



Request for Proposals

Issued by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

Strengthening Higher Education Research Project

In 2020, the AAFCS Board of Directors reinstated the Task Force for Program Advancement (TFPA). The purpose of the Task Force is to proactively support and strengthen higher education units (i.e., departments, colleges, programs, etc.) associated with the people-centered sciences, also named as Family and Consumer Sciences, Human Ecology, Human Sciences, Health & Human Sciences, etc.

Recent and continuing considerations of how to strengthen and sustain FCS programs by the Taskforce for Program Advancement (TFPA) have included discussion of the role of AAFCS accreditation in credentialing and supporting program quality and viability. Yet, neither the documentation of the benefits nor the challenges of being accredited is available at present. While a study published in the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* in 2016 provides a background perspective, the data collection for that study is now nearly a decade old and there have been significant changes in higher education.

Objective: AAFCS seeks to fund a research project to assess the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities associated with AAFCS accreditation. Proposed research projects should address the purposes of AAFCS accreditation as reflected in [*Accreditation Documents for Undergraduate Programs in Family and Consumer Sciences, 2019 Edition*](#). The research project can be quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed methods design.

The funded research should include:

1. Data collection from AAFCS-accredited programs;
2. Data collection from FCS units who have dropped AAFCS accreditation in the last 5-10 years; and
3. Data collection from FCS content units that have not sought AAFCS accreditation.

Funding Amount: One award will be given; the maximum award amount is \$20,000.

The recipient(s) will present the results at the 2025 AAFCS Annual Conference either as a poster or oral research presentation. Outcomes of the research are to be submitted for publication in the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences (JFCS)* and/or *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal (FCSRJ)*. Further dissemination of project findings will be allowed only after these dissemination requirements have been met. The recipient will acknowledge the AAFCS Strengthening Higher Education Research Project from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in research publications and presentations.

ELIGIBILITY

Preference among applicants will be given to individuals and teams of researchers from family and consumer sciences/human sciences/human ecology programs, with the principal investigator from a program accredited by the AAFCS Council for Accreditation. All investigators must be AAFCS members. Priority will be given to submissions from tenured/tenure-track full-time faculty members involving students as part of an investigation team.

Members of the AAFCS Board of Directors, AAFCS Task Force for Program Advancement, AAFCS Council for Accreditation, or AAFCS Staff are not eligible to apply during their terms of office and/or employment.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Submit the completed application as PDF to research@aafcs.org by **11:59 PM ET on April 30, 2023.**

Include the following:

1. **Project description** (limit 8 pages; 1 ½ line spacing, one-sided with 12-point type and one-inch margins) addressing the following:
 - A. **Purpose of the Study** with clearly stated objectives;
 - B. **Abbreviated Literature Review** including the overarching purposes of accreditation;
 - C. **Research Design and Plan** stating methods and procedures related to data collection and data analysis
 - D. **Timeline** with start and end dates
2. **Plans for dissemination** such as a presentation at AAFCS 2025 Annual Conference, publication in *JFCS* and/or *FCSRJ*, etc.
3. **Budget** (indirect costs are not allowed) with justification/explanation for each line item
4. **Brief vita** (limit to one page for each investigator)
5. **A Conflict of Interest Statement**
6. A **letter of support** from the unit head for the researcher(s). The letter(s) of support should indicate that the applicant's time will be sufficiently and appropriately allocated for the project.

BUDGET AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

The grant has a funding limit of \$20,000 from AAFCS. Supplemental funds may be provided from other sources. Any grant funds disbursed but not used in support of the project must be returned to AAFCS.

1. Allowable costs
 - a. Salaries (academic year or summer) for personnel, graduate students, undergraduate students
 - b. Travel to carry out the objectives of the project. NOTE: Travel to participate in the AAFCS Annual Conference is restricted to \$1,500 per investigator.
 - c. Materials and supplies
 - d. Other (advance approval required)
2. Unallowable costs
 - a. Computer hardware
 - b. Indirect costs

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be blind-reviewed by a committee of the Task Force for Program Advancement. The Evaluation Criteria include:

- Review of literature including values and challenges of other accrediting bodies
- Soundness of the methodology, including data analysis
- Feasibility of timeline
- Qualification(s) of researcher(s)
- Evidence of the researcher(s) institutional research office approval of the grant application
- Reference list
- Clarity of writing

TIMELINE:

1. Applications must be submitted in PDF format by 11:59 PM EDT on April 30, 2023
2. Notification of the funding will be no later than June 1, 2023
3. Project must be completed between July 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024
4. A mid-term progress report, including data collection and analysis, is due January 31, 2024. A final report, including report of dissemination of findings and journal submission, is due September 30, 2024. Reports (mid-term and final) must include itemized budget expenditures.

AWARD POLICIES

Changes in objectives or design of the research need approval from the Task Force for Program Advancement in advance.

One-half of the grant funds will be disbursed to the institution of the Primary Investigator at the commencement of the grant. Another one-fourth will be disbursed at the halfway point, upon receipt of the mid-term progress report. The final one-fourth will be disbursed after project and upon receipt of an acceptable final report, including submission of the journal manuscript.

All AAFCS policies, procedures, and guidelines must be followed for the application to be considered. Data collected will remain the property of AAFCS.

The Task Force for Program Advancement reserves the right not to award the grant if jurors do not find a worthy applicant meeting the specified guidelines and/or requirements.