Proposals to the Early Career Research Awards Program (ECRA)

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Proposal Deadline: April 1, 2021

SSSP invites proposals for the funding of projects by **early-career research award (ECRA) applicants** that are consistent with the SSSP's purposes of advancing scholarship in and about school psychology and promoting the application of research to the practice of school psychology.

The purposes stated in the bylaws of SSSP are:

1. To advance basic and applied scientific research in all aspects of school psychology;

2. Disseminate important research results concerning school psychology to the general public, scientists, academicians, and practitioners; and

3. Foster communication about the profession of school psychology.

Award Program Eligibility
Early Career Research Award Program eligibility is defined as pre-tenure individuals who are beginning research careers in universities, state or local agencies, or research centers. Generally, "early" is defined as being in a **post-doctoral research role** for up to **five years**, including persons who have more than five years post-doctoral experience who have recently assumed positions with research expectations and opportunities. The five-year limit may also be extended for events and activities that typically extend one's tenure including, but not limited to leave taken for child birth, illness, or relative's illness.

Only investigators affiliated with non-profit organizations, public institutions (including schools), or public (and private) institutions of higher education are eligible for funding. The early-career applicant may serve as either principal investigator (PI) or co-principal investigator (Co-PI) for the project. An applicant can only be listed as PI or co-PI on a single application. **Previous winners (i.e., PI or co-PI) are not eligible for a second ECRA.** Inquiries about eligibility are welcome.

Nature and Scope of Projects
A wide array of projects consistent with SSSP purposes can be funded under this grant program. We anticipate that approximately $80,000 will be available to fund 4-5 projects. Thus, we expect to limit funding to $20,000 per proposal. Funded projects generally will be of one year's duration; however, projects with longer timelines will be considered but will be dependent upon on the annual availability of funds to SSSP and satisfactory progress in the project toward accomplishing goals. Jointly funded projects involving cooperation with other organizations also will be considered. Note that SSSP awards, including the ECRA, will **not** reimburse for indirect costs (IDC) (see the SSSP website).

The key features on which proposed projects are evaluated include their consistency with SSSP purposes, scientific merit, cost effectiveness, potential impact on school psychology scholarship, and potential impact on improving school psychology practice. Projects consistent with the purposes of SSSP generally will fall into one of the following categories:

1. Produce empirical results that address important scientific issues, methods, theories, or practices in a different way or offer a new perspective on an old scientific problem;

2. Evaluate and/or empirically validate assessment, intervention, and prevention procedure and techniques or other practice activities

3. Produce empirical results with the potential of contributing to the development or confirmation of a theoretical framework from which meaningful practical questions will be evaluated;

4. Produce empirical evidence that may inform the development of education and training models rooted in theory and research;

Award Priorities
Our **first and foremost goal** is to support projects that are innovative; have the potential for advancing the science of school psychology by producing new knowledge (theoretical, applied, or practical) based on empirical findings; and incorporate methods that are rigorous, replicable, and clearly delineated.

Other priorities include
  * Applicants who have authored (senior authored) one or more published or in-press articles in a refereed journal.
  * Applicants who have not been funded previously by SSSP.
  * Proposals where the applicant has a designated mentor who has reviewed the proposal and agreed to advise and consult on the project (Note: Current members of the SSSP Executive Board cannot serve as mentors);
  * Applicants who have attended a School Psychology Research Collaboration Conference (SPRCC) sponsored by SSSP either at the NASP or APA annual conventions;
  * Projects for which there are no other, or only limited, alternative sources of funds, including small pilot projects for which the results could provide the basis for seeking funding from other sources in the future.

Application Process
Applicants should include a letter of endorsement from the appropriate administrative head or organizational authority.
  • The SSSP does not support the completion of theses or dissertations, or other awards to students as principal investigators.

- The SSSP does not provide basic salary support for principal investigators or mentors; honorariums for mentors are not provided. It is permissible to allocate up to $5,000 in summer stipend money to support project activities.

- The SSSP does not support major equipment purchases (including computers and video equipment), or graduate assistantships; graduate students can be hired on for prescribed tasks at a university hourly rate.

- Travel allowance is limited to that required for actual data collection, not for travel to conferences or for meetings between PIs or PI and mentor.

- Indirect administrative (overhead) costs will **not** be reimbursed by the SSSP for any of its awards (see the SSSP website).

Awards will be made once each calendar year. **Proposals must be submitted by April 1, 2021.** A Proposal Review Committee appointed by the President of SSSP, with the approval of the SSSP Executive Board, will review all proposals. Current officers of the SSSP and members of the Proposal Review Committee are ineligible to participate as mentors. In the event of a potential conflict of interest in the evaluation process, the Committee member who has such a conflict will not participate in the scoring process for that application. Applicants can expect a final decision on their proposals by May 31, 2021.

The proposal must be submitted electronically in a **single file** in **pdf format** to the Chair of the Proposal Review Committee (Amity Noltemeyer, anoltemeyer@miamioh.edu) via e-mail attachment. Applications (sections 2 through 6) must be no more than 10 pages, 1"margins, double spaced, in a font size of 12 point or larger. Title page, appendices, references, and mentor letter do not count toward the page limitation, **but all must be included in the single file**.

Applications should be organized into the following sections:

1. <u>Title Page</u>: This should include the title of the study, the Principal Investigator(s) and their affiliation, the Mentor and affiliation, and the requested total budget amount.

2. <u>Overview of the Project</u>: Provide a succinct one-half-page statement of what will be supported with SSSP funds, the major activities, and intended outcomes. Include the primary research questions or aims.

3. <u>Scientific Rationale for Proposal</u> (1-3 pages): The rationale should include the theoretical, empirical, and/or logical foundation for the project. Previous literature and pilot studies (if available) should be critically reviewed in relation to the proposed research. Clear statements about how this research addresses previous limitations and/or extends previous findings should be included. This section should end with a brief description of the current study and restated research questions that are supported by the rationale in the previous pages.

4. <u>Rationale for SSSP Funding</u>: Discuss how the project rationale is compatible with SSSP purposes. Describe the specific short and long-term impact that this study will have on scholarship and/or practice in school psychology.

5. <u>Limited availability</u> of other sources of funding: Discuss the rationale of SSSP funding in terms of other available sources of funds or describe how other resources will be combined with SSSP funds to accomplish important goals.

6. <u>Operational Plan (2-4 pages)</u>: Include specific information about participants and how they will be recruited, measures used, descriptions of interventions or other independent variables, a description of the sequence of procedures, and a plan for analyzing the data that connects directly back to the research questions (i.e., how will you answer the questions). The operational plan should include the following details of the research strategies and method:

   a. *Participants*. Describe the number of participants and relevant demographics (e.g., ages, gender, grades, and location). Also describe IRB approval, risks and protections, and methods of recruitment.
   b. *Measures, Methods, and Research Procedures*. Explicitly state the research design and link to the rationale and research questions. Briefly describe each of the measures and their technical adequacy for the purposes of the research. Also describe scoring procedures when appropriate, including procedures to minimize instrumentation threats. If some of the measures are author-created (e.g., rating scales), discuss how reliability of scores will be tested. Indicate if and how procedural reliability will be monitored and assured for experimental procedures.
   c. *Planned Data Analyses*. Describe the plan for analyzing the data to answer each of the research questions. Give enough detail of statistical analyses (e.g., correlations, regression, analyses of variance, growth models, and multi-level approaches) so that readers will understand the scores to be analyzed and the expected results to support the hypotheses.

7. <u>Personnel</u>: Briefly describe the qualifications of the person(s) responsible for project activities in a brief vita (up to 3 pages) as an appendix for the key person(s) responsible for project activities. Indicate prior experience with School Psychology Research Collaboration Conference (SPRCC) sponsored by SSSP either at NASP or APA in this section. (Vita pages do not count against the page limits). It is imperative that applicants include some information on the role and qualifications of the Mentor in this section as well.

8. <u>Budget</u>: Provide detailed estimates organized according to the budget categories of: (a) Stipends/Honoraria for research participants, (b) Supplies, (c) Data processing, (d) Equipment, and (e) Other (specify). As noted above (see Application Process), travel

funding is limited to that involved in the actual data collection process and SSSP will **not** reimburse for indirect costs (IDC).

9. <u>Letter from Mentor</u>: The grant will not get funded without a letter from the designated mentor. The letter should **clearly indicate the role of the mentor** and not simply read as a letter of support. Letters of support are optional, but do not necessarily communicate "mentorship."

Criteria for Awards

Awards will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. <u>35 points</u>: Importance of the scientific rationale and research/project in relation to needs in school psychology

2. <u>10 points</u>: Rationale for SSSP funding in relation to other sources of funds and SSSP purposes

3. <u>35 points</u>: Operational plan including a detailed timeline, reasonable description of research plan, key stages and criteria for completion, persons responsible, benchmarks for success

4. <u>10 points</u>: Personnel and agency or institutional capabilities; qualifications of PI and mentor

5. <u>10 points</u>: Efficiency of resource utilization, including availability of matching funds, effective use of monies, and realistic appraisal of probable costs.

Procedures

The Proposal Review Committee with members appointed by the SSSP President with the approval of the SSSP Executive Board, will review all proposals. Proposals will be rank ordered by the Proposal Review Committee with a two-tier process. The initial process will include the review of all proposals by at least three members of the Review Committee; based on these reviews, the top ranked will be reviewed, discussed, and voted on by the full Review Committee, which will make recommendations regarding funding to the SSSP Board. Final approval will be made by the SSSP Board. Applicants can expect feedback concerning proposals by May 31, 2021. The grant will be for a period of one year, extending from July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022.

Successful applicants will be expected to acknowledge funding by SSSP in any subsequent publication of the results of the research supported by the grant. Successful applicants are encouraged to consider publication in the *Journal of School Psychology.* A grant report summarizing the activities and results will be required at the completion of the grant year.

If you have any questions, please contact Amity Noltemeyer, Chair of the Early Career Research Awards Program at anoltemeyer@miamioh.edu . Proposals to the Early Career Research Awards Program must be submitted by April 1, 2021 by e-mail to: anoltemeyer@miamioh.edu