



American Foundation  
*for* Suicide Prevention

***AFSP Policies  
for  
Young Investigator Grants***

*Effective March 30, 2010*

## 1. REVIEW PROCESS

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Research grants and fellowships are awarded by the AFSP Board of Directors acting on the recommendations of the Chair of the Scientific Council. Each application is reviewed independently by two AFSP Scientific Advisors, and subsequently by a member of the Research Grants Committee, who presents it 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 patients, (b) the qualifications, experience and productivity of the applicant, (c) the facilities available to the applicant for the purpose of the study, and (d) the demonstrated availability of a sufficient number of patients or subjects to carry out the research.

In addition, the evaluation of Young Investigator Grant applications will include consideration of the mentoring plan and the opportunities provided for the applicant to receive meaningful guidance in carrying out the proposed research.

## 2. SOURCE OF FUNDS

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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

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**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. Grant payments are made to the grantee institution for the individual investigator.

**b.** Individuals may be the Principal Investigator (PI) on only one AFSP Young Investigator Grant at a time, and may not simultaneously be the PI on

any other type of AFSP research grant, including a Standard Research Grant, a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship or a Pilot 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 “start” papers for the second grant is approved.

**c.** Someone who is or has been a PI on an NIH/NIMH grant does not qualify as a Young Investigator.

**d.** An individual may receive no more than two (non-overlapping) Young Investigator Grants over the course of a career.

**e.** 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.

**f.** The mentor’s fee of \$5,000 per year (\$10,000 total over 2 years) can be waived, but cannot be used to increase the budget for the Young Investigator’s research beyond the allowable maximum of \$75,000.

**g.** The mentor’s fee must be dispersed by the appropriate financial office at the Young Investigator’s institution, and cannot be paid directly to the mentor by AFSP.

**h.** 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

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### **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 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.

An additional purpose of the Young Investigator Grant is to assist new researchers to obtain the advice, guidance and supervision of an established mentor in a selected area of suicide research.

### **Term of Grant**

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

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, a written request for an extension of the grant must be made by the Principal Investigator. Payments will also be delayed (see Payments). If granted, the maximum term for such an extension is one year. 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. The project must begin within 6 months of the approved start 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. Grantees who request an extension should understand that the payments to the institution are also extended or even 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.

The grantee is responsible for making payment to the mentor(s) on the project.

### **Requirements and Amount**

**Young Investigator Grants** of up to \$37,500 per year for a two-year period are awarded to investigators with an academic rank no higher than assistant professor. This grant is designed for investigators who have completed doctoral studies, although high quality applications from pre-doctoral applicants will be considered. The Young Investigator Grant provides an additional \$5,000 per year to a mentor, who serves as an advisor to the applicant.

The mentor must have an academic rank of associate or full professor and an established record of suicide research and publication relevant to the Young Investigator's proposed study. Individuals may serve as mentors for no more than two AFSP grantees at a time, whether Young Investigators or Postdoctoral Research Fellows.

### **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 Young Investigator 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
- Mentor fee of \$5,000 per year

- 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
- Other direct costs required to carry out the proposed research

Non-allowable costs include:

- Indirect costs
- Fringe benefits for mentor
- 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
- Personnel recruiting and relocation expenses
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Tuition

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 Young Investigator Grants are considered once each year, and must be submitted by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Grants applied for by November 15<sup>th</sup>, if approved, may begin after July 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Preliminary notification letters are sent to applicants after April 1<sup>st</sup> following review of applications by the Research Grants Committee. 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.

## **5. APPLICATION**

Applications for a Young Investigator Grant must be submitted on the appropriate AFSP forms and must follow the format specified. Application forms can be downloaded from the AFSP website.

Completed grant applications must be submitted electronically to [grants@afsp.org](mailto:grants@afsp.org). A compact disc (CD) containing the completed application and supplemental materials must also be submitted to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 120 Wall Street, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10005.

*Care should be taken to comply with the page restrictions noted for each section of the application on the application forms. Material submitted that exceeds the specified maximum number of pages, or that is not specifically requested, may not be considered by the reviewers. The entire application should be typed using a font size no smaller than 11 point.*

The application must include the following sections:

**a. Cover Sheet.** All requested information about the proposed project, applicant and institution must be provided, along with the signatures of the head of the applicant's department and the proposed mentor.

**b. Principal Investigator Assurance Form.** This form must be signed by the Principal Investigator, accepting responsibility for the conduct of the research in the event that a grant award is made.

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

**d. Certification for Protection of Research 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.

**e. 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. The budget should:

- 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 identified 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 included with the application. The mentor should be listed in the personnel section of the budget, and the \$5,000 mentor’s fee listed for each project year. Note that no fringe benefits are paid on the mentor’s fee.

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

**f. 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.

**g. Biographical Information.** The information requested on the biographical form should be provided for all persons playing a substantial role in the project, including the mentor. Use only the form provided in the AFSP application packet. *Do not provide full CVs.*

**h. Project Description.** 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; and a description of the data collection and analysis methods to be employed. 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 subjects within the amount of time allocated for subject recruitment and enrollment. Additionally, if this proposal is analysis of data previously collected, the fidelity, currency and ability to access the data needs to be provided in the application.*

**i. Project Timeline.** The timeline should identify key project activities and the anticipated dates for their completion.

**j. References.** Provide complete citations for all literature cited in the Project Description.

**k. Recommendation of Mentor.** Using the form in the application packet, the mentor should provide detailed information about his or her role in the proposed research project, and evaluate the applicant’s qualifications to carry out the research and to pursue a research career. Specific

information must be provided about the frequency and nature of anticipated contacts with the applicant during the grant period. *The evaluation of Young Investigator Grant applications will include consideration of the mentoring plan and the opportunities provided for the investigator to receive meaningful guidance in carrying out the proposed research.*

## **6. FINANCIAL RECORDS AND REPORTS (Download forms at [www.afsp.org/grants](http://www.afsp.org/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.

**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.

## **7. PROGRESS AND FINAL REPORTS (Download forms at [www.afsp.org/grants](http://www.afsp.org/grants))**

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.

## **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 emanating from the grant to [grantsmanager@afsp.org](mailto:grantsmanager@afsp.org).

## **9. CHANGES OR CANCELLATION OF GRANT**

If any other 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. 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 must be accompanied by the

return of all unexpended funds.