



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
ICRG CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN GAMBLING RESEARCH
Application Deadline: Oct. 1, 2022

The study of gambling disorder remains an emerging field. To advance understanding of this disorder, the International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG) created the Center of Excellence in Gambling Research program in 2009. Recipients of center grants—the University of Minnesota, The University of Chicago, Yale University and the University of Missouri—have made exceptional strides in advancing research on disordered gambling.

The ICRG is pleased to continue this program in 2022 by inviting proposals focused on an under-developed area of research: prevention of gambling-related harms. While implementation of responsible gambling initiatives is gaining momentum, scientific investigations on the safety, uptake, and efficacy remain sparse. Needed is empirical validation of existing programs and the continued development and validation of novel approaches developed for the emerging gambling landscape.

Purpose of ICRG Center of Excellence Grants

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to advance development, implementation and validation of interventions to minimize gambling-related harm. The Center grant mechanism provides funding for a stable, long-term institutional focus on a complex set of gambling-related problems requiring innovative, multi-disciplinary approaches. Recipients are expected to provide leadership in the field by (1) conducting cutting-edge investigations of gambling-related harm and responsible gambling, (2) translating research findings for non-academic audiences and (3) cultivating the next generation of gambling researchers by mentoring young investigators.

Projects Eligible for Support

This request for applications (RFA) invites investigators to explore interventions to prevent the negative consequences associated with gambling, including impacts on the gambling of players who gamble in a problematic manner. We are especially interested in the low uptake of responsible gambling tools. Research focused on intervention

programs or educational tools, for land-based gambling venues or online venues are encouraged.

The following are examples of areas of interest to the RFA:

- Is messaging the reason for low uptake of RG programs? We encourage a critical examination of RG language and testing of new messaging.
- Determining the perception of people who gamble, ranging from low to high engagement, of existing RG programs and coping tools, and how to enhance the uptake and effectiveness of these tools.
- A critical examination of advertising and awareness efforts, and how to elevate awareness of RG tools.
- An exploration of voluntary versus mandatory RG tools and the impact on uptake.
- Examination of the impact of modifications to gambling product design and availability on minimizing gambling-related harm.
- Replication studies of existing research, such as Positive Play, that address the positive and negative perceptions of RG.

Available Funding

Applicants may request up to a total of \$350,000 plus 15 percent in Facilities & Administration costs for a period not to exceed 3 years. Total requests may not exceed \$402,500.

The International Center for Responsible Gaming

The ICRG is a global leader in research and education on gambling disorder and responsible gambling. Since 1996, the ICRG (formerly the National Center for Responsible Gaming) has conducted a rigorous competition for research grant funds. The ICRG grants program is monitored by the Scientific Advisory Board, an independent panel of leading scientists with expertise in addiction and related topics. The Scientific Advisory Board plays a vital role by ensuring that the ICRG follows rigorous standards in awarding grants for only the highest quality research proposals. See page 13 for a list of current members.

Funding

The funding for the Center of Excellence in Gambling Research grant is from Bally's Corporation, a global casino-entertainment company with a growing omni-channel presence of Online Sports Betting and iGaming offerings. The ICRG maintains a firewall to protect the integrity of research supported with funds from the gambling sector. Visit www.icrg.org and see details about the firewall under About ICRG and Funding.

Eligible Applicants

Domestic or international, public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for ICRG funding. The Principal Investigator must have a PhD, MD, or other terminal degree.

Review Process and Criteria

The ICRG seeks proposals of high scientific merit from investigators who show promise of disseminating their work at high-impact conferences and in prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals.

An appropriate scientific review group convened in accordance with the standard ICRG peer review procedures, modeled on those of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will evaluate applications for scientific and technical merit.

As part of the initial review, all applications:

- May undergo a selection process in which only those applications deemed to have the highest scientific merit, generally the top half of applications under review, will be discussed and assigned a priority score.
- Will receive a written critique in the Summary Statement.
- Will receive a second level of review by the Scientific Advisory Board, which makes the final funding decisions.

The peer review panel will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria, adapted from the NIH:

1. *Significance.* Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventative interventions that drive this field?
2. *Investigator(s).* Are the Principal Investigator (PI), collaborators and other researchers well suited to the project? If the project is collaborative, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?
3. *Innovation.* Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions novel to one field of research or

novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies instrumentation or interventions proposed?

4. *Approach.* Are the overall strategy, methodology and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success presented? If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for protection of human subjects from research risks justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?
5. *Environment.* Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations or collaborative arrangements?

Additional Review Criteria

In addition to the above criteria, the following items will be considered in the determination of scientific merit and the priority score:

- *Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk:* The involvement of human subjects and protections from research risk relating to their participation in the proposed research will be assessed.
- *Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children in Research:* The adequacy of plans to include subjects from both genders, all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups), and children as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research will be assessed. Plans for the recruitment and retention of subjects will also be evaluated.
- *Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research:* If vertebrate animals are to be used in the project, the five items described in [PHS Form 398 research grant application instructions](#) will be assessed.
- *Biohazards:* If materials or procedures are proposed that are potentially hazardous to research personnel and/or the environment, determine if the proposed protection is adequate.

Additional Review Considerations

- *Budget:* The reasonableness of the proposed budget and the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research plan.

- *Plans for education and dissemination of research findings*
- *Plans for mentoring young investigators*

Application Instructions

The first section of the application is available for download from <https://www.icrg.org/research-center/apply-icrg-funding> The application form provides the Face Page, page 2 and the Budget pages. You may use the NIH Biosketch form or the one provided on the ICRG's website. The narrative section should be presented in your own document.

Application Outline

- I. Face Page (form provided)
- II. Project Summary/Abstract, Senior/Key Personnel, Previous Support (form provided)
- III. Biographical Sketches (form provided or use NIH Biosketch form)
- IV. Budget Summary and Justification for Years 1, 2 and 3 (form provided)
- V. Research Plan (your own document)
- VI. Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals (if applicable) (your own document)
- VII. Plan for Mentoring Young Investigators (your own document)
- VIII. Education and Dissemination Plan (your own document)
- IX. Appendix: references, letters of support, other materials (your own document)

I. Face Page (1 page)

Insert text in the shaded areas on the Face Page form.

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** is the person responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the project and is the primary contact for the ICRG. Provide full name, degree(s), title, department, institution, mailing address, telephone number and email address.

Date of Proposed Period of Support. Projects may begin on February 1, 2023 and conclude no later than January 31, 2026.

Funds Requested. Fill in the amounts requested for years 1, 2 and 3. Total requests may not exceed \$350,000 in direct costs. A Facilities & Administration rate higher than 15 percent of direct costs is not allowable.

Applicant Organization. The Applicant Organization is legally and financially responsible for the conduct of activities supported by the award. Provide the name and contact information of the Applicant Organization's Administrative Contact.

Regulatory Approvals. Please check the appropriate box to indicate the use of animals (IACUC) or human subjects (IRB) in the proposed project. Note that the Principal Investigator must provide a copy of the IACUC and/or IRB letter before award funds will be released. Pending approvals at the time of application submission are acceptable.

Certifications. The signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Official Signing for the Organization.

II. Project Summary/Abstract; Senior/Key Personnel; Previous Support (1 page)

Insert text in the shaded areas on the form provided.

Project Summary/Abstract. Provide a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. State the application's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims. Describe concisely the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals.

Senior/Key Personnel. In addition to the Principal Investigator, Senior/Key Personnel are defined as individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not salaries are requested. List the Principal Investigator, last name first. Then list all other Senior/Key Personnel in alphabetical order, last name first. For each individual, provide name, institutional affiliation and role on the project.

Previous Support from the ICRG. Please list the title of any grant awards to the Principal Investigator from the International Center for Responsible Gaming, the National Center for Responsible Gaming or the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders. Identify products resulting from the grant(s), such as publication in a peer-reviewed journal, a poster or presentation at a conference, or subsequent support from NIH or another funding entity to continue the research project.

III. Biographical Sketches

Biographical Sketches of the Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel should be included (maximum of five pages each). Please use the NIH form or download the biosketch form from www.icrg.org/research-center.

IV. Budget (3 pages)

Present the proposed budget for years 1, 2 and 3 on the forms provided. The total requested should not exceed \$402,500 (\$350,000 + Facilities & Administration rate of 15 percent).

Allowable Cost Items:

- *Personnel.* Allowable personnel expenses include salary and applicable fringe benefits for the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, post-docs and graduate students (if they receive a salary) and other professional and technical staff.
- *Consultant Costs.* Identify consultants by name and estimate the number of days of service and rate of compensation.
- *Equipment.* Only equipment essential to the conduct of this project is allowed. In the Budget Justification section, explain how it directly relates to this project.
- *Human subjects.* Costs of recruitment (e.g., purchase of advertising), payments to study participants, patient care and other costs associated with the use of participants in the study.
- *Facilities & Administration costs.* Fifteen (15) percent of the total direct costs.
- *Travel.* ICRG grantees are required to present one poster at the annual ICRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction. Budget for travel to the conference in Las Vegas, Nevada in the third year of the grant.

Unallowable Cost Items

Funding will not be provided for the following:

- *Administrative personnel*
- *Stipends*
- *Office equipment and furniture*
- *Tuition*
- *Dues and membership fees*
- *Maintenance/service contracts*
- *Construction, alteration, maintenance or rental of buildings or building space*
- *Recruiting/relocation expenses*
- *Entertainment/social expenses*
- *Pre-award costs*

Budget Justification

In the space below the Budget Summary, explain and justify costs presented, providing calculations to demonstrate how amounts were determined. Enter text in the shaded area on the form provided.

V. Research Plan (maximum 15 pages)

This section should be presented in your own document. Please observe the formatting requirements:

- Arial 11-point font
- A smaller type size may be used in figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, figure legends and footnotes. However, applicants should use their judgment and avoid the use of excessively small type that would be difficult to read.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
- Margins of at least one half inch on all sides on all pages.
- Single-column format for text
- Standard paper size (8.5" X 11")
- Paginate all pages

Use any word processing software to create the text. Then, convert to a PDF using a PDF-creation software such as Adobe® Acrobat® Professional. Scanning hard copies to produce a PDF typically results in excessively large files that can be difficult to e-mail or open and, therefore, will not be accepted for review.

Please follow the outline provided below.

Specific Aims. State the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field or develop new technology).

Research Strategy. Organize the Research Strategy section according to the following outline:

(a) *Significance*

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
- Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

(b) *Innovation*

- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s).
- Explain any refinements, improvements or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.

(c) *Approach*

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans, as appropriate.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims

VI. Protection of Human Subjects/ Vertebrate Animals (Maximum 2 pages)

Protection of Human Subjects

If applicable, summarize your plan to protect human subjects according to the following outline:

1) *Risks to Human Subjects*

a) Human Subjects' Involvement and Characteristics

- Describe the proposed involvement of human subjects in the work outlined in the Research Plan Narrative section.

- Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range and health status.
- Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation.
- Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as fetuses, neonates, pregnant women, children, prisoners, institutionalized individuals or others who may be considered vulnerable populations. Note that “prisoners” includes all subjects involuntarily incarcerated (for example, in detention centers) as well as subjects who become incarcerated after the study begins.
- List any collaborating sites where human subjects research will be performed and describe the role of those sites and collaborating investigators in performing the proposed research.

b) Sources of Materials

- Describe the research material obtained from living individuals in the form of specimens, records or data.
- Describe any data that will be collected from human subjects for the project described in the application.
- Indicate who will have access to individually identifiable private information about human subjects. Provide information about how the specimens, records or data are collected and whether material or data will be collected specifically for the proposed research project.

c) Potential Risks

- Describe the potential risks to subjects (physical, psychological, financial, legal or other), and assess their likelihood and seriousness to the subjects.
- Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures, including the risks and potential benefits of the alternative treatments and procedures, to participants in the proposed research.

2) Adequacy of Protection Against Risks

a) Recruitment and Informed Consent

- Describe plans for the recruitment of subjects (where appropriate) and the process for obtaining informed consent. If the proposed studies will include

children, describe the process for meeting requirements for parental permission and child assent.

- Include a description of the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. If a waiver of some or all of the elements of informed consent will be sought, provide justification for the waiver.

b) Protections Against Risk

- Describe planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to privacy of individuals or confidentiality of data, and assess their likely effectiveness.
- Research involving vulnerable populations, as described in the DHHS regulations, Subparts B-D, must include additional protections. Refer to DHHS regulations, and OHRP guidance (www.hhs.gov/ohrp).
- Where appropriate, discuss plans for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Studies that involve clinical trials (biomedical and behavioral intervention studies) must include a general description of the plan for data and safety monitoring of the research and adverse event reporting to the IRB and others, as appropriate, to ensure the safety of subjects.

3) *Potential Benefits of the Proposed Research to Human Subjects and Others*

- Discuss the potential benefits of the research to human subjects and others.
- Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to research participants and others.

4) *Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained*

- Discuss the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained as a result of the proposed research.
- Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the importance of the knowledge that reasonably may be expected to result.

5) *Data and Safety Monitoring Plan*

If the research includes a clinical trial, create a heading entitled “Data and Safety Monitoring Plan.”

- Provide a general description of a monitoring plan that you plan to establish as the overall framework for data and safety monitoring.
- Describe the entity that will be responsible for monitoring and the process by which Adverse Events will be reported.

Vertebrate Animals

If vertebrate animals are involved in the project, address each of the five points below.

- 1) Provide a detailed description of the proposed use of the animals for the work outlined in the Research Plan Narrative. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex and numbers of animals to be used in the proposed work.
- 2) Justify the use of animals, the choice of species and the numbers to be used. If animals are in short supply, costly, or to be used in large numbers, provide an additional rationale for their selection and numbers.
- 3) Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals involved.
- 4) Describe the procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain and injury will be limited to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research. Describe the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs, and/or comfortable restraining devices, where appropriate, to minimize discomfort, distress, pain and injury.
- 5) Describe any method of euthanasia to be used and the reason(s) for its selection. State whether this method is consistent with the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia. If not, include a scientific justification for not following the recommendations.

VII. Plan for Mentoring Early Career Investigators (maximum 2 pages)

Explain how early career investigators will be involved in the conduct of the research project. List other proposed training activities.

VIII. Education and Dissemination Plans (maximum 2 pages)

Propose innovative ideas for disseminating research findings beyond the academic community to the gaming industry and the public.

IX. Appendix

The Appendix may include items such as a list of references cited, letters of support (e.g., to demonstrate support for the project) and other supporting materials. If human subjects are involved in the research project, download the Targeted/Planned

Enrollment Form from the ICRG website (<https://www.icrg.org/research-center/apply-icrg-funding>) and include in the Appendix.

Submission Process

Use any word processing software to create the text. Then, convert file to a PDF using a PDF-creation software such as Adobe® Acrobat® Professional. Scanning hard copies to produce a PDF typically results in excessively large files that can be difficult to e-mail or open and, therefore, **will not be accepted for review**. Use one of the free PDF merge programs available online to combine the application form with the narrative section and appendix. **The application must be submitted as one PDF document.**

Upload the document to the ICRG review express website (<https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/e-editor/e-submit.cgi?dbase=icrg>) by **5 p.m. (EDT), Oct. 1, 2022.**

Questions? Contact Christine Reilly (creilly@icrg.org; 978-338-6610).

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