INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Advancing Research, Education and Awareness

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ON RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Up to $437,500 including indirect costs

Application Deadline: August 15, 2025
One grant will be awarded.

The International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG) invites eligible investigators and institutions to apply for funding to establish a Center of Excellence (COE) dedicated to innovative research on Responsible Gaming (RG). This initiative aims to advance evidence-based strategies that promote meaningful behavior change, enhance player protection, and improve engagement with RG tools and messaging.

Available Funding

Applicants may request up to $350,000 in direct costs over 3 years, and up to 25 percent in Facilities & Administration (indirect) costs. The maximum total budget is $437,500. One grant will be awarded under this initiative.

The International Center for Responsible Gaming

The International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that has supported rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific research on gambling disorder and responsible gambling since 1996. The ICRG is recognized globally as a leader in funding high-quality research that informs prevention, treatment, and policy.

The ICRG awards grants on a competitive basis under the leadership of the **Scientific Advisory Board**. Composed of leading independent scientists with expertise in addiction and related topics, the Scientific Advisory Board plays a vital role by ensuring the ICRG follows rigorous standards in awarding grants for only the highest quality research proposals. The current roster of members is listed on page 11.

Eligible Applicants

Domestic or international, public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. The Principal Investigator (PI) must have a PhD, MD or other comparable terminal degree. Investigators who are not active PIs or Co-PIs or Co-Is on existing ICRG grants are strongly encouraged to apply.

Background

A wide range of responsible gambling tools—such as limit-setting features, play breaks, reality checks, and financial management tools—have been developed to help individuals and reduce the risk of harm related to gambling. While these tools have shown promise in reducing gambling-related problems, their uptake and sustained use remains limited.

The purpose of this RFA is to support research that identifies effective ways to increase the adoption, use, and long-term engagement with these tools, particularly among higher-risk populations. Funded research should generate insights that can lead to more effective RG strategies and interventions across real-world gambling environments.

Research topics of interest for this RFA include but are not limited to:

1. Explore how protective social norms can influence RG tool use and reduce stigma around help-seeking.
2. Explore whether non-monetary or low-risk incentives (e.g., progress tracking, achievement badges, in-app rewards) can improve uptake and consistent use of RG tools.
3. Use behavioral design principles (e.g., default settings, timely prompts, personalized feedback) to strengthen RG tool effectiveness.

Review Process and Criteria

The ICRG seeks proposals of high scientific merit that contribute to the field from investigators who show promise of disseminating their work at high-impact conferences and in 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 merit 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. **Importance of the Research**. Does the project address a critical problem or significant barrier in the field? Will successful completion of the project substantially advance scientific knowledge, clinical practices, methodologies, or preventive interventions? Does the proposal use innovative concepts or approaches, or improve and refine existing methodologies?
2. **Rigor and Feasibility:** Is the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis clearly justified and likely to yield robust, reproducible results? Are potential problems and alternative strategies clearly addressed? For clinical research, are human subject protections justified and appropriate?
3. **Expertise and Resources:** Are the investigators well-qualified, with complementary expertise and clear leadership roles? Does the environment, including institutional support, resources, equipment, and collaborative arrangements, enhance the likelihood of successful project completion?

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.

• **Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research**: If live vertebrate animals are to be used, the following five points should be addressed in the application:

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed use of the animals in the work outlined in the Research Strategy section. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex and number 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 reasons for its selection. State whether this method is consistent with the recommendations of the AVMA

Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. If not, include a scientific justification for not following the recommendations.

• **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.

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

Application Instructions

The first section of the application should be presented on the COE application form available for download from www.icrg.org. The application form provides the Face Page, Page Two 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

• Face Page (form provided)
• Page Two: Project Summary/Abstract, Senior/Key Personnel, Previous Support (form provided)
• Biographical Sketches (form provided or use NIH form)
• Budget Summary and Justification for Year 1 (form provided)
• Budget Summary and Justification for Year 2 (form provided)
• Budget Summary and Justification for Year 3 (form provided)
• Research Plan (your own document)
• Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals (your own document)
• Appendix: letters of support, citations, other materials. If human subjects are involved in the research project, download the Targeted/Planned Enrollment Form from the ICRG website and include in the Appendix. If your application is a resubmission, and based on a previous application to a COE, Large Grant or other RFA, you may submit up to 2 pages outlining (a) previous critiques of your application and (b) how you have addressed these concerns/critiques.

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 e-mail address.

Date of Proposed Period of Support. Projects may begin on November 1, 2025, and conclude no later than December 31, 2028.

Funds Requested. Fill in the amounts requested for year 1, year 2 and year 3. Requests may not exceed $437,000 total over the 3 years, including direct costs and indirect costs. A Facilities & Administration rate (also known as “indirect costs”) higher than 25 percent 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 to the ICRG before award funds will be released. Pending approvals at the time of application submission are acceptable.

Certifications. Provide the electronic signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Official Signing for the Organization by typing names in the shaded box and checking the box “Confirm Signature.”

Page Two: 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 suitable for dissemination to the public. 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. In addition, stakeholders should be included under Key Personnel. Stakeholders are defined as individuals affected by the proposed research project. For example, a stakeholder might be a member of the population under study. 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, the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders and/or the Institute for Research on Gambling 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 other funding entities to continue the development of the research project.

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.

Budget (6 pages)

Present the proposed budget for years 1, 2 and 3 on the forms provided.

Allowable Cost Items:

- *Personnel.* Allowable personnel expenses include salary and applicable fringe benefits for the Principal Investigator, 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.
- *Study participants*. Costs of recruitment (e.g., purchase of advertising), payments to subjects, patient care and other costs associated with the use of participants in the study.
- *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 subjects, patient care and other costs associated with the use of participants in the study.
- *Facilities & Administration costs*. Up to 25 percent of the total direct costs.
- *Travel*. ICRG grantees are required to present a poster at the annual ICRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction. Budget for travel to the conference in Las Vegas, Nev. in the second year of the grant.

Unallowable Cost Items:

Funding will not be provided for the following:

- *Administrative personnel*
- *Stipends*
- *Office furniture*
- *Tuition*
- *Dues and membership fees*
- *Maintenance/service contracts*
- *Construction, alteration, maintenance or rental of buildings or building space*
- *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.

Research Plan (Maximum 15 pages)

This section should be presented in your own document. Please observe the following 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. A data sharing Plan or an explanation of why data sharing is not feasible is expected to be included in all applications where the generation of data is anticipated. Reviewers will assess the reasonableness of the data sharing plan or the rationale for not sharing research data.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

(d) The Relevance and Societal impact of the proposed research.

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 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.

Appendix

The Appendix should include items such as a list of references cited, letters of support (e.g., to demonstrate institutional support for the project), and other supporting materials. In addition, if the research plan involves human subjects, please include a targeted/planned enrollment form, available for download from www.icrg.org. If your application is a resubmission, and based on a previous application to a COE, Large Grant or other RFA, you may submit up to 2 pages outlining (a) previous critiques of your application and (b) how you have addressed these concerns/critiques.

Submission Process

- Create a single PDF document named as follows: PI's Last Name_RGCOE_2025. Use a PDF creation software such as Adobe® Acrobat® Professional to create the PDF rather than scanning hard copies to produce a PDF. Such files can be difficult to e-mail or open and, therefore, will not be accepted for review.
- Email the application to Travis Sztainert (tsztainert@icrg.org) by **August 15, 2025.**

Questions? Contact Travis Sztainert, Director of Research and Education.

ICRG SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

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