

# AMSSM FOUNDATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## *“New Investigator Research Grant Award”*

### **AMSSM BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY**

The AMSSM Foundation and the AMSSM Research Committee welcome research grant proposals that investigate issues within the broad discipline of sports medicine, including clinical practice, injury prevention and rehabilitation, quality improvement, basic science, epidemiology, and education. Grant topics and names of other grant award winners can be found under [AMSSM Research Grants](#).

#### ***General Summary***

Published Date: May 2026

Summary: The purpose of the AMSSM Foundation New Investigator Research Grant Award is to foster original scientific investigations by members of AMSSM in the early stages of their research careers.

Eligibility: The Principal Investigator (PI) of the grant must be an AMSSM member in good standing and either within 5 years of fellowship (i.e., early career) **OR** with fewer than 2 first-author original research publications post-fellowship. If there is more than one PI, all Principal Investigators (PIs) must be active members of AMSSM, in good standing. PIs from both private practice and academic institutions are encouraged to apply.

**Applicants are only eligible to receive this grant once.**

Key dates: *All deadlines are at 5pm ET unless otherwise specified.*

- **Application Deadline: October 5, 2026**
- Award Announcements: December 2026
- Grant Start Date: Between January 1 and September 1, 2026. (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 1 year of the study start date listed in the signed letter of agreement provided after award notification.)
- Letter of Agreement & IRB approval must be received by April 1, 2027

Maximum Project Budget: \$15,000

Maximum Project Timeline: 1 year

Available Templates: Cover Page, Biographical Sketches

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### *Review Process*

The review process is modeled after the process utilized by the National Institute of Health and similar national sports medicine organizations, including the AMSSM Collaborative Research Network. The Research Grant Review Committee will consist of at least five members from any of the following: the AMSSM Foundation, AMSSM Research Committee, AMSSM Board of Directors, or AMSSM members-at-large. Individuals applying for the AMSSM Research Grant as a principal or co-investigator(s) are not eligible to review during that cycle. To receive funding, a grant proposal must be of high scientific quality and have clear relevance to the field of primary care sports medicine. Funding decisions will be made based on the review criteria below and the availability of funds.

**Review Criteria:** To encourage consistent, fair, and reliable review of proposals, this RFP will follow an adapted NIH Simplified Framework for critique and scoring based on the scientific merit of proposals. Proposals will also be assessed for programmatic alignment with the clinical practice of AMSSM members. Letters of Intent and full applications will be scored according to the criteria identified below. Reviewers consider Factors 1, 2, and 3 in the determination of scientific merit and in providing an overall impact score. In addition, Factors 1 and 2 each receive a separate criterion score between 1-9.

#### **Factor 1: Importance of the Research [Criterion Score 1-9]:**

- a. **Significance:** Proposals will be evaluated for the importance of the proposed study to the practice of sports medicine in the context of current scientific and clinical challenges and opportunities. Proposals should address an important gap in knowledge in the field and/or have the potential to contribute to the improvement of clinical practice. Proposals will also be evaluated for the rationale provided for undertaking the study, the rigor of the scientific background (e.g., prior literature and/or preliminary data), and whether the scientific background justifies the proposed study.
- b. **Innovation:** Proposals will be evaluated for the extent to which innovation influences the importance of undertaking the proposed study. Innovation may include novel concepts, methods or technologies or use existing concepts, methods, technologies in novel ways to enhance the overall impact of the project. Technical or conceptual innovation can influence the importance of the proposed research; however, a proposal that does not apply novel concepts or approaches may still be critically important to advancing the clinical practice of sports medicine.

**Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility [Criterion Score 1-9]:** Proposals will be evaluated for their scientific quality, including rigor and feasibility.

- a. **Rigor:** Evaluation of rigor includes (1) the potential of the proposed study to produce unbiased, reproducible, robust data; (2) appropriateness of study design to the research question; (3) assessment of proposed sample size and accompanying justification; (4) quality of proposed analytic approach – including interpretation and reporting of results; (5) justification for selected outcome variables; (6) generalizability of results, or relevance to particular subgroups of interest; (7) appropriate inclusion/exclusion criteria (for clinical trials only)
- b. **Feasibility:** Evaluation of feasibility includes whether the proposed approach is sound and achievable, including plans to address problems or new challenges that may emerge during the study. Proposals where feasibility may be less certain will be evaluated whether the uncertainty is balanced by the potential for major advances. Adequacy and feasibility of the recruitment and retention plan in appropriately diverse populations of participants will be assessed. Additionally, proposals will be evaluated for their likelihood of successfully achieving proposed enrollment based on appropriate age, racial, ethnic, and sex categories for the research question. The feasibility of study timelines and milestones will also be considered.

#### **Factor 3: Expertise and Resources [Appropriate/Not Appropriate]:**

- a. **Investigator(s):** Proposals will be evaluated as to whether the investigator(s) have demonstrated background, training, and expertise, as appropriate for their career stage, to conduct the proposed study.

For Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) applications, should include a leadership plan that describes how coordination and collaboration will be facilitated.

- b. Environment: Proposals will be evaluated as to whether identified institutional resources are appropriate to ensure the successful execution of the proposed study.

**Overall Impact Score [Criterion Score 1-9]:** Factors 1, 2, and 3 will be considered when determining the scientific merit of the proposed study and in providing an overall impact score. The overall impact score is not an average of Factors 1 and 2.

**Criterion Scoring:** Criterion scores will involve whole numbers only. A score of 5 indicates a good, medium-impact application and is considered an average score. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have a major scientific impact on the clinical practice of sports medicine. Reviewers will be asked to utilize the entire scoring range.

Degree of Impact	Impact Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
<b>High</b>	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
<b>Moderate</b>	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
<b>Low</b>	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
<b>Definitions:</b> <b>Minor:</b> Easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project. <b>Moderate:</b> Weakness that lessens the impact of the project. <b>Major:</b> Weakness that severely limits the impact of the project.			

**Additional Review Criteria:** Other review criteria will not be scored but will be considered as part of the overall impact score. These criteria include adequate protection of human subjects (including risk and protection against risk, potential benefits, and importance of knowledge gained), and an appropriate budget and budget justification.

**Progress Report**

- Communications and progress reports should be sent to the AMSSM Research Program Manager: [ssund@amssm.org](mailto: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 the progress report.
- A final progress report and report of expenditures are due within 60 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.
- As part of the Final Progress Report, grant recipients will be asked to provide a brief reflection on how they believe their study outcomes may impact policy & practice within Sports Medicine. This summary will be shared with the AMSSM Director of Policy and Advocacy, Brian Williams, and the leadership of the Practice and Policy Committee for review. They may reach out to authors for future collaborations related to the study.

- If a significant change to the study protocol is necessary, approval should be requested in advance from the Research Grant Sub-Committee Co-Chairs at least 30 days before any changes are implemented.
  - Requests can be send to Sarah Sund (ssund@amssm.org).
- Progress reports and all communications should be electronically submitted to the AMSSM Grant Portal.

### ***Presentations and Publications***

The AMSSM Foundation and the AMSSM Research Committee encourage publication of research findings by the grantee in scientific journals. All publications resulting in whole or in part from the grant must include a statement similar to: ***"Funded in part by the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) New Investigator Research Grant. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AMSSM."*** All presentations and posters should include a similar acknowledgment. AMSSM imposes no restrictions on copyrighting publications by grantees.

It is expected that any completed project funded by an AMSSM Research Grant Award will be submitted for presentation at the AMSSM Annual Meeting and will be judged with all other research submissions by guidelines previously established by the AMSSM Research Committee.

### **Grant Program Outcomes**

The Research Committee will monitor the success of this program through outcome measurements to including:

1. Rates of successful completion of projects
2. Quality of completed projects
3. Rates of submission to the AMSSM annual meeting
4. Acceptance rates
5. Poster
6. Podium
7. Publication rates
8. Grant Award winner survey of process and AMSSM support
9. Future research grant application submissions and successful funding to AMSSM or other funding sources by previous Grant winners.

It is expected that grant winners will facilitate the collection of this outcome data by responding in a timely fashion to requests for the above information when requested by the AMSSM Research Committee.

***Human Subjects Approval:*** Institutional Review Board approval is not required at the time of submission; however, proof of IRB approval is required within six months of award notification, and no funds will be disbursed until documentation of IRB approval is received by AMSSM. **To avoid unanticipated delays, investigators are highly encouraged to begin the Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission process prior to award notification.** If you do not have an Institutional Review Board, a review of your project by your hospital Human Subjects Committee or equivalent is required. If your hospital or private practice does not have a Human Subject committee or equivalent, please contact the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund, prior to submission to discuss 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:** The Research Committee seeks to fund one grant award for a maximum of \$15,000. The Research Committee welcomes applications to fund start-up or pilot projects and will consider partial funding if matching funds have been secured before the application. All matching funds should be explicitly described in the budget. AMSSM will not release grant funds to an investigative team until a signed Letter of Agreement (LOA) and proof of IRB approval or other necessary regulatory approvals are received via the grant portal.

**Duration of Funded Research Programs:** The grant will be awarded for a one-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 AMSSM through the grant portal no later than the date listed under [Key Dates](#). If these documents are not submitted by this date, AMSSM 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 via the [AMSSM Grant Portal](#) on the [AMSSM website](#). **E-mailed submissions will not be accepted.** The grant portal can be accessed on the research grants page under the Research tab. 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.
- **File size must not exceed 10MB.** [To minimize file size, consider only including abstracts or files only in black & white in the appendix.]
- 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 3 pages
  - Biographical sketch: 5 pages (per investigator), following NIH guidelines (see below for details)

### Components of Application & Checklist:

- 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. Indicate which co-investigator(s) are serving as mentor(s). 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 3 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.
- **Timeline:** Provide a tentative timeline for the project, including the start and end dates as well as any important anticipated milestones. Data collection and analysis should be completed within 12 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.
  - A detailed budget justification should be included to provide additional information in each budget category where applicable (salary, equipment, travel, publication fees). Include institutional overhead costs (indirect costs) to a maximum of 10% of direct costs minus equipment and tuition. Indirect costs must be budgeted into the \$15,000 award. 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, full-time equivalent (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 facilitation of the research project (i.e., travel to sites for data collection). This does not include conference attendance for presenting the results, which is not an eligible budget item for this award.
  - If additional funding is required to complete the proposed research project and has already been secured through alternative mechanisms, please provide information, including the funding agency, the amount received, as well as justification for the additional funds requested in this proposal.

- **Mentor(s) letter of support:** All AMSSM grants of less than \$25,000 require a signed letter of support from at least one mentor with significant research experience. Mentor(s) should also be listed as co-investigators on the application. If the primary research mentor is not an active member of AMSSM, a second mentor who is an active member of AMSSM with experience relevant to the proposed research must also be included as a mentor/co-investigator. All mentors listed on the application should provide a signed letter of support. Mentor letters of support should include a brief description of the mentor's research background, the nature, and duration of the relationship between the PI and mentor(s), the role of the mentor(s) in study design and preparation of the grant application, and plan for mentorship/support, including provision of resources (personnel, equipment, etc.), and anticipated meeting frequency.
- **Biographical Sketch:** Biosketches 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.
- **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. A 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.
  - 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.
  - 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. [To minimize file size, consider only including abstracts or files only in black & white in the appendix.]

***Adherence to all requirements of the full application is essential; failure to comply will result in proposals not being reviewed. No extensions to submission deadlines will be granted.***

## QUESTIONS

All questions and clarifications related to this RFP can be directed to the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund: [ssund@amssm.org](mailto:ssund@amssm.org), phone: 608-265-0027.

# AMSSM New Investigator Request for Proposals COVER PAGE

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**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 <i>(if applicable)</i>	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

**A. Personal Statement**

**B. Positions, Scientific Appointments, and Honors**

**C. Contributions to Science**