDF	Portable Document Format
PHS	Public Health Service
PI	Principal Investigator
SAM	System for Award Management
SOW	Statement of Work
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USAMRAA	U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity
USAMRDC	U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command
USC	United States Code