AMSSM & ACSM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

"Breaking Barriers Research Grant Award"

AMSSM & ACSM BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The AMSSM Foundation and the ACSM Research Committee welcome research grant proposals that investigate topics within the discipline of sports medicine that focus on the health and well-being of traditionally underrepresented communities in sports medicine. The purpose of this grant mechanism is to foster research that can "break barriers" and grow the evidence base supporting historically underserved communities within sports medicine.

General Summary

Published Date: September 2026

Summary: The purpose of the Breaking Barriers award is to address the health and well-being of traditionally underrepresented communities in sports medicine.

Eligibility:

The Principal Investigator (PI) of the grant must be an AMSSM or ACSM physician member (MD/DO or international equivalent) to apply, with the requirement that the PI awarded the $20,000 grant must be a member of both AMSSM and ACSM throughout the 2-year period after the grant recipient has been selected. Applicants must be or become an ACSM professional or fellow member if selected as a grant recipient, and membership type may not be downgraded during the funding period. ACSM chapter membership alone does not fulfill this requirement. That is, a PI is not required to be a member of both organizations at the time of application but is required to be a member of both if selected as a grant recipient. Applications where instructions are not properly followed will not be considered. AMSSM and ACSM Board members are not eligible to apply.

Key dates:

- **Application Deadline: November 13, 2026 (5 p.m. ET)**
- **All deadlines are at 5 p.m. ET unless otherwise specified.**
- Award Announcements: March 2027
- Grant Start Date: Between April 1 and September 1, 2027. Earlier start dates are strongly encouraged, but a September 1st date is accepted if necessary for school year data collection. Data collection should be completed within 2 years of the study start date listed in the signed letter of agreement provided after award notification.

Maximum Project Budget: $20,000 (direct + indirect expenses)

Maximum Project Timeline: 2 years

Available Templates: Cover Page, Biographical Sketches, Review Template

APPLICATION PROCESS

Review Process

The review process is modeled after the process utilized by the National Institutes of Health and similar national sports medicine organizations. The Research Grant Review Committee will consist of 3 appointed representatives

from the AMSSM and 3 appointed representatives from the ACSM. At least 4 of the 6 representatives should be members of both the AMSSM and the ACSM. To receive funding, a grant proposal must be of high scientific quality, have clear relevance to the field of primary care sports medicine, and specifically address the health and well-being of traditionally underrepresented communities in sports medicine. To further promote the purpose of this grant, applicants should provide a brief description that either highlights their past experiences helping underserved communities (research or volunteerism) or discuss a part of their past that has motivated them to help underserved populations. Funding decisions will be made based on the review criteria below and the availability of funds.

Review Criteria

The Research Grant Review Committee evaluates the scientific merit of each grant application according to the NIH's "Simplified Peer Review Framework" as follows:

- Factor 1. Importance of the Research (Significance & Innovation) - Score (1-9) + Written feedback
- Factor 2. Rigor and Feasibility (Approach, Rigor, Feasibility) - Score (1-9) + Written feedback
- Factor 3. Expertise and Resources (Investigators & Environment) - Appropriate/ Not Appropriate
- Preliminary Overall Impact Score (1-9)

Non-Scored Review Considerations

- Institutional Assurances - Appropriate/ Not Appropriate
- Budget - Appropriate/ Not Appropriate

* Any consideration fields where 'not appropriate' or 'doesn't align' are selected will have written feedback provided.

An applicant's personal statement will not be scored as part of the scientific review, but it will be reviewed in regard to the overall alignment of the proposal with the goals of this RFP.

Progress Report

- Communications and progress reports should be sent to the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund: ssund@amssm.org.
- A progress report must be submitted every six months. A report of expenditures should be submitted with the progress report. Any balance of more than $200 must be refunded to AMSSM within sixty days of completion of the project. If needed, a no-cost extension should be requested at least one month before the scheduled end date of the project and submitted with a progress report.
- A final progress report and report of expenditures are due within 90 days of the end of the grant support. The final progress report should highlight significant results and their significance. It should also include a dissemination plan that describes where and when the results are expected to be published and/or presented, other ways the team plans to share the work with the community, and the anticipated next steps of the line of research.
- If a significant change to the study protocol is necessary, approval should be requested in advance from the Research Grant Review Committee at least 30 days before any changes are implemented.

Presentations and Publications

AMSSM/ACSM encourages publication of research findings by the grantee in scientific journals, preferably an ACSM journal or CJSM. All publications resulting in whole or in part from the grant must include a statement similar to: **"Funded in part by a grant from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) Foundation and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AMSSM and/or ACSM."** All presentations and posters should include a similar acknowledgment. AMSSM and ACSM impose no restrictions on copyrighting

publications by grantees.

It is expected that any completed project funded by the Breaking Barriers Research Grant Award will be submitted for presentation at either the AMSSM Annual Meeting or the ACSM Annual Meeting and will be judged with all other research submissions by guidelines previously established by the respective organization.

Human Subjects Approval:
Prior Institutional Review Board approval is not required at the time of submission; however, **investigators are required to provide evidence of initial IRB submission at the time of application.** No funds will be disbursed for research purposes until IRB approval is received by AMSSM. Proof of IRB approval will be required within three months of acknowledgment of approval of the award. If you do not have an Institutional Review Board, a review of your project by your hospital Human Subjects Committee or equivalent is required for funding. If your hospital or private practice does
not have a Human Subject committee or equivalent, please contact the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund: ssund@amssm.org, before submission to determine alternative options. It is the sole responsibility of the principal investigator(s) and their institution(s) to ensure the work is carried out within the required guidelines.

Timeline and Award Notification:
All applications submitted in response to this RFP will be due no later than 5 p.m. ET on the deadline listed under Key Dates. The award recipient will be announced at the time listed under the Key Dates.

AWARD MECHANISMS AND AMOUNTS

Overview: AMSSM and ACSM intend to award one high-quality research grant each year that addresses the health and well-being of traditionally underrepresented communities in sports medicine. The maximum grant award is $20,000. The awardee will receive 50% of approved funds from ACSM and 50% from AMSSM. Historically, funded proposals are those that seek to answer meaningful and focused research questions within the limited time frame and budget. The grant funds will not be released to an investigative team until a signed letter of agreement and proof of IRB or other necessary regulatory approvals are received by the AMSSM Research Program Manager.

Duration of Funded Research Programs: The grant will be awarded for a two-year cycle. Additional one-year no-cost extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis upon request by the PI.

Overhead and Indirect Cost Limits: The PI's institution or practice is expected to provide all necessary basic facilities and services to complete the proposed research. Overhead or indirect costs will be supported at a maximum of 10% of the total budget.

***Disbursement of funds*:** Regardless of the proposed grant start date, these documents must be received by the AMSSM Research Program Manager no later than date listed under Key Dates. If these documents are not submitted by this date, AMSSM/ACSM reserves the right to withdraw funding for the project.

FULL APPLICATION

Grant awards are designed to provide support for promising, innovative research projects. The Research Committee welcomes applications to fund pilot projects that will be used in support of future funding applications. The principal investigator assumes full administrative, fiscal, ethical, and scientific responsibility for the conduct of the project.

Overview: All required components of the grant application must be submitted in the application portal here: https://acsm.secure-platform.com/site. After logging in, select Research & Program Grants to start a proposal. Applications where instructions are not followed will not be considered. The complete proposal should include the following sections.

General Guidelines:

- The complete application should be submitted as a single file in PDF format, single-spaced, 11pt Arial font,
- minimum 0.5" margins.
- Please number all pages.
- Although there are no limits to the total length of the application, the following limits must be followed for specific sections:
  - Abstract: maximum 300 words
  - Research proposal: maximum 6 pages
  - Personal Experience: maximum 1 page
  - Biographical sketch: 5 pages (per investigator), following NIH guidelines (see below for details)

***Components of Application*:**

- **Cover Page:** include the title of the proposed study, the principal investigator with complete contact information (name, title, institution, address, phone, and email), and the names, titles, and institutions of all co-investigators. At the bottom of the cover page, please include the proposed start and end dates of the project and the requested funding amount.
- **Abstract:** Maximum 300 words. The abstract should include the following elements: Title, Background, Purpose/Specific Aims, Methods/Study Design, Hypothesis, and Significance of Study.
- **Research Proposal:** The research proposal (excluding the abstract, budget, biographical sketches, and references) should not exceed 6 pages, single-spaced, 11pt Arial font, minimum 0.5" margins. Please include the following sections:
  - **Background:** Briefly describe the clinical problem that the proposed research project addresses. Include an evaluation of existing studies relevant to the project, with appropriate citations, identifying gaps in current knowledge and practice.
  - **Preliminary Studies (optional):** Describe the results of any relevant published or preliminary results generated by the principal or co-investigators to support the rationale and/or feasibility of the proposed studies.
  - **Purpose/Specific Aims:** Concisely state the overall objective of the proposed research as well as the specific aims that the proposal intends to answer. Include a hypothesis of the outcome for each specific aim and a brief scientific rationale supporting this hypothesis. A maximum of three specific aims is recommended to ensure the study is appropriately focused.
  - **Study Design/Methods:** Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and statistical analysis plan. Include the setting, approach to data collection, and analysis. Describe any novel proposed approaches, tools, or technologies. A power analysis justifying the total number of subjects, specimens, or other samples must be included. If the proposal is a pilot study, a scientifically based rationale for the proposed sample size is required in place of a formal power analysis.
  - **Potential pitfalls/alternative strategies**: Discuss any anticipated difficulties or limitations of the proposed methods and potential solutions/alternative approaches that may be considered if necessary.
  - **Significance of Study:** Describe the importance and relevance of the proposed research, anticipated next steps, and potential long-term impact on the field of primary care sports medicine.
- **Personal Experience**: Provide a brief description that (1) highlights the research team's past experiences helping underserved communities (research, clinical or volunteerism) and/or (2) discusses their team's motivation and interest in helping underserved populations through the proposed research project.

- **Timeline**: Provide a tentative timeline for the project, including the start and end date as well as any important anticipated milestones. Data collection and analysis should be completed within 24 months of the proposed start date.
- **Budget & Budget Justification**. Provide a detailed budget itemized by expense categories.
    - Funds may be used to support supplies and equipment, investigators, technicians, research assistants, study coordinators, or statistical support.
    - Include institutional overhead costs (indirect costs) to a maximum of 10% of direct costs minus equipment and tuition. If the PI's institution does not require indirect costs for this type of award, this must be specifically stated in a letter from the Department Chair or other appropriate institutional official and included in the appendix of the application.
    - Include name, role, FTE, and budgeted costs for all personnel involved in the project during the twelve months. In cases where an individual cannot be identified at the time of submission, providing the proposed position title and role is adequate. Fringe benefit costs for personnel should be included as appropriate. If graduate student support is requested, indicate the amount of tuition and the amount of the stipend.
    - If equipment is to be purchased, each item with a unit acquisition cost must be listed. Please justify significant equipment purchases and any unusual costs.
    - A maximum of $750 is allowable for travel expenses related to the project. This does not include conference attendance for presenting the results.
    - A detailed budget justification should be included to provide additional information in each budget category where applicable (salary, equipment, travel, publication fees).
    - If additional funding is required and has been obtained to complete the proposed research project, please provide information including the funding agency, the amount received, as well as justification for the additional funds requested in this proposal.
- **Biographical Sketch:** Bio-sketches for all key study investigators (PIs and Co-Is) are required. Use of SciENcv, a tool to develop and automatically format biosketches according to NIH requirements, is strongly encouraged. However, applicants may also use and adhere to the attached template. If using the provided template, applicants should include all pertinent appointments and qualifications, and a statement of purpose that identifies the investigator's strengths in answering this RFP as it relates to the chosen research topic. Only publications most relevant to the proposed research project are necessary.
- **IRB Documentation:** Include documentation confirming submission of the study protocol to the relevant institutional compliance office. If IRB approval has been obtained, include a copy of the approval letter. If the study has been deemed to be exempt from IRB approval, this documentation should also be provided.
- **References**: Please number all references in the order in which they appear in the proposal. Commonly accepted reference styles include the Vancouver Style and the AMA Style. The sample format for references is given below:
    - Journal article:
        - Newcomer KL, Laskowski ER, Idank DM, et al. Corticosteroid injection in early treatment of lateral epicondylitis. Clin J Sport Med. 2001; 11:214–222.
    - Book chapter:
        - Claessens AL. Elite female gymnasts: a kinanthropometric over-view. In: Johnston FE, Eveleth P, Zemel B, eds. Human Growth in Context. London: Smith-Gordon and Co; 1999:273–280.
    - World Wide Web:
        - Gostin LO. Drug use and HIV/AIDS [JAMA HIV/AIDS web site]. June 1, 1996. Available at: http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/ethics. Accessed June 26, 1997.
- **Appendix**: The following materials may be included in the appendix as appropriate:
    - For proposals that include surveys/questionnaires, a copy of the survey/questions must be included.
    - A letter from the Department Chair or other designated institutional official if indirect costs are not

required by the PI's institution.

- Up to three peer-reviewed publications authored by one or more of the investigators ***pertinent to the proposed research*** may be included. These manuscripts must be published or in press.

QUESTIONS

All questions and clarifications related to this RFP can be directed to the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund: ssund@amssm.org, phone: 608-265-0027. For questions or assistance related to the application portal, contact Gretchen Patch: gpatch@acsm.org.

COVER PAGE TEMPLATE

Title of Research Project:

Primary Institution:

Principal Investigator(s):
Include name, title, institution, address, phone and e-mail

Co- Investigator(s):
Include name, title, institution, address, phone and e-mail

Timeline Proposed:
Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Budget Information:

Total Amount Requested (not more than 2 years): Total $_____for __Years

Year 1: $_____

Year 2: $_____

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME:

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE *(if applicable)*	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement

B. Positions, Scientific Appointments, and Honors

C. Contributions to Science

GRANT REVIEW TEMPLATE

Review Instructions

This review process will mirror NIH's Simplified Peer Review Framework. Use whole numbers with no decimal points. A score of 5 is for a good, medium-impact application and considered an average score. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. Reviewers are asked to utilize the whole scoring range.

Degree of Impact	Impact Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/ Weaknesses
High	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Moderate	4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses
Definitions **Minor**: easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project. **Moderate**: weakness that lessens the impact of the project. **Major**: weakness that severely limits the impact of the project.			

Factor 1. Importance of the Research (Numerical Score 1-9)

Significance: Assess whether the proposed research addresses a critical gap or challenge in the field, is grounded in rigorous scientific rationale, and offers meaningful advancement in knowledge or practice.

Innovation: Evaluate how the project introduces or applies novel concepts, methods, or technologies—or uses existing ones in new ways—to enhance its impact and relevance.

Factor 1. Feedback

Provide written feedback on score driving reasons for this factor.

Factor 2. Rigor and Feasibility (Numerical Score 1-9)

Approach: Evaluate the scientific quality of the proposal, the likelihood that compelling, reproducible findings will result and assess whether the proposed studies can be done well and within the timeframes proposed.

Rigor: Assess whether the study design, controls, sample size, analysis plans, and consideration of biological variables support the generation of unbiased, reproducible, and generalizable data.

Feasibility: Determine if the proposed research is realistically achievable, including plans to manage challenges and recruit a diverse and appropriate participant population where applicable.

Factor 2. Feedback

Provide written feedback on driving reasons for this factor.

Factor 3. Expertise and Resources (Appropriate/Not Appropriate)

Investigator: Evaluate whether the investigator has demonstrated background, training, and expertise, as appropriate for their education or career stage, to conduct the proposed work.

Environment: Evaluate whether the institutional resources are appropriate to ensure the successful execution of the proposed work.

Preliminary Overall Impact Score (Numerical Score 1-9)

Consider Factors 1, 2 and 3 in the determination of scientific merit, and in providing an overall impact score. Remember, the overall impact score is not an average of Factors 1 and 2.

Institutional Assurances (Appropriate/Not Appropriate)

Indicate if the institutional assurances are sufficient and appropriate. Note any concerns to protections for human subjects in the Additional Feedback field below.

Budget (Appropriate/Not Appropriate)

Refer to the approved budget uses and restrictions within the application. Note if the budget requested is appropriate overall and at the itemized level.

Additional Feedback

Written feedback is required for areas marked "Not Appropriate" or "Does Not Align" or provide any additional feedback on the proposal.