

# SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

## Proposals to the Early Career Research Awards Program

### GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Proposal Deadline: April 20, 2018

SSSP invites proposals for the funding of projects by **early-career 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 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 postdoctoral experience who have recently assumed positions with research expectations and opportunities. Inquiries about eligibility are welcome.

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.

#### Nature and Scope of Projects

A wide array of projects consistent with SSSP purposes can be funded under this grant program. In a typical year, it is anticipated that up to \$80,000 will be available to fund 4 projects (with a maximum of \$20,000 per award). Funded projects generally will be of one year's duration; however, projects with longer timelines will be considered. Annual appropriations for multiple-year awards are dependent 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.

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 of 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 whose 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 allow for summer support so long as project-related work is necessary and ongoing during the summer months; honorariums for mentors are not provided.
- 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 cannot exceed 5 percent of the budget.

Awards will be made once each calendar year. **Proposals are due by April 20, 2018.** 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 be replaced with an alternate reviewer as a review panel member for that year's competition. Applicants can expect a final decision on their proposals by May 31 in the calendar year of the competition.

The proposal must be submitted electronically in a **single file** in **pdf format** to the Chair of the Proposal Review Committee via e-mail attachment (Craig Albers; [craig.albers@wisc.edu](mailto:craig.albers@wisc.edu)). Applications must be no more than 10 pages, 1" margins, double spaced, in a font size of 12 point or larger. Title page, appendices and references do not count toward the page limitation **but must be included in the single file – this includes the mentor letter.**

Applications should be organized into the following sections:

1. Title Page: 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 including indirect costs.
2. Overview of the Project: Provide a succinct one-half-page statement of what will be supported with SSSP funds, the major activities, and intended outcomes.
3. Scientific Rationale for Proposal (1-4 pages): The rationale should include the theoretical, empirical, and/or logical foundation for the project. Previous literature, theoretical frameworks, pilot studies and other activities showing promising results and qualitative perspectives are all acceptable for building a rationale. Proposals should include hypotheses to be tested, research questions to be addressed, goals or intended outcomes to be assessed, etc.
4. Rationale for SSSP Funding: Compatibility with SSSP purposes: Discuss how the project rationale is compatible with SSSP purposes. Describe specific ways in which scholarship and/or practice in school psychology will be influenced by the results.
5. Limited availability 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. Impact: Specify short- and long-term impact on school psychology scholarship or the implementation of research into school psychology practice.
7. Operational Plan: Provide a detailed operational plan through a timeline that integrates rationale, purpose, activities, person(s) responsible for the activities, and indicators of progress toward meeting project goals. The operational plan should clearly indicate the role of the mentor in completion of the proposed research.

8. Personnel: 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.
9. Budget: Provide detailed estimates organized according to the budget categories of: (a) Stipends/Honoraria for research participants, (b) Supplies, (c) Data processing, (d) Equipment, (e) Indirect administrative costs (overhead), and (f) Other (specify). As noted above (see Application Process), travel funding is limited to that involved in the actual data collection process.
10. Letter from Mentor: 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. 35 points: Importance of the scientific rationale and research/project in relation to needs in school psychology
2. 10 points: Rationale for SSSP funding in relation to other sources of funds and SSSP purposes
3. 35 points: Operational plan including a detailed timeline, reasonable description of research plan, key stages and criteria for completion, persons responsible, benchmarks for success
4. 10 points: Personnel and agency or institutional capabilities; qualifications of PI
5. 10 points: 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 half will be reviewed and discussed by the full Review Committee. Final approval will be made by the SSSP Board. Applicants can expect feedback concerning proposals by May 31 during the calendar year of the competition. The grant will be for a period of one year, extending from July 1 to June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

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 the Chair (Craig Albers, [craig.albers@wisc.edu](mailto:craig.albers@wisc.edu)) of the Early Career Awards Program.