



NSCA Foundation Grant LOI Packet

Letter of Intent Instructions, Review Criteria, and Applicant Timeline

LOI as the First Step

Purpose of the Letter of Intent

The LOI provides a concise early view of the project before a full proposal is requested.

- Introduces the proposed research project and its purpose.
- Demonstrates alignment with the NSCA and NSCA Foundation mission and priorities.
- Helps reviewers determine whether the applicant should be invited to submit a full proposal.
- Supports an efficient review process by focusing on significance, approach, innovation, and presentation.



What the LOI Should Communicate

A concise overview with clear reviewer-facing evidence

Project Snapshot

State the research problem, proposed project focus, target population or setting, and the practical value of the work.

Mission Alignment

Make the connection to NSCA and NSCA Foundation priorities explicit. Do not assume reviewers will infer alignment.

Feasibility & Approach

Summarize specific aims, methods, expected outputs, and why the project can be completed as proposed.

Bottom line: the LOI should be brief, clear, relevant, and strong enough to justify a full proposal invitation.

LOI Format Requirements

Required formatting for applicant submissions

Length

Maximum of 2 pages
Includes references

Font

11-point Arial

Margins

1" margins

Visuals

Figures and/or
tables may be
included

References

May be included
Not required

Important: The two-page limit includes references. References are optional, but if used, they must fit within the two-page maximum.

Full Proposal Invitation Criteria

Reviewer criteria for deciding whether to invite a full proposal

Criteria	Description
Mission	Project aligns with the NSCA’s mission and strategic priorities.
Significance / Rationale	Rationale is clearly stated, and project will fill a key gap in NSCA guidelines, textbooks, certification courses, or be immediately applied by practitioners.
Specific Aims and Approach / Methods	Methodology is well-conceived, feasible, and appropriate for achieving specific aims.
Innovation / Novelty	The project introduces novel ideas, methods, or improves practical application substantially.
Overall Presentation	LOI is professionally presented, with clarity and adherence to guidelines.

How Reviewers Will Read the LOI

Translate criteria into applicant-ready questions

- 1 Mission** Is the NSCA connection clear and specific?

- 2 Significance** Does the project fill an important gap or meet a practical need?

- 3 Aims & Methods** Are the aims focused, and are the methods feasible?

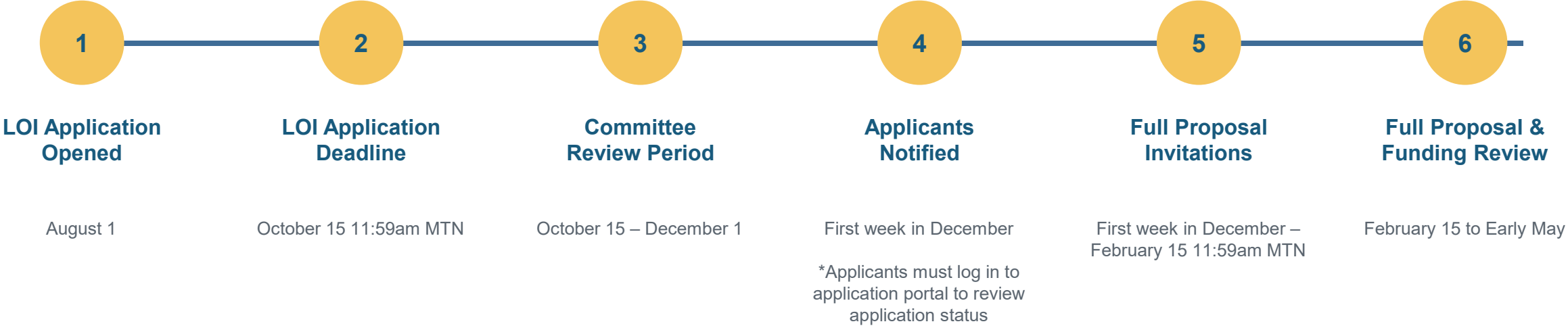
- 4 Innovation** What is new, improved, or substantially more useful?

- 5 Presentation** Is the LOI clear, professional, and compliant?

Applicant takeaway: make the answer to each reviewer question easy to find.

Grant Timeline | Applicant Milestones

Insert final dates before distribution



Applicant Readiness Checklist

Use before submitting an LOI

- ☐ Project alignment with NSCA and NSCA Foundation mission and priorities is explicit.
- ☐ Significance, rationale, and the key gap are clearly stated.
- ☐ Specific aims and methods are feasible, appropriate, and connected.
- ☐ Innovation or substantial practical improvement is easy to identify.
- ☐ LOI is no more than two pages, including references.
- ☐ Document uses 11-point Arial font and 1" margins.
- ☐ Figures and/or tables, if used, fit within the required page limit.
- ☐ Overall writing is clear, professional, and reviewer-friendly.

Submit the LOI first. Invited applicants proceed to the full proposal stage.