



FCS Innovation Grant Guidelines

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Innovation Grant is designed to support the development, startup, and/or launch of innovative programs that advance the FCS Body of Knowledge and expand the impact of FCS professionals in improving individual, family, and community well-being. This one-year grant provides funding to catalyze new ideas, creative approaches, and forward-thinking solutions that respond to emerging needs, trends, and opportunities within FCS-related fields.

The purpose of this grant is to:

- Encourage innovation in program design and delivery;
- Support the creation or launch of new initiatives, not continuation of existing programs;
- Expand the reach and relevance of FCS in contemporary contexts;
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration and applied practice; or
- Generate scalable and sustainable models that can be replicated or adapted.

For the purposes of this grant, an “innovative” program is one that demonstrates one or more of the following characteristics:

- **New or Novel Approach:** Introduces a fresh idea, method, or model not previously implemented within the applicant’s organization or community
- **Creative Problem-Solving:** Addresses an identified need or challenge in a unique or non-traditional way
- **Emerging Trends or Technologies:** Incorporates new technologies, research, or practices relevant to FCS fields
- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** Combines multiple content areas of FCS or connects FCS with other disciplines (e.g., health, technology, education, workforce development)
- **Expanded Access or Reach:** Engages new or underserved audiences in meaningful ways
- **Transformational Potential:** Has the capacity to significantly improve outcomes, practices, or systems
- **Replicability and Scalability:** Can be adapted or expanded for broader use beyond the initial implementation

Applying for the FCS Innovation Grant

Those eligible to apply for the FCS Innovation Grant include:

- AAFCS members or non-members;
- AAFCS affiliates in good standing; or
- Nonprofit agencies or organizations whose purposes are consistent with those of AAFCS.
- Projects implemented between July 1 of the award year and June 30 of the following year are eligible for funding. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to successfully implement and evaluate the proposed program within the one-year timeframe.
- Application materials are prepared by the applicant and must be submitted in English.

- Members of the AAFCS Board of Directors and Grantmaking Committee are not eligible to apply during their terms of office. AAFCS staff are not eligible to apply during their periods of employment with the Association.
- All policies, procedures, and guidelines must be followed for the application to be considered for juried review.

Submitting the Application

The application must be submitted using the official application form as one PDF document. Please be aware of the page requirements for each section and include page numbers and headings. Keep a copy of all materials submitted to AAFCS. Forward questions to grants@aafcs.org

Section 1: General Information

Applicant Information

- ☐ First and Last Name of Principal Investigator (include AAFCS Credentials, if applicable)
 - Current Title/Position
 - Name of Institution/Employer
 - AAFCS Member Number, if applicable
 - Contact Information (Email, Phone Number, mailing Address)
- ☐ If group, agency, or organization, please specify the legal name of the group.
 - First and Last Name of official point of contact
 - Contact Information (Email, Phone Number, Mailing Address)

Section 2: Proposal Information (Maximum of six (6) double-spaced pages in 12-point font)

- ☐ Project Narrative
 - Description of the Innovative Program
 - Statement of Need or Opportunity
 - Target Audience(s)
 - Goals and Expected Outcomes
- ☐ Rationale/Explanation of Innovative Nature
- ☐ Implementation Timelines
- ☐ Evaluation Plan: Include methods for measuring success and impact
- ☐ Sustainability: Describe how the program or project will continue or expand beyond the grant period

Section 3: Budget and Justification (Maximum of two (2) double-spaced pages in 12-point font)

Provide a detailed budget breakdown with justification and rationale for the expenses. The successful proposal requests no more than \$7,500 from AAFCS. Funds may be used for materials, technology, personnel, and other direct costs. Indirect costs are not allowed.

Section 4: Applicant Capacity (Maximum of one (1) double-spaced page in 12-point font)

Description of applicant's experience and ability to implement the project.

Section 5: Two Letters of References: Each letter is limited to one page and should be written from individuals who can give evidence of the applicant's capacity and ability to complete the project. For applicants currently employed, one of the two letters should be from a supervisor, indicating that the applicant's time will be sufficiently and appropriately allocated for this project.

Evaluating the FCS Innovation Grant

- Individuals who write a letter of reference for a current applicant cannot serve as jurors for this grant.
- Jurors cannot review applications from family members, their current students, students at their own institution, applicants who share the same employer or current collaborators and partners. Jurors are responsible for identifying any applicants that include a potential conflict of interest and recusing themselves from the review process.
- Jurors selected by the AAFCS Grantmaking Committee review and score the application using the Evaluation Criteria.

Awarding the FCS Innovation Grant

- The FCS Innovation Grant Award is limited to one recipient or recipient team.
- The recipient(s) will be notified in late February/early March and will be announced during the AAFCS Annual Conference.
- Recipient(s) will receive a commemorative certificate, and their name(s) and project title will be shared in AAFCS communications and materials.
- The Grantmaking Committee reserves the right not to fund a project if jurors do not find a worthy applicant.

Receiving the FCS Innovation Grant

The AAFCS FCS Innovation Grant recipient will complete an acceptance form outlining project deliverables and timeline to align with the following:

- Any individual or team of researchers chosen to receive the FCS Innovation Grant will receive a maximum of \$7,500 for the project and will be reimbursed an additional \$1,000 to support participation and presentation at the AAFCS Annual Conference.
- To change or modify objectives/strategies or budget lines, approval of the AAFCS Grantmaking Committee must be obtained in advance.
- One-half of the funds granted will be dispersed within 90 days of receipt of the acceptance form. One-quarter of the funds will be disbursed upon receipt of a 6-month progress report. The final one-quarter of the funds will be disbursed upon completion of the project and submission of the final report. The reports will include budget expenditure information. . Following the Annual Conference, the principal investigator will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 to support participation in and presentation at the event.
- The recipient(s) are expected to
 - Present the funded project findings at the AAFCS Annual Conference, either as a poster or oral research presentation or educational session.
 - Submit a manuscript (within 18 months of project conclusion) of the funded project to one of the AAFCS journals.
- The recipient will acknowledge funding as the “FCS Innovation Grant from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences” in publications, presentations, and deliverables.
- Any unused FCS Innovation Grant funds must be returned to the Association within thirty (30) days of the final report submission.

Failure to follow the guidelines will result in ineligibility of the applicant for the grant.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria correspond with the FCS Innovation Grant guidelines. They provide clarification, ease in preparing the application materials, and consistency in evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria	Points Possible
Innovation Creativity, originality and forward-thinking approach	/ 20
Impact Target audience identified; Project has potential to improve outcomes for individuals, families or communities	/ 20
Alignment with FCS Mission, Goals, and Body of Knowledge Project clearly aligns with FCS Body of Knowledge; demonstrates strong relevance across practice settings and articulates contribution to individual, family, or community well-being.	/ 20
Feasibility and Timeline Project is realistic and achievable within one year; timeline is clearly outlined	/ 10
Budget Justification Budget is reasonable, clearly tied to project needs.	/ 10
Organizational Capacity Applicant has appropriate experience and ability to execute the project	/ 10
Scalability and Sustainability Project has potential for growth or replication	/ 5
AAFCS Membership As of the due date of application, the applicant(s) is an AAFCS member. <i>Note: if applicant is a team and at least one team member is an AAFCS member, full points (5) will be awarded. Partial points are not awarded for membership.</i>	/ 5
Total	/ 100