

Call for Proposals 2027

Neuromuscular Research New Zealand¹ is the research arm of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand Inc., (MDANZ) and accepts funding applications for research relevant to New Zealanders living with neuromuscular conditions once per year.

- Advances research into effective treatments - For a list of all neuromuscular conditions covered by MDANZ, please click [here](#).
- Capacity to improve health outcomes or quality of life - Research may encompass standards of care, innovative practice in supporting people with neuromuscular conditions, and/or evaluation of therapy approaches, service delivery modes and interventions.
- Capacity to improve the diagnostic journey - Research aims to reduce diagnostic timeframe and improve experience of receiving a genetic diagnosis.
- Translational research that makes a tangible difference to the lives of New Zealanders with a neuromuscular condition.
- Basic mechanistic research to increase understanding of neuromuscular diseases.
- Pre-clinical design, development and assessment of therapeutic interventions for neuromuscular diseases.
- Qualitative research that gives a voice to the experience of New Zealanders with lived experience of neuromuscular conditions and their families and whānau.
- Research conducted in New Zealand with short to medium term time frames of no more than two years.
- Preliminary studies to develop further proposals for substantial financial support from research funding agencies in New Zealand (e.g., Neurological Foundation or HRC) or abroad (e.g., AFM-Téléthon or Muscular Dystrophy Association [USA]).

¹ Neuromuscular Research New Zealand is officially the Neuromuscular Research Foundation Trust (NRFT)

Grant Types

In this round, two distinct funding opportunities are available:

1. Project Grants

These are intended to support researcher-initiated, hypothesis driven research that advances understanding of neuromuscular conditions, the management (or guidelines for management) of these conditions, or quality of life of people with neuromuscular condition-related disability.

The scope of research is broad, with applications encouraged across all disciplines that are relevant to health and wellbeing, including the social sciences.

The value of the Project Grant should be enough to cover the expenses of the project for up to two years. As a guide, grants awarded in previous funding rounds were approximately \$20,000 (*exclusive of GST*).

2. Postgraduate Student Grant

The first \$20,000 of available funds is dedicated to providing funding support as a grant-in-aid towards course fees, stipend, or research related costs, for post-graduate students (Masters, PhD or MD).

The maximum value of this grant is \$20,000 (exclusive of GST) over a duration of up to two years.

Eligibility Criteria

If you are the first named investigator (i.e. lead researcher) on an application, you must be based in Aotearoa New Zealand and be employed/or study with a New Zealand host educational, research or clinical-based organisation.

Collaborating researchers from outside Aotearoa New Zealand can, at the NRFTs discretion, be included as named investigators on an NRFT application. However, the total proportion of contract budget allocated to overseas investigators must not exceed 20%.

Assessment Criteria

Scientific quality (40%) - Clarity of hypotheses and objectives; and strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design and feasibility.

Significance and/or Innovation (25%) - The potential to increase knowledge about neuromuscular diseases and procedures, capacity to improve health outcomes or quality of life, capacity to improve the diagnostic journey.

Māori health advancement and alignment with MDANZ (25%) - The capacity to advance Māori health (including Pacific people). The proposal should include what activities have been or will be undertaken to realise this advancement.

Team and resources (10%) - Research projects that foster collaboration will be considered. However, the proposal should include written confirmation from the named collaborator(s) to demonstrate that he or she has considered the proposal and is willing and able to contribute to it as described. Resources and facilities available for the proposed project should be described. Human and/or animal ethics, as well as the expertise of the investigators should be described.

For more information about our contract requirements, please contact us.

Timeline

Registrations Open:	Tuesday 1 st September 2026
Applications Close:	Friday 23 rd October 2026 at 5.00pm
Assessment Panel Meet:	Mid-December 2026
Applicants Notified:	January 2027

Reporting

All successful applications will be notified in writing and are subject to the following report and appropriate acknowledgement of this funding contribution in publications.

- Supply of one progress report halfway through the approved timeline.
- If the project extends beyond two years, a report will be required by December 1 of the second year as well as a final completion report.
- Supply of a completion report within one month of project completion.

The principal funding for this research grant is being obtained from the Richdale Charitable Trust. We request that you acknowledge the support of both Trusts in any publications and publicity material as appropriate. For example, "I acknowledge the generous support of Neuromuscular Research New Zealand and the Richdale Charitable Trust"

Ethics

If experimentation on humans or animals is involved, approval of the appropriate Ethics Committee must be obtained. The NRFT will not issue payments until the necessary approval has been provided.

Application Process

All applications must be submitted by email to: nrft@mda.org.nz

Applicants will need to provide a CV for all named investigators.

You will also need to nominate two confirmed referees who can be contacted to provide an external peer review of your application prior to assessment. It is your responsibility to follow up with your confirmed referees to ensure their peer reviews are submitted by the closing date. If two peer reviews have not been received for your application by the closing date, your application will not proceed to assessment by the NRFT Trustees and expert reviewers.

External expert reviewers and Trustees for Neuromuscular Research New Zealand assess each application according to the assessment criteria.

Got a question?

For more on the funding call and how to apply, please contact:

NRFT Funding Administrator 0800 800 337 nrft@mda.org.nz