NIVEA CONNECT

SOCIAL CONNECTION INSTITUTE

Application Guide

NIVEA CONNECT 2026 Gen Z Research Grant

What research can this grant support?

We welcome interdisciplinary proposals using innovative methods. Relevant topics include:

- Drivers and experiences of social connection, loneliness, and social isolation
- Friendship, belonging, and relationship development
- Digital technologies, social media, artificial intelligence, gaming, and online communities
- Schools, universities, workplaces, neighborhoods, and community organizations
- Social connection among historically underserved or marginalized populations
- Protective factors, including resilience, civic engagement, volunteering, and community participation
- New ways to measure social connection and related constructs
- Pilot studies of programs, policies, interventions, or environmental approaches designed to strengthen connection

Who can apply?

Researchers across disciplines at any career stage may apply.

Lead applicants must be affiliated with a recognized university or nonprofit research institution capable of receiving and administering grant funds.

Independent scholars and researchers without an eligible institutional affiliation may apply through an eligible host institution. Nonprofit organizations may be eligible if they have established research capacity and appropriate grant-administration systems.

Projects must be appropriately scoped for a 12-month seed grant.

What can funding support?

Eligible costs may include:

- Personnel and research staff
- Participant recruitment and compensation
- Data collection and analysis
- Research materials
- Dissemination of findings
- Travel or equipment only when directly necessary for data collection

Indirect or overhead costs are not eligible.
Grants will be paid in Euros.

Reporting, data sharing, and ethics

Reporting: Awardees must submit a final scientific and financial report at the end of the 12-month grant period. Reports should summarize progress, methods, findings or preliminary findings, deviations from the approved plan, research outputs, and use of grant funds.

Data sharing: Applicants should describe how research data, code, measures, and other materials will be managed and shared. Awardees should share de-identified data and materials through a trusted repository when ethically, legally, and practically possible. Any restrictions should be documented. Identifiable participant data must not be shared.

Ethics: Research involving human participants must receive approval from the appropriate institutional review board or research ethics committee before data collection. Projects must comply with applicable laws, institutional policies, and professional standards, including requirements for informed consent or assent. Projects involving participants younger than 18 must address parental or guardian permission unless an ethics committee approves an alternative.

Acknowledgment: Publications, presentations, reports, and other public outputs resulting from the grant must acknowledge support from NIVEA CONNECT and SCI.

Suggested wording:

This research was supported by the NIVEA CONNECT 2026 Gen Z Research Grant, funded by NIVEA CONNECT and scientifically led and administered by the Social Connection Institute.

Funding does not imply endorsement of findings.

What to submit

Applicants should submit:

- Cover page
- Project narrative, maximum 5 pages
- Budget and justification
- Twelve-month timeline
- CV or biosketch for key personnel
- Brief description of relevant ethics-review requirements and plans for data management and sharing

See the Applicant Guide for complete instructions and submission requirements. Also see the application form.

How proposals will be reviewed

Applications will undergo independent peer review coordinated by the Social Connection Institute. Reviewers will consider:

- Scientific significance, originality, and innovation
- Methodological rigor and feasibility within 12 months
- Potential contribution to understanding social connection among Generation Z
- Qualifications of the research team
- Potential to catalyze future research
- Budget appropriateness

Key dates and contacts

Applications open: November 13, 2026

Application deadline: December 11, 2026

Funding decisions: Mid-January 2027

Submission portal: grants@socialconnectioninstitute.org

Questions: info@socialconnectioninstitute.org

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