

Call for Proposals: 2025 NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant Program
Preliminary Proposal Deadline: May 5, 2025 (12:00 p.m. EDT)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Due to an NCAA administrative error that cannot be fixed this grant cycle, *applicants MUST upload the proposal on both the first and third page of the application for the submission to be complete and for the NCAA to receive the proposal.* Notification regarding this process will be sent on April 22, 29 and May 4 to those who have started an application.

The NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant Program supports research and data-driven pilot programs designed to enhance student-athlete psychosocial well-being and mental health. In 2025, the NCAA will award \$100,000 in grants to member institutions that are designing data-informed resources or piloting on-campus programs aimed at enhancing the well-being of NCAA student-athletes.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to, new approaches to encouraging wellness behaviors or mental health help-seeking, career exploration, supporting transfer students, managing personal branding, NIL education, gambling education, student-athlete social media use/abuse, cultivating healthy relationships and successful exit from sport.

Proposals will be judged on their originality, feasibility, clarity and, most significantly, the potential to result in *campus-level resources and programming* that can positively impact student-athlete psychosocial well-being and mental health at a range of member institutions (e.g., across divisions, geographic regions and resource availability levels).

Grant funding

Applicants may request up to \$50,000 in funding; a minimum of two grants will be funded in 2025.

Eligibility and restrictions

Interdisciplinary proposals bringing together athletics department administrators, coaches, student affairs practitioners and faculty are strongly encouraged. Project directors must be employed at NCAA institutions. Project team members will be responsible for coordinating review of their work with the Institutional Review Board on their own campus, if applicable.

Grant period

The funding period spans September 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027. During the final six months (January 2027-June 2027) of the grant period, project teams are expected to refine (if necessary) and disseminate their deliverables at low or no cost to those in the NCAA membership for local adoption or adaptation.

Submission Process

There is a two-step application process. Preliminary proposals, one page in length, are to be submitted by May 5, 2025. After review by an independent panel, a maximum of 15 project teams will be asked to submit a full proposal by July 2, 2025. Grantees will be announced by August 28, 2025.

Preliminary Proposal Format

The one-page proposal should be written for a general audience, with the intent that the reader can gain a basic understanding of your project idea and how your work might be adapted/adopted for their own campus. Please consider using color, graphics, and limiting the amount of text you include on the page. Preliminary proposal examples can be found under the Information for Applicants header on the program [website](#). *Deadline: Monday, May 5, 2025, by 12 p.m. Eastern time.*

Preliminary proposals must include the following elements:

1. Project title
2. College/University
3. Problem statement. What issue will your project address?
4. Project description. How will your innovative program address this issue?
5. Evaluation plan. How will you know if your project/intervention works?
6. Membership deliverable. How will other NCAA schools be able to adopt/adapt your program?
7. Project team. Name, role, area of expertise.
8. Approximate total budget (not to exceed \$50,000)

Submission instructions

The preliminary grant proposal is due **May 5, 2025 by 12 p.m. Eastern time**. NCAA grants and scholarships are operated from the NCAA Program Hub. Innovations Grant applications **must** be uploaded to this website directly (ncaa.org/programhub), and applicants should expect the process (including Program Hub registration) to take 15-20 minutes. Those submitting proposals who have not accessed the Program Hub previously need to create a new profile. Detailed instructions can be found [here](#). A confirmation page will be displayed after the proposal is submitted.

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For project teams selected to submit a full proposal, the application format is as follows:

Full Proposal Format (by invitation only)

Please merge the nine proposal components outlined below into one PDF document to upload with your application. Any supplemental materials must also be included in the single PDF and can only be submitted for review via NCAA Program Hub, not email.

1. **Cover page.** The cover page should indicate the title of the proposal, member institution with which the project director is affiliated, contact information for the project director (name, title, address, email, phone number) and contact information for the campus grants/sponsored projects office.

2. **Proposal narrative.** The proposal narrative should be detailed but concise (4,000 words or fewer) and must include the following elements:
 - a. **Problem statement.** [Not to exceed 250 words.] Clearly identify the issue(s) that the research and/or pilot program is designed to address. How does this problem manifest itself on campus (locally), and how is it a part of the landscape of intercollegiate athletics (national context)?
 - b. **Project description.** The proposal should clearly identify, create and/or support resources or programs designed to improve student-athlete well-being at the institutional level that have the potential to be adopted or adapted at a range of NCAA member institutions.
 - c. **Program evaluation plan.** Please discuss the relevant data/research guiding the proposed work, and detail how key findings will be applied in a practical environment or educational setting. Clearly describe how resources or pilot programs will be evaluated both in the short term and over time (e.g., participant feedback survey at the end of the program; follow-up survey eight weeks later to see if students retained and/or used information gained during program).
 - d. **Membership deliverable.** Please describe what will be shared with the membership to facilitate the adoption or adaptation of your resource(s) or program at the end of the grant cycle (e.g., website, program manual, curriculum guide, smart phone app, videos, etc.). Grant recipients are expected to make deliverables available to the membership at minimal or no cost.
 - e. **Refinement and dissemination.** Please describe the process by which the membership will be both informed of the deliverable and the mechanism for distribution of the deliverable during the final six months of the grant term (January-June, 2027).
3. **Citations.** Appropriately reference (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) any works cited throughout the proposal narrative.
4. **Timeline.** Provide a timeline for the various aspects of the proposed project, with an end date by June 30, 2027, not to exceed two pages. The project (resources, programs and evaluation) must be completed by December 31, 2026, and the final six months of the grant term must be focused on the sharing of deliverables.
5. **Proposed budget.** Grants may be used for salary support, data collection, equipment, miscellaneous programmatic expenses such as software, food and books, travel to member campuses or athletics conference offices and printing/publishing/website costs related to the dissemination of deliverables. *Indirect costs, living expenses, academic conference registration fees and academic conference travel will not be supported.* Those funded will be required to submit records of expenses to the NCAA as part of the grant reporting process. Unused or uncommitted funding must be returned to the NCAA.
6. **Budget narrative.** The narrative should provide a rationale for the items listed in the project budget, not to exceed one page.



7. **Resume.** Please include the resume of the project director(s), limited to two pages per person.
8. **Letter(s) of Support.** Please include at least one letter of support for your proposed project/pilot program from the athletics department benefitting from this project. This letter should, at a minimum, attest to the feasibility of your proposed research or pilot program and the ability of the PI/team to accomplish the proposed research or programming. A letter of support directly from the director of athletics or senior woman administrator is strongly encouraged.

Funding disbursement

One third the total award will be disbursed at the beginning of the grant period (after a grant agreement has been signed), one-sixth on the acceptance of the Year 1 interim report, one-sixth on the acceptance of the Year 1 annual report, one-sixth on the acceptance of the Year 2 interim report and one-sixth on the acceptance of the final report.

Dates and deadlines

February 14, 2025	Announcement of grant program
May 5, 2025	Preliminary proposal deadline, <u>12 p.m. Eastern time</u>
May 30, 2025	Applicants notified; 10-15 finalists selected
July 2, 2025	Proposal deadline for finalists, <u>12 p.m. Eastern time</u>
August 28, 2025	Grantees announced
April 24, 2026	Interim report #1 due
December 4, 2026	Interim report #2 due
June 30, 2027	Final report and deliverables due
July 30, 2027	Final expense report due

Review process

A review panel composed of athletics administrators, student affairs professionals, coaches, student-athletes and faculty representing NCAA member institutions across the three divisions reviews proposals and determines the grant recipients. Applicants will be notified whether they have made it to the finalist round by May 30, 2025. The review panel will review submissions from the grant program finalists and determine the grantees. Final decisions will be announced by August 28, 2025.

Restrictions

Grant recipients retain legal rights to intellectual property developed during grant funding. Grant recipients are expected to make results and products available to the membership at minimal or no cost before the end of the grant term.

Questions

Please visit the Frequently Asked Questions page on the Innovations Grant [website](#). If your question is not answered there, please contact research@ncaa.org.