



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

2026 DISSERTATION GRANT

Up to \$5,000 for one year

Deadline: June 5, 2026

ICRG anticipates awarding two dissertation grants under this program.

Introduction

The goal of the Dissertation Grants program is to support doctoral students by providing funding for the costs of dissertation research on gambling. Applications are encouraged from doctoral candidates in a variety of academic disciplines and programs. This program will ultimately facilitate the entry of promising new investigators into the field of gambling research, including gambling disorder, gambling policy, and responsible gambling. This award provides up to one year of support for the completion of the doctoral dissertation research project. Requests for no-cost extensions beyond 12 months will be considered. Strong applications will demonstrate a clear research question, methodological rigor appropriate to the scope of the award, and a well-defined plan for completing the dissertation.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible principal investigators (PIs) are doctoral students at the dissertation stage of training with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research. The applicant must have an approved dissertation proposal (at the time of award), show evidence of high academic performance in the sciences, and demonstrate a commitment to a career as an independent research scientist, physician-scientist, or clinician-scientist (dual-degree training). The applicant must be currently enrolled in a PhD or equivalent research degree program, a formally combined MD/PhD program, or other combined professional/clinical and research doctoral program in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences.

Available Funding

Applicants may request up to \$5,000 in direct costs. No indirect costs are allowed. Funds may be used for direct research costs such as participant payments, equipment, travel, and data collection expenses. Funds may not be used for salary.

Review Process and Criteria

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.

The peer review panel will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria:

- **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?
- **Investigator(s):** Is the Principal Investigator (PI) well suited to the project?
- **Innovation:** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or broadly novel? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?
- **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 the protection of human subjects from research risks justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?
- **Environment:** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be conducted contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?
- **Letters of Support:** The faculty advisor, dissertation committee chair, or university official directly responsible for supervising the dissertation research must submit a letter certifying that the PI meets the eligibility criteria for this award.

Application Instructions

Applicants must use the application form provided on the ICRG website (www.icrg.org). Enter text in the shaded areas on the form. The document will automatically convert the text into Arial font. A single **PDF file** should be assembled, including the following information:

Face Page (1 page)

The Principal Investigator is the person responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the project and is the primary contact for the ICRG. Provide the following details:

- Full name, degree(s), title, department, institution, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- **Date of Proposed Period of Support:** Projects may begin August 1, 2026 and must conclude within one year.
- **Funds Requested:** Requests may not exceed **\$5,000**.
- **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:** Indicate the use of animals (**IACUC**) or human subjects (**IRB**) in the proposed project. The PI 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 the names in the shaded box and checking the “**Confirm Signature**” box.

Page Two: Aims (1 page)

Enter text into the shaded areas.

- **Specific Aims:** State concisely the hypothesis to be tested and the specific aim(s) to be achieved during the grant period.

Page Three: Budget (1 page)

Use the form provided to present a summary of the proposed budget.

- **Allowable Cost Items:** Direct research costs such as participant payments, equipment, travel, and data collection expenses.
- **Non-Allowable Costs:** Funding will not be provided for administrative personnel, stipends, furniture, tuition, dues and membership fees, maintenance/service contracts, construction, alteration, maintenance, or rental of buildings or building space, entertainment/social expenses, and pre-award costs.

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.

Appendix

- **Letter of Support:** The faculty advisor, dissertation committee chair, or university official directly responsible for supervising the dissertation research must submit a letter certifying that the PI meets the eligibility criteria for this award.
- **References Cited:** Include a list of references cited in the proposal.
- **Biographical Sketch:** Provide a biographical sketch for the principal investigator. Download the required format from **www.icrg.org**. The PI’s biographical sketch should not exceed **five pages**.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Create a **single PDF document** named as follows: **PI’s Last Name_Dissertation_2026**. Use PDF-creation software such as **Adobe® Acrobat® Professional** to create the PDF rather than scanning hard copies to produce a PDF. Scanned files can be difficult to email or open and, therefore, will not be accepted for review.

Email the application to Travis Sztainert (tsztainert@icrg.org) by **June 5, 2026**.

Questions?

Contact **Travis Sztainert, Director of Research and Education** (tsztainert@icrg.org).

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Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
RUSH University Medical Center

International Center for Responsible Gaming
101 Convention Center Drive, Suite 600
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Tel: 978-338-6610
Fax: 978-552-8452
E-mail: info@icrg.org
www.icrg.org