

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

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

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Objective of the Stephan D. Weiss PhD Mental Health Fund for Higher Education:

There are growing national concerns about the prevalence and complexity of mental and behavioral health issues among college students. These disorders negatively impact the health and safety of higher education communities, student retention, student learning and academic progress, and the human potential of students.

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.

The Stephan D. Weiss Student Mental Health Award:

The Stephan D. Weiss Student Mental Health Award is sponsored by the Stephan D. Weiss Foundation and the Weiss Fund of the American College Health Foundation (ACHF). It offers an **award of \$5,000** to the student grantee, along with a **commitment from the student's institution of an additional \$5,000** of actual funds or in-kind support, to promote and improve the quality of mental health support for college students.

The Weiss Student Mental Health 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 Student Mental Health Award will be granted annually to student applicants who are enrolled at an American College Health Association (ACHA) Member Institution or are an ACHA Individual Members at a non-member institution.

The applicant 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.

The Weiss Student Mental Health Award will support funding for projects that:

1. Identify and track students' mental and behavioral health needs as they relate to individual and community health, student retention, student learning and academic advancement.

2. Assess 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. Assess 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. Develop 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. Develop 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. Strengthen 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. Develop 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. The project should be theory-driven and demonstrate evidence-based planning.
- Measurable process and outcome evaluation.
- Access to ongoing funding that will allow the initiative to continue after award funding is completed.

Eligibility Requirements:

Only students who are enrolled at an ACHA Member Institution or who are ACHA Individual Members are eligible to apply. An ACHA Membership Number must be included on the application form.

Preference will be given to candidates who are graduate students engaged in mental health professional training programs.

Ineligible Requests:

- The Weiss Student Mental Health 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 project leaders are acceptable. Funding does not cover indirect costs.
- A project **cannot apply for more than one American College Health Foundation (ACHF) Award in a single year**. For example, a project cannot simultaneously apply for both the Weiss Student Mental Health Award **and** the ACHF College Well-Being Award Funding Opportunity or the Koster's Charitable Innovative Health Care Award.

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 14, 2027**.
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.** For example, a project cannot simultaneously apply for both the Weiss Student Mental Health Award and the ACHF College Well-Being Award Funding Opportunity or the TKoster's Charitable Innovative Health Care Award. An applicant with more than one proposal (different topics) may apply for a different award for that proposal.

Award Application Review/Award Process:

Each application will be reviewed for completeness and for its relevance to the Weiss Award objectives and specific criteria. Award decisions will be made by the **ACHF Board of Directors**. Application reviews will not be shared.

Application Timeline:

All applications must be received by January 14, 2027. Award recipient(s) will be announced at the next ACHA Annual Meeting.

Amount of Financial Assistance:

The Weiss Student Mental Health Award will support individual allocations of up to \$5,000 with the assurance of an additional \$5,000 from the student's institution.

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:

Weiss Student Mental Health 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 objectives. 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.