



FOR NURSING LEADERSHIP  
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION™

**Mission:** To provide resources that create opportunities to bridge science and practice to shape the future of nursing leadership.  
**Vision:** A healthier tomorrow advanced through nursing leadership.

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## Reducing Disparities in Healthcare Outcomes Request for Proposals

### Introduction:

The AONL Foundation envisions a healthier tomorrow advanced through nursing leadership and strives to achieve that vision by providing resources to create opportunities to bridge science and practice to shape the future of nursing leadership.

The AONL Foundation supports the AONL vision of advancing health for all. Priority will be given to studies focused on eliminating disparities in health outcomes across populations through the [AONL strategic priorities](#) listed below:

- Lead, inspire, and support the healthcare workforce
- Advance nursing leadership
- Improve health through advocacy

### Definition of Terms

As defined by the [National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities](#), health disparities are largely preventable health differences that adversely affect populations who experience greater challenges to optimal health.

Culturally informed care as defined by the [US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health](#), is an approach to healthcare delivery that is respectful of and responsive to the health beliefs, practices, and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse patients.

### Purpose

#### Reducing Disparities in Healthcare Outcomes Through Nursing Leadership

##### I. Background and Purpose

The American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) is the national professional organization representing more than 12,500 nurse leaders across the United States. As the voice of nursing leadership, AONL is dedicated to transforming healthcare through expert and influential leadership. Guided by its vision, Nursing leadership: one voice advancing health for all, AONL seeks to advance high-quality healthcare for all individuals and communities.

Disparities in healthcare outcomes remain an issue, and nurse leaders are uniquely positioned and empowered to address these challenges in their communities through organizational influence, advocacy, workforce development, and innovation in care delivery.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), AONL Foundation invites proposals for research projects that empowers nursing leadership to reduce disparities in healthcare outcomes. Funded research projects should generate actionable knowledge, scalable strategies, or demonstrable impact that align with AONL's mission and can inform nursing leadership practice nationally.

##### II. Funding Opportunity Overview

AONL seeks proposals that support innovative, evidence-informed, and leadership-driven approaches to promote high quality and culturally informed care. Proposals should emphasize the role of nurse leaders in driving transformation at the organizational, system or community level.

**Areas of Interest include, but are not limited to:**

1. **Leadership Strategies to Advance Health Outcomes**
  - Models that mitigate disparities in health outcomes through nursing leadership decision-making, governance, and organizational strategy
  - Development and/or evaluation of leadership competencies
2. **Workforce and Practice Transformation**
  - Initiatives that strengthen the nursing workforce's capacity to promote culturally responsive care
  - Leadership approaches to creating inclusive and culturally responsive care environments
3. **Technology and Innovation**
  - Nurse leader driven interventions that improve access, quality or outcomes for communities
  - Leveraging technology to promote culturally informed care and improve patient outcomes
4. **Data, Measurement, and Accountability**
  - Use of data, virtual care models and artificial intelligence to identify, monitor and reduce disparities in health outcomes
  - Leadership-led approaches to reducing disparities identified in key performance metrics and quality frameworks
5. **Policy and Systems Change**
  - Nursing leadership engagement in policy, advocacy or regulatory efforts aimed at eliminating disparities in health outcomes.
  - Nurse-led public health and community partnerships across the continuum of care

**II. Proposal Requirements**

Proposals must not exceed 10 pages (excluding references and appendices) and should include the following components:

1. **Project Summary (1 page)**
  - Overview of the problem, proposed solution, and anticipated impact
2. **Statement of Problem**
  - Description of the issue being addressed, supported by data or evidence
  - Relevance to nursing leadership and alignment with AONL's mission, vision and [2025-2027 strategic plan](#)
3. **Project Description and Approach**
  - Goals, research aims and objectives
  - Description of activities, methods, and leadership strategies
  - Role of nurse leaders and key partners
4. **Impact**
  - How the project will advance health and reduce disparities in healthcare outcomes
  - Populations impacted and anticipated outcomes
5. **Evaluation and Outcomes**
  - Measures of success and plans for evaluation
  - Use of data to assess progress and impact
6. **Dissemination and Sustainability**
  - Include plans to share findings, tools, or lessons learned with the broader nursing leadership community, along with efforts to link this work to policy change or advocacy
  - Potential for scalability or sustainability beyond the funding period
7. **Budget and Budget Justification**
8. **Project Team and Organizational Capacity**
  - Qualifications of the project team
  - Relevant experience and resources

**Grant Details:**

Grants available: One (1) grant of \$15,000

Online Submissions Open: Mar. 29  
Deadline for Submissions: Jul. 6  
Award Notification: Aug. 14  
Public Announcement: Sept. 1  
Funding Dates: Sept. 1, 2026 – Oct. 1, 2027

Please note: a portion of the funds will be distributed at the beginning of the funding period. Remaining funds are dependent upon and will be distributed at completion of the study.

Timeframe allows for the possibility of presentation at either the 2028 or 2029 AONL Annual Conference. Project can be completed at any point within the timeframe.

Study completed within 18 months. Dissemination within 1 year of study completion.

This grant was generously provided by AMN Healthcare and the AONL Foundation.

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- Principal investigator must be a current licensed Registered Nurse.
- Members of the board of directors, officers, and staff of the AONL Foundation, AONL, the American Hospital Association and its affiliates are not eligible to apply.
- Principal Investigator currently funded by the AONL Foundation are not eligible for this award.
- One or more members of the research team is an AONL member
- AONL Foundation can only provide grants to recipients in the United States and its territories.

### **Guidelines:**

- This grant award applies only to research studies and does not include evidence-based projects.
- Documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required prior to initiation of funding (timetable for IRB approval or proof of IRB approval to be included in proposal). Learn more information [here](#).
- Implementation of the research project must commence immediately upon receipt of the funds.
- The research project must be completed within the timeframe established above, inclusive of dissemination.
  - Dissemination should include presentation at a national conference and submission of a manuscript for publication in a peer reviewed journal. A webinar and/or other format may also be considered.
    - Please note, if planning to submit an abstract to present at an AONL Annual Conference, that abstract should include the completed study.
  - A portion of the award money will be dependent upon completion of award study.
  - The AONL Foundation should be acknowledged in all publications and presentations that use/reference the findings.
- Budget proposals:
  - AONL Foundation provides funding for direct expenses and allows up to 10% of total grant funds to be used for indirect expenses or overhead expenses.
  - Investigator time will not be supported. All other research-related expenditures including salary support for research assistants or statisticians, incentivizing study participants, supplies, software, printed materials, copying, communications, and expenses related to attending and presenting study findings at conferences are acceptable expenses.
    - When building budget to attend and present findings at a national conference, consider all travel, poster design and printing, presentation design and

production, and other associated costs.

### **Proposal Application:**

An electronic copy (Microsoft Word or PDF) of the entire proposal shall be submitted online via AONL Foundation's website. Applications should be no longer than 10 single-spaced pages with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman or Arial 12-Point font (excluding references and appendices). Copies of planned surveys or other measures are to be included as appendices.

A second copy (Microsoft Word or PDF) of the entire proposal – **with all identifying information of researcher(s) and institution(s) removed** – shall also be submitted. The same page limit applies.

**Format of Application:** *(Please note all elements listed below are required for consideration of this grant award.)*

#### *Title Page:*

- Name, title, organizational affiliation, email address, phone number, address of each investigator
- Project Title

#### *Proposal:*

- Project Summary (400-500 words maximum – not to be included in the 10-page limit)
- Statement of Problem (Background/Literature Review)
- Project Description and Approach
  - Conceptual Model or Framework
  - Specific Aims/Purpose of Study
  - Research Design and Methods (Setting, Sample, Measures, Plans for Data Analysis)
- Alignment with AONL Strategic Priorities
  - Please clearly state how this study aligns with and supports these priorities.
- Impact (How will this study add to the body of knowledge? What is the potential for future research studies?)
- Plans for Protection of Human Subjects
- Plans for Dissemination and Sustainability
  - Include Translation and Potential Implementation of Findings
- Timeline
- Budget
- References

#### *Support Documents:*

- Two letters of support (at least one letter of support from the organization at which the study will be conducted)
- Letter of IRB approval or exemption or timeline for obtaining IRB approval or exemption
- Instruments to be used in study
- Proof of author permission to use proposed instruments
- Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch for each investigator
- Declaration of any other funding sources for this project

### **Review Process:**

All submitted proposals will undergo a blind review by members of the AONL Foundation Board of Director's Research Review Committee. The grant award recipient will be selected based on consideration of eligibility and merit of the research proposal. Review criteria will include:

- What is the overall impact of the proposed research study on the defined purpose?
- What is the significance and innovativeness of the planned study?
- Is the study strategy, methodology and data analysis plan rigorous and can it be accomplished in the projected timeframe?
- Is the support (budget) requested justified to the proposed research?

Priority will be given to:

- Research work that advances nursing leadership and impacts health disparities.
- Proposals that identify original research opportunities.
  - If the research opportunity proposed is a replication study, large-impact studies will receive priority.

Previous research completed, and research experience will be taken into account.

### **Expectations of Grant Recipient:**

- At the beginning of the grant period, the principal investigators will provide a jpg head shot and a narrative biography of no more than 300 words for each investigator.
- At the midpoint and at the conclusion of the research study the principal investigators will submit an interim and final report, respectively, on the progress of the study.
- At quarterly intervals, principal investigators and study team will meet with AONL Foundation staff and a member of the Research committee designated as the study's research liaison. These informal check-in meetings will help keep everyone apprised of the study and current status.
- Upon conclusion of the study and within the timeline the principal investigator will:
  - Submit an abstract and, if accepted, present study findings at a national conference
  - Submit manuscript for publication to at least one peer reviewed nursing research journal
  - Submit a summary of the study to be added to the online AONL Foundation's Research Repository
  - Develop a guidebook, policy statement or advocacy tool that can be used to further reduce health disparities.
  - Allow study findings to be incorporated into the AONL Foundation's marketing and communications
  - Aid the AONL Foundation in demonstrating impact of the research
- Principal investigator will ensure proper acknowledgment of AONL Foundation and the underwriting donor in all publications and presentations.

### **Acknowledgment:**

Funding for this research study is made possible thanks to AMN Healthcare. Thank you for your support.

### **Inquiries:**

For questions about the submission or review process, please contact Erica Cheng, AONL Foundation Program Specialist, at [echeng@aha.org](mailto:echeng@aha.org).

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