

Stephan D. Weiss Student Mental Health Award American College Health Foundation

<https://www.acha.org/ACHF>

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Fund Objective:

The American College Health Foundation's *Stephan D. Weiss, PhD, Mental Health Fund for Higher Education* was established in 2010 to support efforts to promote and improve the quality of mental health care to college students.

With growing national concerns regarding the prevalence and complexity of mental and behavioral health issues among college students and the negative impact these disorders have on the health and safety of higher education communities, student retention, student learning / academic progress, and the human potential of students, the Weiss Fund is providing support for an award offering to be available annually.

This award is sponsored by the Stephan D. Weiss Foundation and the Weiss Fund of the American College Health Foundation. It offers an award of \$5,000 along with a commitment from the institution of an additional \$5,000 of actual funds or in-kind support of the award to the grantee to promote and improve the quality of mental health support for college students. The Weiss Award is intended to encourage students to develop creative initiatives that will enhance mental health service delivery to students through an innovative program which could be replicated at another college or university. This award will support program development that has the potential to demonstrate measurable success in student retention for those whose mental health problems might otherwise compromise the quality of their college experience and jeopardize the likelihood of their graduation.

Funding for the Weiss award will be awarded annually to applicants enrolled at ACHA individual or institutional member institutions. The recipient should offer a project that is creative in its scope, formulated on the basis of published research, measurable in its effects, and applicable to the mental health enhancement of college students who participate in it. Preference will be given to those candidates who are graduate students engaged in mental health professional training programs.

More specifically, this award will support funding for the following:

1. Identifying and tracking students' mental and behavioral health needs as they relate to individual and community health, student retention, student learning and academic advancement.
2. Assessing environmental factors that may contribute to or provide protection from mental and behavioral health disorders. This may include institutional social and cultural factors as well as public policies that affect the health of students.
3. Assessing the adequacy of campus and community resources and partnerships that provide prevention, early intervention and treatment services for students affected by mental and behavioral health disorders.
4. Developing collaborative, strategic campus-wide initiatives and resource allocation that strengthen the health of the campus-learning environment and reduce the risk for development of mental and behavioral health disorders among students.
5. Developing community and public health initiatives and resources designed to increase awareness, early recognition and active intervention for mental and behavioral health issues across campus.

6. Strengthening theory-driven, evidence-based methods and processes for mental and behavioral health assessment, early intervention, treatment, referral and post-treatment follow-up, including multidisciplinary professional development and capacity-building for appropriate health center, counseling center, student services and academic faculty and staff.
7. Development of campus-wide communication strategies to address an immediate threat to on-campus populations as a result of an individual's mental status and actions.

Award applications will need to demonstrate:

- Strategic and collaborative partnerships across campus that create a shared vision and responsibility for reducing mental and behavioral health concerns.
- Theory-driven-evidence based planning
- Measurable process and outcome evaluation
- Funding that will allow the initiative to continue after award funding is completed.

Eligibility Requirements:

Only American College Health Association Institutional or Individual Members are eligible to apply. An ACHA Membership Number must be included on the application form.

Ineligible Requests:

This award does not support activities directly tied to fund-raising events, advertising, purchase of routine supplies/equipment other than that required to implement the project or professional development activities unrelated to the project e.g., travel to conferences. Activities such as outside speakers used to train leaders for the project are acceptable. Funding does not cover indirect costs.

Award Application Procedure:

1. All applications must be typed, single or double-spaced.
2. Electronic submissions are required using the Online Application and uploading the application as a single PDF by **January 15, 2026.**
3. The Award Application Cover Sheet must be signed by the Project Director who preferably is a student. The second signature is from the Project Director's supervisor or authorizing agent. The authorizing agent will use a separate signature form.
4. Applicants may apply for only one ACHF award per year for a specific proposal/project. An applicant with more than one proposal (different topic) may apply for a different award.

Award Application Review/Award Process:

Each application will be reviewed for completeness and for its relevance to the Fund objective. Award decisions will be made by the **American College Health Foundation Board of Directors**. Application reviews will not be shared.

Application Timeline: All applications must be received by **January 15, 2026**. Award recipient(s) will be announced at the next ACHA Annual Meeting.

Amount of Financial Assistance: Individual allocations of up to \$5,000 with the assurance of an additional \$5,000 from the institution may be awarded.

Length of Financial Assistance: Project funding is available for use over a 12-month period. Award allocations are distributed in two payments, 50% at the beginning of project work and the remaining 50%, six months later, after a mid-year report has been submitted to the ACHF office.

Post Project Requirements: Award recipients shall submit a project results report to the American College Health Foundation within 60 days of the completion of the funding cycle. In addition to the final report, an abstract describing the results of the project will be submitted to the American College Health Foundation. Copies of the abstract may be made available to ACHA members during the ACHA annual meetings or in ACHA/ACHF publications to demonstrate the effectiveness of the fund's objective. Award recipients may also be requested to make a presentation at a future American College Health Association conference (state, regional, national) and/or write an article for publication in a college health related periodical discussing project outcomes.