

**SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) DISSERTATION GRANT AWARD
Request for Applications**

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS
Applications are Due November 1, 2025 by 11:59PM Eastern Time
Applications should be emailed to dashri@iu.edu

Purpose of the DEI Dissertation Grant Award

The purpose of the Society for the Study of School Psychology (SSSP) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Dissertation Award is to promote excellence in research training in school psychology with the foremost goal to support dissertations that are innovatively focused on DEI thereby enhancing the capacity of doctoral scholars to advance the science of school psychology by promoting diversity science research within the field of school psychology. Diversity science addresses “how people create, interpret, and maintain group differences among individuals, as well as the psychological and societal consequences of these distinctions. . . [and recognizes that] significant social distinctions are not simply natural, neutral, or abstract” (Plaut, 2010, p.77). Although not all quality proposals submitted can be funded, each student will receive feedback intended to contribute to the student’s enthusiasm for and competence in research with a DEI emphasis.

Eligibility

Doctoral students who are matriculated in school psychology programs in the United States or Canada are eligible. In addition, doctoral students who are in a combined program are eligible, contingent on evidence from an advisor that the student’s emphasis is clearly in school psychology and not other aspects of the combined program. Evidence of a student’s school psychology status is likely to include (a) an advisor’s statement that the student is enrolled in the school psychology “track,” (b) inclusion of faculty on the dissertation committee who is a SSSP member or whose primary appointment is in school psychology and who publishes in school psychology journals, *and* (c) the student’s involvement in school psychology professional organizations (via service or dissemination efforts or record of publications in school psychology journals. Emphasis on DEI may include specialized coursework specifically related to DEI or diversity science, service activities, presentations, or publications that indicate an applicant’s potential or sustained efforts to build capacity or contribute to professional efforts related to advancing DEI or diversity science in school psychology.

Note. Eligible individuals may apply for both the DEI Dissertation Grant Award and Dissertation Grant Award competitions but may accept only one award if successful for both.

Award Priority

The goal of the DEI dissertation grant award is to support dissertation research that is innovatively focused on DEI and has the potential to advance DEI and diversity science in school psychology.

Mentorship Requirements

Close mentorship and advisement on the dissertation are expected. A plan for advising, mentorship, and oversight by a mentor is required (see section 7f).

Topics and Methods

The DEI Dissertation awards will be granted to students conducting well-designed empirical DEI-focused research with strong potential to advance diversity science in school psychology. Topics to be considered are those that address human forms of diversity or social determinants of health or structural/system inequities; pertain to students' academic, social, emotional, or behavioral development or well-being; or feature systems that support children's learning and development (e.g., homes/families; classrooms/schools; and health and mental health systems) at the intersection of DEI. Methods of empirical investigation can include quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches. Researchers must ensure that their proposals are consistent with professional codes of ethics (i.e., APA, NASP, and American Academy of Pediatrics).

Size of Award

There will be one DEI Dissertation Award, with a cap of \$5,000. An applicant whose initial submission is not funded *may resubmit* for a subsequent funding cycle *only once*. The awarded funds cannot be used for travel outside the scope of the research plan or payments to the applicant, mentor, or dissertation committee members. The awards cannot be used for indirect cost reimbursement, consistent with SSSP policy (see the SSSP website).

Application Format

The application should be double-spaced, with 1" margins and font no less than 11 point.

For consistency in applications, each of the following sections must be included:

a) *Abstract* (no more than 1 page)

Provide a title and structured abstract that summarizes the substantive focus and research design of the dissertation and its contribution to the field of school psychology and how it addresses DEI emphasis.

b) *Research Strategy* (no more than 12 pages). Must include the following sections:

1) Rationale/Justification/Importance of Research/Conceptualization/Contribution/Innovation

Provide a brief review of relevant previous literature. Provide a good justification for the importance of the proposed research and its potential to contribute new knowledge about the area under study with an emphasis on DEI. Describe the specific aims of the proposed study, and state related research questions or hypotheses.

2) Participants

Describe the number of participants and relevant demographic characteristics (e.g., ages, gender, grades, and location). (In the Human Subjects Plan section, describe IRB approval, risks and protections, and methods of recruitment.)

3) Measures, Methods, and Research Procedures

Concisely describe the study design and research procedures, and rationale for their selection. If appropriate, briefly describe any measures and their reliability and validity evidence for the purposes of the proposed research. Also describe scoring procedures when appropriate. If some of the measures are author-created (e.g., rating scales, interview protocol), discuss how their reliability will be established, when appropriate. Detail proposed research-related interactions with participants.

4) Planned Data Analyses

Describe the plan for analyzing the data to answer each of the research questions. Give enough detail of planned analyses so that readers will understand the data to be analyzed and the expected results to support the hypotheses/questions.

c) *Key References* (no more than 2 pages)

d) *Human Subjects Plan* (no more than 2 pages)

Describe the proposed involvement of human subjects in the work outlined in the Research Strategy section and the potential risks and benefits to participants. Describe planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to privacy of individuals or confidentiality of data. Describe plans for the recruitment of participants (where appropriate) and the process for obtaining informed consent. Note that evidence of IRB approval from the appropriate institution is required prior to receipt of funding.

e) *Budget and Brief Justification* (no more than 1 page)

Provide a narrative budget justification for the proposed project. The budgeted amount may not exceed \$5000. The budgeted period may not begin prior to February 1, 2026 and should not exceed 12 months. *Note.* Dissertators who have incurred out-of-pocket expenses for costs related to beginning their dissertation projects prior to receiving an award may seek reimbursement for those expenses if they were incurred no more than 6 months prior to the award start date. Reimbursement is allowed only for purchases for which the dissertator has receipts and a clear justification, and cannot be made to any party other than the dissertator. The amount requested for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses must be less than half of the entire amount requested. Dissertators seeking reimbursement must also state, and have their advisor confirm, that the majority of research will take place during the award period (i.e., SSSP will not pay for projects that are mostly or entirely completed).

The narrative budget justification should describe how costs are derived or anticipated for each budget item. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs. Overhead or indirect costs will not be reimbursed for any of the SSSP awards (see the SSSP website), including the dissertation award. Travel expenses to present at conferences will **not** be reimbursed by the SSSP. Examples of eligible budget items include participant

incentives, equipment and materials, software, transcription necessary for recruitment, data collection, or analyses proposed.

Note. Unspent funds must be returned to the SSSP by the institution's grants and contracts office within 30 days of the close of the project.

f) *Mentorship Plan* (one page exclusive of mentor biosketch).

- 1) Provide the name and institutional and program affiliations of all dissertation committee members. Indicate one primary mentor who will act as advisor throughout the project. If the student is enrolled in a combined program, provide evidence of eligibility as described in Section 2.
- 2) Describe the timeline for the work described in the research strategy section and for completing the writing of the dissertation.
- 3) Include a statement signed by mentor certifying the feasibility of the research strategy, the DEI emphasis, the mentor's availability to act as advisor throughout the course of the project, and whether the student's dissertation committee has approved the associated dissertation proposal. If the advisory committee has not approved the proposal at the time of submission of this proposal, the statement should include the anticipated date of the proposal defense, which must be on or prior to January 15, 2026. Funds will not be awarded until the proposal has been approved by the student's dissertation committee.
- 4) Mentor biosketch (see NIH biosketch requirements) and list of recent graduates they have mentored (4 pages maximum, including list of graduates) and professional activities related to DEI.

g) *Applicant's Biosketch* (not to exceed 2 pages)

Include contact information (phone number and email address), post-high school education, including dates of attendance and receipt of degrees, employment summary, graduate level scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships, professional memberships, other relevant awards or recognitions, publications and presentations, and professional activities.

h) *Additional Support*

If implementation of the research requires collaboration or support from other parties, such as a school district's approval of the research or access to a database, letters of support may be included in an appendix.

Evaluation Criteria

Five criteria will be evaluated on a 7-point scale, and three criteria will be evaluated on a 3-point scale.

a) *Significance of Research* (1-7)

Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in school psychology? Specific emphasis on DEI as outlined in the DEI focused purpose of the award? Does the project have a DEI emphasis beyond focus on a demographically diverse population? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will the project advance diversity

science in the field of school psychology with respect to promoting scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or applied practice be improved?

b) Innovation (1-7)

Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to this field of research? Does the research challenge and seek to shift current research or practice in school psychology related to DEI?

c) Overall Approach (1-7)

Are the methods and analyses clear and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Approach will be rated separately for each of the following areas:

d) Sampling (1-7)

Is the sample appropriate to the research questions or aims? Will the sample size provide sufficient power to produce potential significant effects? Are the recruitment procedures feasible and appropriate?

e) Measures, Methods, and Research Procedures (1-7)

Is the design appropriate to the research questions/aims? Do the measures have adequate reliability and validity evidence for the purposes of the research? Are the measures appropriate to answer the research questions? If the measures are author-created, is there a plan to test their reliability for the purposes of the research? Are the research procedures clearly stated and appropriate to the research questions?

f) Planned Data Analyses and Expected Contributions (1-7)

Are the data analyses well thought out and appropriate to answer the research questions? Are the expected results clearly described and plausible? Have other possible confounding factors been considered, when appropriate?

g) Mentorship Plan (1-3)

Will the mentoring provided contribute to the probability of success? Does the mentor or members of the dissertation committee have an established record of DEI research in school psychology? Does the mentorship plan include those with an established record of professional activities that reflect culturally centered approaches that do not pathologize and cause further harm to minoritized populations?

h) Applicant's qualifications to conduct the research and disseminate findings in scientific journals (1-3)

Does the applicant demonstrate, by prior DEI research involvement, contributions to professional associations, professional publications, and other means, both interest in and ability to pursue a productive research career that advances diversity science in school psychology?

i) Necessity and Reasonableness of Budget (1-3)

Does the applicant provide adequate justification for budgeted items in terms of necessity and reasonableness of costs? Are travel expenses limited to expenses necessary to support data collection and analysis (i.e., not for conference travel)?

Submission Instructions and Notification of Awards

The complete application should be converted to a single PDF file with the sections organized in the order listed under the section on application format above, and emailed to Dr. Dave Shriberg at dashri@iu.edu (with the subject line “SSSP DEI Dissertation Grant Award”) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time November 1, 2025. Applications received after this day and time or not in the PDF format indicated above will be returned without review. The PDF file should be labeled with the applicant’s name, followed by the mentor’s name and the date (e.g., Doe_Beckman_11-01-2025.pdf).

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by December 15, 2025.

The length of award, typically, will be one year. A no-cost extension may be requested; however, the request for a no-cost extension should be made within 60 days of the end of the funding period.

Reporting Requirements

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*. Within six months after the funding period (or within 6 months after the end of the no-cost extension period), award recipients are required to send a narrative Final Grant Report to the SSSP Director of Research (dirofresearch.sssp@gmail.com) describing: a) how the funds were spent, b) any significant deviations from the research strategy described in the application, c) a summary of grant-related activities and findings, d) a list of presentations and publications emanating from the dissertation research, and e) the date of defense and final approval of the dissertation by the student’s committee. If the dissertation has not been defended and approved by the student’s committee within 6 months after the funding period, the report should indicate the anticipated date of the defense and final approval, in which case the student is expected to notify SSSP when the dissertation has been defended successfully. Within six months after the project period, also send a Final Financial Report (e.g., a copy of your university’s grant close-out report) and return any unused funds to the SSSP Treasurer (treasurer.sssp@gmail.com).