



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

***AFSP Policies for
Linked Standard Research Grants***

Effective July 1, 2020

1. REVIEW PROCESS

This grant mechanism is designed to encourage implementation of a common grant protocol at two or more sites. Applicants must provide a compelling rationale for the linked grant (more than availability of a larger sample size), designate who will be responsible for the overall conduct and quality control of the study, designate who will be responsible for the data analyses, and discuss how the work at the various sites will be coordinated.

Prior to submitting an application, applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent**. The Letter of Intent must be received by September 15th, must be no longer than 2 pages and must include:

- Descriptive title of proposal
- Names, titles, institutional affiliations and contact information for the PIs and all other key personnel
- List of participating institutions
- A brief description of objectives, samples, outcome measures, procedures (including approach to data analysis), as well as what each site uniquely contributes
- References may be included on a separate page

If standards are met, a full application will be permitted. In the application, **each site participating in the Linked Standard Research Grant must submit its own site information as part of one online application**. Contact information for Investigator and Finance and Administrative Departments, Budget, Budget Justification, Personnel, and Biographical Information must be unique to the site, and the application must include additional, detailed information about the unique role that each separate site will play in the project.

All applications are reviewed independently by two AFSP Scientific Advisors. The better-scoring applications are subsequently reviewed by a member of the Research Grants Committee, who presents them to the full committee for discussion and prioritization. These are then

acted on by the Scientific Council and Board of Directors of AFSP.

Applications are evaluated on the basis of (a) the potential of the research to contribute to the understanding and ultimate prevention of suicide, or to the treatment of suicidal individuals, (b) the qualifications, experience and productivity of the applicant, (c) innovation of the study, (d) the facilities available to the applicant for the purpose of the study, and (e) the methodology and demonstrated availability of a sufficient number of patients or subjects to carry out the research.

2. SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funds used for all AFSP research grants and fellowships are obtained from private donations to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

a. AFSP research grants and fellowships are awarded to individuals affiliated with not-for-profit institutions or organizations in the U.S. and abroad. Grant applications are not accepted from for-profit organizations, or from federal or state government agencies. Applications from the Veterans Administration are eligible. Applications from both private and public colleges and universities are eligible so long as the institution is not-for-profit. Check with your institution's financial department if you are not certain about the status of your institution. Grant payments are made to the grantee institution for the individual investigator.

b. Individuals may be the Principal Investigator (PI) on only one AFSP grant at a time, and may not simultaneously be the PI on any other type of AFSP research grant. This does not preclude serving as a *mentor* on a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship or a Young Investigator Grant while being the Principal Investigator on another AFSP grant.

During the second year of funding (the first year in the case of a one-year grant), an individual holding a research grant may apply for another AFSP grant in the same or another category which, if approved, would start after the end date of the first grant. The second grant cannot begin until the final progress report and financial statement for the current grant are received by AFSP and the Initiation papers for the second grant are approved.

c. AFSP research grants and fellowships are awarded with the understanding that the recipient individual and institution will not accept funds from any other granting agency for research that substantially overlaps with what was approved by AFSP.

d. Personnel compensated in whole or in part through an AFSP research grant are not considered employees of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, but of the grantee institution. AFSP does not assume any responsibility for the conduct of the research or other acts of the investigators. AFSP grantees are subject to the ethical and scientific policies of the grantee institution.

4. DESCRIPTION OF GRANT

Purpose

All AFSP research grants are designed to support research on suicide from a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, medicine, psychology, genetics, epidemiology, neurobiology, sociology, nursing, health services administration, social work, and many others. Grants are not intended to support the development or implementation of prevention programs, educational programs, treatments, or other interventions that do not have a significant research component.

Term of Grant

Grants are generally made for a period of two years, with the second year of funding contingent upon the first year's performance. The project

must begin within 6 months of the approved start date.

If, during the course of the study, a grant recipient experiences delays that will cause the project's duration to last longer than the term of the award (based on the final payment date), a written request for an extension of the grant may be made by the Principal Investigator. These No Cost Extensions can be requested only after the final grant payment has been made. The NCE request will be evaluated in the (original) final quarter of the grant. If approved, the maximum term for such an extension is one year, thus postponing the closing date of the grant, and postponing the due date for the Final Reports. Please note that grant extensions will not normally be granted in cases where the problems or delays being experienced make it unlikely that the project will be successfully completed.

Documents required for request of a No Cost Extension:

- Letter explaining the cause of the delay and rationale for the extension.
- Budget detailing expenses to date and use of remaining funds during the NCE period.
- New timeline outlining projected progress through the end of the new closing date.

Payments

At the time the award is made, grantees will be informed of the specific schedule of grant payments. Payments will be made to the investigator's institution in equal amounts, with the first payment made after all required information has been provided to AFSP, and the Principal Investigator has indicated that the grant project is ready to begin. Payments will proceed on schedule as long as the project is not experiencing significant delays, but may be delayed for projects that are not making adequate progress in completing scheduled activities, including reporting. Grantees should understand that the payments to the institution are suspended until proof of progress is made. The PI should inform the institution's financial officer of the delay, so that the officer also understands that funding will be delayed.

Requirements and Amount

Linked Standard Research Grants of up to \$225,000 per year for a two-year period are awarded to investigators at any academic rank. Although prior research on suicide is not required, applicants are expected to show evidence of prior research or research training in a related field. These grants are intended to fund new directions and initiatives in suicide research rather than to supplement the applicant's existing research and junior investigators.

Allowable and Non-Allowable Costs

AFSP research grants and fellowships are not designed to cover the total cost of the research proposed. The grantee institution is expected to provide the required physical facilities and administrative services normally available in an institution. The following is a summary of allowable and non-allowable costs for Linked Standard Research Grants.

Allowable costs include:

- Compensation for investigators and other personnel required to conduct the research (e.g. technicians, research assistants, clerical staff), including salary and fringe benefits
- Consultant fees
- Consumable research supplies
- Costs related to assessment measures, tests or procedures
- Travel specifically required of personnel or participants to achieve the research aims
- Subject/participant fees
- Software licenses for the term of the grant
- Other direct costs required to carry out the proposed research

Non-allowable costs include:

- Any indirect costs or administrative costs for operations (e.g. telecommunications, office space)
- Construction, alteration or maintenance of buildings
- Standard office equipment or furniture

- Durable equipment (e.g. computers, microscopes, imaging and other laboratory equipment)
- Expenses related to conference attendance or presentations at conferences
- Books, periodicals, or other publications
- Costs for submitting a paper to a conference or academic journal
- Personnel recruiting and relocation expenses
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Tuition
- Purchase of software
- IRB fees

Budgets submitted must be realistic estimates of the funds required for the proposed research, and all items included in the budget must be fully justified. The Principal Investigator may make minor alterations within the approved budget, except where such expenditures conflict with the policies of AFSP. Substantial revisions in the approved budget must be specifically approved by AFSP.

Application Dates and Notifications

Applications for Linked Grants are considered once each year and must be submitted by the deadline. Letters of Intent (LOI) are required, and only invited investigators will be eligible to apply. Please visit our website for this year's date; generally our LOI deadline is in September and the invited full applications are due in mid-November. Final award letters are issued following review and approval by the Scientific Council, and in turn by the Board of Directors, at their May meeting. These grants, if approved, may begin after October 1st.

5. APPLICATION

Letters of Intent should be emailed to the VP of Research. The Letter of Intent must be received by September 15th, must be no longer than 2 pages, and must include:

- Descriptive title of proposal
- Names, titles, institutional affiliations and contact information for the PIs and all other key personnel

- List of participating institutions
- A brief description of objectives, samples, outcome measures, procedures (including approach to data analysis), as well as what each site uniquely contributes, if the project is multi-site

If invited to apply, applications must be submitted via our online grant application/management system, accessible via our website: <https://afsp.org/our-work/research/apply-for-a-grant/>. Questions concerning application requirements should be addressed to grantsmanager@afsp.org.

Care should be taken to comply with the word or page restrictions noted for each section of the application on the application forms. Material submitted that exceeds the specified maximum number of pages/words (as applicable), or that is not specifically requested, may not be considered by the reviewers. Furthermore, applicants should not try to circumvent the restrictions by including crucial application information in an appendix. All substantive information must be in the application itself. The entire application should be typed using a font size no smaller than 11 point.

Each site participating in the Linked Standard Research Grant must submit its own site information as part of one online application. Contact information for Investigator and Finance and Administrative Departments, Budget, Budget Justification, Personnel, and Biographical Information must be unique to the site, and the application must include additional, detailed information about the unique role that each separate site will play in the project.

The application must include the following sections:

a. Basic Information. All requested information about the proposed project,

applicant and institution must be provided, along with an upload of the signatures of the applicant and the head of the applicant's department. Please note: the log-in and primary contact email should be the applicant's institutional email address, not a personal one (e.g., a .edu or .org address, not a gmail address).

b. Financial/Administrative Contact Information.

Provide complete financial payment and grant administrative contact information. Additional site information must also be included (see application form.)

c. Abstract. The aims, methods and expected outcomes of the proposed research project should be clearly stated in lay language.

d. Budget. All requested information must be provided on the standard budget form, and the total amount requested for the first and second (if applicable) year of the project should be indicated. Additional site information must also be included (see application form.) PI effort must be 10% or more.

Indicate for each person participating on the project: name, position, percentage of time to be dedicated to the project, and the amount of funds requested. Note that the use of "to be named" should be used *only* for support or clerical personnel. All personnel who will be playing a substantial role in the project should be specifically listed in the Key Personnel table of the application, and their biographical information provided on the appropriate forms. All consultants to the project who will receive grant funds must also be specifically identified, and a letter of agreement to collaborate from each consultant should be uploaded with the application.

Identify all other direct cost items for which funds are requested, and the amount requested in each budget year for each item.

e. Budget Justification. The duties and responsibilities of all key personnel and

consultants should be described. All other expenses included in the budget should be explained and justified in accordance with the research aims, methods and activities. Additional site information must also be included (see application form.) PI effort must be 10% or more.

f. Biographical Sketches. The information requested should be provided for all persons playing a substantial role in the project. Use only the format provided via the link in the application; the size is up to five pages. All sketches should be combined and uploaded as one document. For consultants, sketches are not required; instead, upload letters of agreement (again as one document). *Do not provide full CVs.*

g. Project Description (excluding references). *Please limit this upload attachment to seven (7) single-spaced pages.* This section of the application should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to evaluate the proposed methods and procedures. It must include a statement of the specific aims and hypotheses; a description of prior related work and the significance of the proposed study for the field; a description of sample, measures, the data collection and analysis methods to be employed; and a discussion of the study's strengths and weaknesses. There must be a suicide outcome measure included in the study. The number of subjects and the power of the study should be indicated. *Explicit details need to be given substantiating the availability of the proposed number of patients or research participants within the amount of time allocated for subject recruitment and enrollment. Additionally, if this proposal is an analysis of data previously collected, details regarding the fidelity, currency and ability to access the data need to be provided in the application.*

Including LGBTQ Data in Project Description

Survey data suggests that individuals who are LGBT are at greater risk for suicide attempts

(Haas, Eliason et al. 2011). However, confirmation of this finding is needed across a wider range of samples and using a wider range of data collection methods. In an effort to learn more about this issue we suggest that all AFSP-funded researchers who are collecting original data systematically assess research participants for sexual orientation and gender identity.

For self-report assessments, please consider using the following questions, which have been recommended for inclusion in federal health surveys (<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu>).

Gender identity: How do you describe yourself? (check one)

- Male
- Female
- Trans male
- Trans female
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Do not identify as any of these options
- Prefer not to answer

Sexual orientation: How do you identify? (check one)

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Do not identify as any of these options
- Prefer not to answer

If the proposed research will utilize previously collected data, we suggest the following format to describe who is included in your sample:

Gender identify of participants (check one):

- Male
- Female
- Trans male
- Trans female
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Did not identify as any of these options
- Preferred not to answer
- Gender not specified

Sexual orientation of participants (check one):

- Asexual

- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Did not identify as any of these options
- Preferred not to answer
- Sexual orientation not specified

h. Certification for Protection of Human and Animal Subjects.

Human Subjects: The proposed research should be submitted to the sponsoring institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) no later than the date the application is submitted to AFSP. On the certification form, the applicant must indicate the current status of the IRB review. If the proposed research has already been approved by the IRB, the form should be signed by the appropriate official and submitted to AFSP. If the research has not been approved by the IRB at the time the application is submitted, this should be indicated by checking the appropriate statement on the form, and a copy of the signed form should be submitted following IRB approval. If a grant award is made by AFSP, no funds will be released until proof of IRB approval is received.

Animal Subjects: Institutions must implement the PHS Policy for all AFSP-supported activities involving animals and must ensure that any standards that might not be consistent with PHS Policy do not affect or pose risks to AFSP supported activities. A certification of approval from The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is required to be submitted prior to the funding of an application.

Assurances: In the box provided, describe assurances regarding the risks to human and animal subjects and the adequacy of protection against possible risk.

i. Project Timeline. Download the timeline template, then complete the table to identify key project activities and the anticipated dates for their completion; upload to application.

j. References. Provide complete citations for all literature cited in the Project Description. There is no page limit for references.

k. Appendices. Appendices should be limited to copies of unpublished instruments, manuals or other materials directly related to the proposed research. Do not include previous publications. Do not include information that is substantively part of other application sections.

6. FINANCIAL RECORDS & REPORTS (For Awarded Grants)

a. A separate account must be maintained for each grant. The account, with substantiating invoices and payrolls, should be available at all times for audit by representatives of AFSP. All financial reports must be signed by the Principal Investigator and the responsible Financial Officer of the institution. Reports that are not signed will not be accepted. Payment of grant funds is contingent upon timely receipt of financial and progress reports. Please be advised that the grant end date will change if payments are delayed for any reason.

b. AFSP is not responsible for the over-expenditure of grant funds, for commitments against a grant not paid within sixty days after its termination or renewal, or for expenditures made before the approved starting date of a grant.

c. Reports of expenditures must be submitted semi-annually. A final report of expenditures must be submitted within 60 days after termination of the grant, together with the refund of any unexpended balance. Unexpended funds from an existing grant cannot be carried forward to any other project or grant. Financial Reports are submitted online as an upload to the online Research Progress Report.

7. PROGRESS AND FINAL REPORTS

Every six months, grantees **MUST SUBMIT** a brief progress report on work completed. Continuing payment of grant funds is contingent upon timely receipt of progress and financial reports.

All grantees must also submit a final report within 60 days of the end date of the grant period. Reports of research findings that have not yet been published are considered confidential and this information will not be disseminated without the express consent of the Principal Investigator. All Research Progress Reports are submitted online via our grants management portal: <http://www.afsp.org/research/forms/manage-your-grant> The log-in will be the same as that used for the applicant process.

8. PUBLICATIONS

Publications resulting from research supported by AFSP research grants should contain appropriate acknowledgement, such as, "Supported by a grant from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention." The Principal Investigator should send AFSP a PDF copy of all publications issuing from the grant to grantsmanager@afsp.org.

9. CHANGES OR CANCELLATION OF GRANT

If any significant departures are made from the original, approved grant application, AFSP must be notified in writing of the changes and be provided with adequate justification before the change is made. Based on this information, AFSP reserves the right to terminate the grant if the changes are deemed inappropriate. All budget changes must be requested in writing and signed by the PI and the Financial Officer.

If the grantee changes institutions during the grant period, permission to transfer the grant to the new institution must be obtained from AFSP prior to the move. The written request by the grantee to transfer the grant should discuss the impact of the move on sample recruitment and other aspects of study design, the grantee's relationship with co-investigators, as well as the new institution's IRB approval and budget, and the timeline for the study. Based on the information provided, AFSP will decide whether to approve the transfer or terminate the grant.

In the event that the grantee does not transfer the grant, the grant will be terminated. The grantee must take responsibility for informing AFSP of his/her departure from the institution where the grant is housed. The letter must be signed by the Principal Investigator and the Financial Officer at the sponsoring institution. A final report of expenditures and research accomplishments must be provided within 30 days of the effective date of cancellation. This letter must be accompanied by the return of all unexpended funds.

References

Haas, A. P., M. Eliason, et al. (2011). "Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations: review and recommendations." *Journal of Homosexuality* 58(1): 10-51.

Despite strong indications of elevated risk of suicidal behavior in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, limited attention has been given to research, interventions or suicide prevention programs targeting these populations. This article is a culmination of a three-year effort by an expert panel to address the need for better understanding of suicidal behavior and suicide risk in sexual minority populations, and stimulate the development of needed prevention strategies, interventions and policy changes. This article summarizes existing research findings, and makes recommendations for addressing knowledge gaps and applying current knowledge to relevant areas of suicide prevention practice.