

AACN enthusiastically supports members of our community who seek evidence to support our bedside colleagues in ensuring safety and excellent care for critically ill patients and their families. Funds support research that drives change in high acuity and critical care nursing practice. Awards range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

Available AACN Grants to be Awarded		
AACN Impact Research Grant – See page 2	Research addressing AACN Research Priorities.	Three awards up to \$50,000 each
AACN-Sigma Theta Tau Critical Care Grant – See page 3	Available to AACN and Sigma Theta Tau members.	One award up to \$10,000

Submission Dates

Open: Monday, August 24, 2026

Deadline: Friday, October 2, 2026

Please review all the information provided in this before completing your grant application.

Who Can Apply

- Principal investigators must hold an earned master's degree or have completed candidacy requirements in a BSN-to-PhD or DNP program.
- Current AACN membership is required. Principal investigators must be registered nurses holding current AACN membership at the time of submission and must remain AACN members throughout the life of the grant funding.
- Applicants for the AACN-Sigma Theta Tau Critical Care Grant must hold membership in either AACN or Sigma Theta Tau, International.

The following are **ineligible**:

- Principal investigators who have previously received AACN grant funding are ineligible for additional funding during the lifetime of their original awards (defined as enrollment of the first subject to completion of data analyses and preparation of abstract for presentation or publication of study findings).
- Members of the AACN Research Grant Review Panel are ineligible during their term of review.
- Current members of the AACN Board of Directors and AACN Certification Corporation Board of Directors are ineligible.
- Members of the AACN and AACN Certification Corporation Boards of Directors may not serve as consultants on grants during their term of office.

AACN Impact Research Grant

The AACN Impact Research Grants are funded and supported by AACN. We encourage experienced clinicians and researchers to propose projects that support inquiry and systematic research that generates new knowledge.

The grants are designed to ensure a vital source of clinically relevant research for creating the evidence-based resources that influence high acuity critical care nursing practice. Research projects are two years in duration.

We expect and hope the knowledge gained from the project will be shared. Upon completion of your research study or project, AACN encourages you to submit your work for [publication](#) (<http://www.aacnjournals.org>) and/or presentation.

Available Funding

Up to three grant awards are available annually. Each accepted proposal may be funded for up to \$50,000.

Areas of Inquiry

We designed the AACN Impact Research Grant to address gaps in high-acuity and critical care areas of clinical research. The grants will ensure the pipeline for research that is vital to AACN's research translation resources, such as protocols and practice alerts.

These grants will also facilitate research to support other AACN priorities, such as describing the impact of family presence, influencing nurse certification and implementing standards for healthy work environments.

Specific Requirements for This Grant

- Principal investigators must be AACN members, and must hold an earned master's degree or have completed candidacy requirements in a BSN-to-PhD or DNP program.
- Investigators will be expected to present completed studies at the National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition.
- Please review *Grant Submission, Applying for an AACN Grant and Requirements after Receiving an Award* – See pages 4 -7. For any information not addressed in this document, please contact us at research@aacn.org.

AACN-Sigma Theta Tau Critical Care Grant



Sigma Theta Tau International
Honor Society of Nursing®

AACN and Sigma Theta Tau International co-sponsor this \$10,000 grant administered by AACN. This grant supports experienced nurses in conducting clearly articulated research studies.

We expect and hope that the knowledge gained from this project will be shared. Upon completion of your research study or project, we encourage you to submit your work for [publication](#) and/or presentation.

Available Funding

One grant award is available annually and may be funded up to \$10,000.

Areas of Inquiry

Qualified proposals must be relevant to high acuity and critical care nursing practice and address one or more of AACN's research priority areas – See page 9.

Proposals should also link with AACN's research vision and agenda – See page 8. The grant may be used to fund research for an academic degree.

Specific Requirements for This Grant

- Principal investigator must be a member of either AACN or Sigma Theta Tau International.
- At a minimum the principal investigator must hold an earned master's degree or have completed candidacy requirements in a BSN-to-PhD or DNP program.
- Please review *Grant Submission, Applying for an AACN Grant and Requirements after Receiving an Award* – See pages 4 -7. For any information not addressed in this document, please contact us at research@aacn.org.

Submission

All complete application submissions are due **by Friday, October 2, 2026**. Submissions will be treated as privileged communication with access restricted to members of the AACN Research Grant Review Panel, board of directors and appropriate national office staff.

- Submissions must be prepared according to the published instructions covered in *Applying for an AACN Grant* – See below.
- Please review your files before emailing. No changes, additions or deletions to submitted materials can be made after they are received.
- **All grant application documents must be submitted (as attachments) in one email by the deadline to research@aacn.org.** Subject line should read: **AACN Grant Submission**
- Incomplete submissions or any received after the deadline will not be reviewed.
- An email acknowledging the specific documents received will be sent within two business days of receipt of submission.
- Notification of the decisions of the review panels will be made by **March 31, 2027**.
- **Proof of IRB** approval within 120 days (4 months) of grant award notification.

Applying for an AACN Grant

To apply for an AACN grant:

1. **AACN Grant Submission forms** are available through the links listed below or by emailing research@aacn.org requesting the forms. Forms requested by email will be emailed within two business days of receiving request.
 - [AACN Grant Application](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-application.xls) (https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-application.xls)
 - [AACN Grant Budget](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-budget.xls) (https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-budget.xls)
 - [AACN Biographical Sketch](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-biographical-sketch.doc) (https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-biographical-sketch.doc)
2. Identify the grant award that best meets the needs of your research and most closely matches your topic.
3. Complete the application form.
4. Write a cover letter describing how your proposed research addresses one of AACN's research priority areas – See page 9. Address your cover letter to the Research Grant Review Panel.
5. Write an abstract. Summarize the main points of the grant proposal (about 300 words).
6. Write your research proposal according to the guidelines below. Follow this format for your proposal, references and appendices.
 - Use Arial or Times New Roman with 12-point font.

- Double-space on 8-1/2" x 11" paper (letter size) with 1" margins.
- Place first initial and last name of PI in a header with consecutive page numbers in the upper right corner on all pages of the proposal, including references and appendices.
- Limit the content on **aims, significance, methodology and timetable** to 12 pages. Do not exceed 12 pages; content beyond 12 pages will be truncated.
- **Use the headings listed below** in your proposal.

Specific aims: State the intended objectives of the proposed study, including the rationale for the approach to the problem, the hypothesis the research is designed to test or the research questions the research will answer.

Significance: Briefly describe the background of the proposal, including a critical evaluation of the existing body of knowledge about the problem. Identify the importance of the study by relating it to existing knowledge in the field of high acuity and critical care nursing and potential for leading to further research.

Methodology: Describe the methods that will be used to carry out the research, identifying variables and samples and specifying the protocols and instruments you will use (include copies as an appendix to the proposal). When appropriate, describe the validity and reliability of the instruments. Identify potential limitations of the study. Describe the data analysis plan.

Timetable: Include the proposed timetable for your study. The ideal timetable is about 2 years

References

Appendices (optional)

7. Complete the [AACN Budget Form](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-budget.xls) (https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant-budget.xls). Do not submit other formats. Supply all required information. Be sure to justify all expenses. Specify direct and indirect costs of your project. Provide information on how each budget item requested was derived. Indirect costs are limited to 10% of direct costs and must be included in the total proposed grant budget. Do not submit a budget that exceeds the grant award for which you are applying unless you indicate a confirmed source for the additional required funds. An incomplete or improperly prepared budget will prevent your application from going forward to review.
 - **Allowable Direct Costs** include but are not limited to:
 - Research assistants (calculate number of hours at an hourly rate).
 - Research survey list rentals.
 - Data collection and analysis (calculate number of hours at an hourly rate).
 - Secretarial support (calculate number of hours at an hourly rate).
 - Equipment.
 - Supplies.
 - Consultative assistance, such as research design, programming costs and statistical analysis (calculate number of hours at an hourly rate).

- **Non-allowable Costs:**
 - Salaries of the principal or co-investigators.
 - Travel to presentations.
 - Preparation of presentation materials (slides).
 - Presentation or publication of findings.
 - Educational expenses, such as tuition or books.
 - Purchase of computer hardware, unless the relevance of the equipment to the conduct of the study is clearly demonstrated.

 - *Direct costs* are those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity or any other institutional activity, or can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

 - *Indirect (or facilities and administrative, F&A) costs* are incurred by a grantee for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically with a particular project or program. Indirect costs are limited to 10% of the direct costs and must be included in the total grant budget.
8. Include a biographical sketch for each investigator and each consultant, using the [AACN Biographical Form](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-biographical-sketch.doc) (<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-biographical-sketch.doc>) or the [National Institutes of Health biosketch form](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>). Do not use any other format. Biosketches may not exceed five pages in length for each person.
9. Provide letters of support from:
- One person, such as a colleague, manager or mentor, who can address your ability to complete the project.
 - The institution(s) or unit(s) where your project will be conducted.
 - Your advisor or committee if funding is to be used for academic work, dissertation or thesis.
 - Address your support letters to the Research Grant Review Panel.
10. Provide evidence that the proposed project or study has been reviewed and approved (or administratively reviewed as exempt) by an established institutional ethical review board, or that review is in progress. If review is in progress, indicate the anticipated completion date. If ethical review cannot be submitted until the proposal is funded, so indicate. When a proposal without ethical review is selected for funding, funds will not be distributed until ethical review is complete. Evidence of IRB approval **must be provided within 120 days (4 months)** from award notification or funds will be redirected to another qualified applicant.
- Investigators affiliated with institutions that do not have established review boards must:
 - Obtain review of the proposal by an established review board at another agency (e.g., university, medical center, etc.) or
 - Submit a letter from their agency administrator indicating a commitment to safe and ethical practice and approval of project implementation within the facility.

11. When you have prepared the required content for your proposal, assemble your files and check that you have everything as you wish to submit it. Changes to files *cannot* be made after your proposal has been submitted.
12. Following receipt of your submitted materials, An email acknowledging the specific documents received will be sent within two business days If you do not receive an acknowledgment, your materials were not received by AACN.

Requirements after Receiving an Award

Grant Award Funding

Successful applicants will be notified by **March 31, 2026**.

Grant awards are determined by the reviewing body according to the guidelines for the program and budget. Grantees will be paid by check from the AACN national office.

Funds will be awarded to the Grantees' institution. Grantee must email a completed W-9 form, filled out by their institution, to research@aacn.org.

Unspent funds must be returned to AACN **within six months** of completion of the project.

In the event the funded principal investigator transfers to another institution during the term of the grant, the funds will remain provided the institution can supply documentation that another qualified person can complete the research. If no appropriately qualified researcher at the original institution can complete the funded study, the funds will be transferred to the principal investigator's new institution.

Progress Reports

Grantees are required to submit an annual [AACN Grant Progress Report](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant_progress-report.doc) (https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aacn/NTI/grants/AACN-grant_progress-report.doc) and a final progress report to AACN. **Reports are due March 1** of each year.

If the research or project cannot be conducted within the stipulated timeframe, a change in timeline must be requested and approved or the unspent funds must be returned to AACN.

Changes in timelines must be requested in writing by email and will be approved in writing only.

Acknowledgment of Sponsor Support

Grantees must acknowledge the financial support (full or in part) of AACN and the applicable co-sponsor in all publications and presentations. For example, "This project was funded by a grant from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses."

Use of Animal Models in Research

All studies using animal models must adhere to AACN's policy on the use of animal models in research and evidence must be attached that studies involving animals have been reviewed by the Animal Care Committee. – See page 10

Abstract Submission and Presentation

As part of the final research report, grantees are required to submit an abstract. We encourage grantees to independently publish or present the results of their study or project.

AACN's Research Vision & Mission

AACN's Board of Directors has approved a specific vision, mission, and strategic agenda for research.

Research Vision

Critically ill patients and their families will have nurses who actively question their practice and base their practice on research.

Research Mission

Patients and their families rely on nurses at the most vulnerable times of their lives. Acute and critical care nurses rely on AACN for expert knowledge and the influence to fulfill their promise to patients and their families. AACN drives excellence because nothing less is acceptable.

Research Agenda

Culture of Inquiry

A culture of inquiry fosters critical care nursing research driven by patient needs. A culture of inquiry will exist when:

- Nurses move away from rituals in practice.
- Nurses questioning their practice is not only accepted, but expected.
- Change is the norm.
- Practice reflects ongoing evaluation.
- Nurses seek answers to their questions and articulate and teach the rationale for their practices to others.

Culture of Broad-sharing

A culture of broad-sharing supports the communication of research findings to key stakeholders (e.g., healthcare providers, consumers, industry, payers, etc.) in order to inform and influence practice.

A culture of broad-sharing will exist when:

- Investigators will value the need to share their work with a variety of audiences - old and new
- Information will be framed, packaged, and communicated based upon the needs of stakeholders (e.g., healthcare providers, educators, consumers, payers, industry, etc.) or audiences
- Investigators will demonstrate a willingness to listen and make their messages meaningful to their varied audiences
- Sharing the results of investigations or projects will be a professional norm

Culture of Evidence-based Practice

A culture of evidence-based practice supports and promotes the use of research to improve patient care and health outcomes.

A culture of evidence-based practice will exist when:

- Practice reflects the current state of the science and is not ritualistic
- No gap exists between research and practice
- Optimal patient outcomes are achieved.

AACN's Research Priority Areas

These current priorities reflect areas of interest and relevance to AACN and its members and provide a framework for identifying potential gaps in the development or use of nursing knowledge.

These have been summarized into five broad priority areas to guide future research activities and initiatives.

- Effective and appropriate use of technology to achieve optimal patient assessment, management and/or outcomes
- Creation of healing, humane environment
- Processes and systems that foster the optimal contribution of critical care nurses
- Effective approaches to symptom management
- Prevention and management of complications

Read **Key Issues and Recommendations on Critical Care Research** by the Multisociety Task Force of the Critical Care Societies Collaborative — AACN, American College of Chest Physicians, American Thoracic Society and Society of Critical Care Medicine — in the *American Journal of Critical Care (AJCC)*:

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [Full Article](#)

AACN Policy for the Use of Animals in Research

The purpose of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) is to promote the health and welfare of mankind by advancing the science and art of critical care nursing. One goal of AACN is to encourage scientific investigation in critical care. Knowledge development necessary to achieve this goal is partially dependent upon a number of scientific investigation modes, including the study of animal models. AACN acknowledges that:

- Research is essential for developing knowledge to benefit critically ill patients
- Animal studies have provided the scientific knowledge to improve the quality of life
- Animals are physiologically complex resources that cannot be replaced by nonanimal models
- Continued progress in science of critical care nursing depends on maintaining access to all available sources of knowledge, including animal research.

Policy

AACN supports the use of nonbiological systems, such as computer simulation, mathematical models and biological models, such as cell and tissue cultures whenever they will produce scientifically reliable data. When necessary, AACN supports the appropriate use of animals for scientific investigation and education.

Individuals and institutions funded by AACN grants must comply with the revised Federal Animal Welfare Act, the standards set by the Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, and the DHEW Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals when using the animal model in research. These documents serve as the primary criteria of the humane and ethical care and use of animals for testing, research and education.

References

1. Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-544), as amended in 1970 (Public Law 91-579), and in 1976 (Public Law 94-279), and 1985 (Public Law 99-198). Available from the Deputy Administrator, U.S. Department of Agriculture, APHISVS, Federal Bldg., 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782.
2. Laboratory Animal Welfare. NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts (1985), 14 (8), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.
3. NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. a) DHEW Publication No. (NIH) 78-23, Revised 1978 and b) NIH Publication No. 85-23, Revised 1985: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Revised: 09/02/2004

AACN Grant FAQs

Q: Who is eligible to apply for AACN grants?

A: Current AACN members are eligible to apply for grants with these **exceptions**:

- Principal investigators who have previously received funding from AACN cannot receive additional funding during the lifetime of their original award (defined as enrollment of the first subject to completion of data analyses and preparation of abstract for presentation or publication of study findings).
- Members of the AACN Research Grant Review Panel are ineligible during their term of review.
- Principal investigators must have earned at least a master's degree or advanced to candidacy in a BSN-to-PhD or DNP.
- If you are a member of Sigma Theta Tau International, you need not hold AACN membership to apply for the AACN-STTI Critical Care Grant (indicate your STTI membership number and expiration date on your grant application).
- Members of the AACN Board of Directors and AACN Certification Corporation Board of Directors, who also cannot serve as consultants on a grant during their term of office, are ineligible.

Q: May two researchers from the same institution apply for AACN grants?

A: If they are different studies, then each should apply separately. If it's the same study, they should apply together as co-investigators.

Q: May I apply for more than one grant?

A: No.

Q: What is the difference between allowable direct costs and allowable indirect (facilities and administrative) costs?

A: Direct costs can be identified specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity or any other institutional activity, or can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

Indirect (or facilities and administrative, F&A) costs are incurred by a grantee for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically with a particular project or program.

- The total costs requested in your budget will include allowable direct costs (related to the performance of the grant) plus allowable indirect (F&A) costs.
- Indirect (F&A) costs are determined by applying your organization's negotiated F&A rate to your direct cost base.
 - Most educational, hospital or nonprofit organizations have negotiated their rates with other Federal (cognizant) agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Naval Research.
 - If you are a for-profit organization, the F&A costs are negotiated by the Division of Cost Allocation (DCA), Division of Financial Advisory Services (DFAS) in the Office of Acquisition Management and Policy, NIH.

- For most institutions the negotiated F&A rate will use a modified total direct cost (MTDC) base, which excludes items such as equipment, student tuition, research patient care costs and rent.
 - Check with your sponsored programs office to find out your negotiated MTDC base.

Q: Is there a limit on indirect costs?

A: Yes. Indirect costs are limited to 10% of direct costs. Indirect costs must be included in your total proposed budget, which must be within the available limit of the grant.

Q: Is it permitted to use grant funds for salaries?

A: No. Grant funds may not be used to pay any portion of the principal investigator's salary.

Q: Is it permitted to use grant funds to pay for the research assistants?

A: Grant funds may be used to support the work of the research assistants (data collection, for example) provided the accounting is done on a cost-per-hour basis and not as a percentage of salary. Calculate the number of hours needed for the work and multiply that figure by the hourly rate to arrive at the cost of the research assistants.

Q: Is it permitted to use grant funds to pay for consultants?

A: Grant funds may be used to support the work of consultants, such as those who are engaged for the development of research tools and analysis of data. Account for such expense on a cost-per-hour or per-project basis.

Q: To whom should the cover letter be addressed?

A: Address the cover letter to the AACN Research Grant Review Panel.

Q: How should letters of support be addressed?

A: Address letters of support to the AACN Research Grant Review Panel.

Q: Will one support letter suffice if it's from an advisor who can also address ability to complete the work?

A: Most applications include at least two letters of support. However, one letter is adequate provided its content includes all the requirements and the reviewers can clearly see that. The two letters are meant to show 1) the applicant has the academic preparation to complete the work, usually written by the faculty advisor, and 2) there is enough history of perseverance to complete the work; such a letter is usually written by someone (nonfamily) who has known the applicant over time.

Q: How are grant funds paid?

A: Grant funds will be paid to the PI's institution.

Q: How long is the period of the grant?

A: The period of the grant is two years from the date of funding, unless an extension is requested in writing by the grantee and approved by AACN.

Q: What happens to the grant money when the principal investigator transfers to another institution during the term of the grant?

A: If the original organization can provide documentation that another person there is qualified to complete the research, the funds would stay. However, if no appropriate researcher can complete the study, the funds would be transferred to the PI's new institution.

Q: Is someone without a master's degree, such as an enrollee in a BSN-to-PhD or DNP program, eligible to submit a grant application as the principal investigator?

A: Enrollees in BSN-to-PhD or DNP programs are eligible provided they have advanced to doctoral candidacy and have included such documentation in their submitted materials.

Q: What if I cannot get ethical review completed before the grant submission deadline?

A: If evidence of ethical review and approval are not included in your grant application materials, please indicate if the review is in progress and when it will be completed. If your institution does not conduct ethical review until a study is accepted for funding, so indicate. Evidence of ethical review and approval must be submitted to AACN before any funds can be released. If your study is exempt from ethical review, simply indicate that in your materials.

Q: For the AACN-Sigma Theta Tau Critical Care Grant, is the mentor experienced in the area of the research required to be a nurse?

A: Yes.

Q: AACN Impact Research Grant principal investigators are expected to present a poster or an oral session of their study findings at the AACN National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition that occurs two years following the funding decision. What if I encounter delays?

A: If your study is completed by September 1, you can be accommodated in the NTI program schedule for the following May. If you are later than that we will work with you on an individual basis. Do not submit through the regular abstract review process for an NTI presentation. Contact AACN staff directly at research@aacn.org.