

## Request for Applications: 2026 DM Small Grants Program

### Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation

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<b>Contracting Officer:</b>	Tanya Stevenson, Chief Executive Officer, MDF
<b>Location:</b>	United States, Canada, and eligible international sites
<b>Date Issued:</b>	April 6, 2026
<b>Proposals Due:</b>	Rolling basis, subject to fund availability
<b>Selection Notification:</b>	4-6 weeks post-submission
<b>Period of Award:</b>	Varied
<b>Anticipated Award:</b>	\$5,000 for open-access fees/ \$2,500 for conference travel
<b>Number of Awards:</b>	To be determined based on applicant mix and available funds

### Synopsis

To increase engagement in myotonic dystrophy (DM) research and improve dissemination of scientific findings, the Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation (MDF) established the DM Small Grants Program. This initiative provides modest funding to support open-access publication fees and travel costs for presenting DM-related research at scientific conferences.

Researchers may apply on a rolling basis for up to \$5,000 for open-access publication fees or up to \$2,500 for conference travel expenses.

### Goal

The goal of the DM Small Grants Program is to expand access to myotonic dystrophy research and strengthen collaboration within the field by supporting open-access dissemination and presentation of DM-related research findings.

### Background

Understanding the complex pathophysiology of DM requires interdisciplinary collaboration, advanced techniques, and dedicated research efforts. However, expanding engagement in DM research faces obstacles due to limited funding and resources concentrated on more prevalent diseases. To address this, MDF seeks to facilitate

interdisciplinary collaboration and advance access to knowledge relevant to improving the quality of life for individuals with DM. The Small Grants Program targets open-access publication fees and conference travel costs to increase accessibility to DM research.

- **Open-Access Publications.** Publishing in open-access journals ensures global access to DM research findings for researchers, healthcare professionals, patients, caregivers, and the public. It enhances visibility, promotes patient engagement, and fosters collaboration among researchers, driving scientific progress toward the understanding of myotonic dystrophy and the development of effective therapies.
- **Conferences.** Researchers presenting at DM-focused conferences contribute to the collective understanding of the disease and its underlying mechanisms. These presentations can spark collaborations, inspire new research directions, and facilitate the dissemination of novel findings to a diverse audience of scientists, clinicians, patients, advocates, and policymakers. Conferences provide networking opportunities and insights into the latest developments, enhancing researchers' contributions to the scientific discourse on myotonic dystrophy.

Our aim is that this initiative expedites the translation of scientific findings into clinical applications. We hope to foster the development of therapies, diagnostic tools, and management strategies that benefit individuals living with DM by providing resources, open-access materials, and support.

### Grant Focus Areas

Myotonic dystrophy is a chronic and multi-systemic disease that affects the lives of individuals with DM and their families every day. There are two major types of myotonic dystrophy: type 1 (DM1) and type 2 (DM2). Both are inherited autosomal dominant disorders affecting multiple organ systems. In DM1, progressive muscle wasting and weakness primarily affect the lower legs, hips, hands, shoulders, neck, and face. In DM2, progressive muscle wasting and weakness primarily affect the proximal legs, hips, shoulders, and neck.

Symptoms may include myotonia, cataracts, cardiac conduction defects, infertility, and central nervous system involvement, which can cause fatigue, excessive daytime sleepiness, and executive function difficulties. Congenital DM, a severe infantile form of DM1, can cause hypotonia, breathing and swallowing difficulties, delayed development, and intellectual disability. Research indicates that as many as 1 in 2,100 individuals in

the United States are affected by myotonic dystrophy or at risk of passing the disease to the next generation.<sup>i</sup>

### Opportunity for DM Research

Recognizing that DM significantly impacts daily functioning, independence, and quality of life, MDF supports efforts to expand dissemination of research findings and strengthen scientific collaboration in the field. Small Grants are available to support:

- Publication of DM-related research in open-access journals
- Presentation of DM-related research at scientific conferences

These grants help researchers share findings, build collaborations, and advance scientific understanding of myotonic dystrophy.

### Duration of the Award

Small Grants are one-time awards intended to support either publication or travel costs. Applicants may receive only one travel grant per calendar year. Travel grant applications must be submitted at least three months prior to the proposed conference or travel date.

### Payment

Awards are made to the applicant's institution on behalf of the grantee. Maximum award amounts are:

- Up to \$5,000 for open-access publication fees
- Up to \$2,500 for conference travel expenses

Funds may not be used for indirect costs, institutional overhead, or capital expenditures. A brief progress and expense report is required within four weeks following the publication or conference presentation.

### Applications

#### *Eligibility Requirements*

Applications are limited to investigators affiliated with academic institutions or nonprofit research institutes. For-profit organizations are not eligible. Applications from international institutions are permitted provided the organization is an accredited academic organization, medical center, or nonprofit research institute.

**Principal Investigator Requirements.** The submitting principal investigator must:

- Be employed by or enrolled at an eligible academic or nonprofit research institution
- Be qualified to conduct or supervise original research
- Have administrative and financial responsibility for the grant
- Have access to the institutional resources necessary to complete the proposed work

**Study Requirements.** Applicants must demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to complete the proposed research project. Proposals must focus on research directly related to myotonic dystrophy and may include basic, clinical, or applied research. Eligible research areas include, but are not limited to:

- Pathogenesis of DM
- Molecular mechanisms underlying phenotype differences in DM1, DM2, and congenital DM
- Development of diagnostics or biomarkers
- Studies of disease progression or natural history
- Identification and validation of endpoints for drug development
- Standards of care and care integration, including nursing, social work, and psychology
- Epidemiology, health economics, and patient support services
- Therapeutic development, particularly early-stage projects that could leverage additional funding

### Submission Process and Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in 12-point font. Proposals must be submitted via the Proposal Central application system. Proposals can be submitted on a rolling basis. The proposal must include the following sections:

#### *Applicant*

Professional Profile

ORCID Number

NIH-style applicant bio sketches (not to exceed 4 pages each)

#### *Applicant Institution Information*

Applicant Institution Profile

IRS EIN or TIN Number

Signing Official Email

Financial Official Email

### *Abstract*

- **Abstract of Research Plan (one-half page).** For publication requests, applicants must submit the abstract as provided to the journal. For travel requests, applicants must submit the abstract as submitted to the conference. This abstract will not be made public.
- **Lay Summary (one-half page).** Include a general, non-technical description of the research and its relevance to myotonic dystrophy. If funded, this summary may be used by MDF for communications and outreach.

### *Budget*

Detailed budget (included costs are flexible for travel)

Budget description and justification, including explanations of how uncovered costs will be met (1 paragraph)

### *Attachments*

- **Applicant Statement (one paragraph).** Include applicant name, contact information, journal or conference name, and a brief explanation of how the proposed publication or presentation will increase access to DM research (one paragraph).
- **Proof of Acceptance.** Evidence that the manuscript has been accepted for publication or the abstract accepted for conference presentation.
- **Key Personnel Biosketches.** NIH-style biosketches for all participating personnel (maximum four pages each).
- **References.**

### *Review and Selection*

Reviewers will score and prioritize candidates based on the following criteria:

- **Impact on DM Research Dissemination (60%).** The extent to which broader access to the proposed research may improve knowledge and quality of life for individuals living with DM.
- **Commitment to DM Research (20%).** The applicant's engagement with the DM research community and likelihood of continuing work in the field.
- **Scientific Quality and Feasibility (20%).** The rigor and relevance of the research being disseminated.

Applications judged to be scientifically unsound or unrelated to DM research will not be considered for funding regardless of other scores.

Applicants are welcome to consult with the MDF Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Andy Rohrwasser at [Andy.Rohrwasser@myotonic.org](mailto:Andy.Rohrwasser@myotonic.org) for refinement of their proposals before submission. Technical issues should be directed to the MDF Director of Evaluation and Research Programs, Dr. Nadine Ann Skinner at [nadine.skinner@myotonic.org](mailto:nadine.skinner@myotonic.org).

Awards are made at the sole discretion of the MDF Board of Directors and are contingent upon the availability of funds. Availability of funds does not signify a commitment to award any grants.

## Reporting and Publications

### Reporting

- **Progress Reports (one-half page).** Each recipient must submit a final brief report submitted to the MDF no later than one month after the publication or presentation.
- **Expense Reports.** Each recipient must submit a final expense report (including the original proposed budget and final expenses on the grant) submitted to the MDF no later than one month after the publication or presentation and should be submitted along with a check for any unexpended funds on the grant.

### Publications and Conferences

All papers, exhibits, and press releases directly resulting from MDF funding shall carry a credit line to the MDF. Recipients should notify MDF if a press release or media coverage related to the supported work is planned so that communications efforts can be coordinated.

MDF supports open-access dissemination of research findings and will cover reasonable article processing charges required to make funded research immediately accessible.

Titles, lay summaries, investigator names, and institutions for funded projects may be published on the MDF website, in newsletters, and in foundation reports. The grant recipient will always be clearly acknowledged. The lay summary description should not contain information the grant recipient does not wish to divulge to the general public.

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<sup>i</sup> Johnson NE, Butterfield RJ, Mayne K, et al. Population Based Prevalence of Myotonic Dystrophy Type 1 Using Genetic Analysis of State-wide Blood Screening Program. *Neurology*. Published online January 20, 2021:10.1212/WNL.00000000000011425. doi:10.1212/WNL.00000000000011425