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AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR BOYS AND MEN

Men in HEAL Call for Proposals

The health care and social assistance sector has been a major source of recent U.S. job growth. Demand for these services is projected to keep rising. Yet men remain underrepresented across many care professions. In 2025, men made up approximately:

- 13% of registered nurses.
- 8% of occupational therapists.
- 19% of healthcare social workers.
- 27% of mental health counselors.

Bringing more men into these care-oriented careers could expand workforce capacity, broaden patient choice, and open more routes to meaningful work centered on human care. It would also make these professions more representative of the populations they serve.

The American Institute for Boys and Men invites research projects and practical experiments to increase men's participation across the care professions, including nursing, allied health, mental and behavioral health, social work, and direct care. While we are still learning, there are promising examples of interventions to support more men into these fields: a social-work recruitment experiment which increased men's applications by providing information about workers' past performance evaluations. Another information experiment about teaching careers changed college students' beliefs and stated interest in the profession. We welcome projects along these lines, but also including diagnostic work, survey experiments, and information intervention.

Sample questions we are interested in

- How are aspirations in these careers formed and altered? Do men overlook nursing or other care careers when considering their options? Can information make these careers more appealing at early decision points?
- What do men know or misunderstand about these professions? Examine beliefs about job tasks, pay, working conditions, career progression, training requirements and costs, and men's confidence in their ability to complete training and succeed in the work. Which information about these careers changes those beliefs or confidence?
- Do recruitment and hiring practices deter men from entering these occupations? For example, do job advertisements, outreach channels, or hiring biases affect who applies and progresses? Proposals may examine these barriers or test lawful changes to existing practices.
- What makes a career appealing and a plausible fit? Does emphasizing opportunities to help others, do hands-on or technical work, find stable employment, or advance professionally increase men's interest in these careers? How do perceived belonging and expected reactions from peers or family shape interest?
- Who responds to interventions? Compare defined groups, such as undecided undergraduates, community college students, or men in related majors. Measure changes in consideration or intended choices, and feasible next steps where available.

Projects should aim to produce initial findings within 6–12 months; applicants may propose a different timeline with a brief explanation. Useful outcomes may include changes in knowledge, beliefs, confidence, career interest, majors selection or intended choices. Applications, enrollment, and job entry

are welcome but not required. Explain what you can measure and any comparison; distinguish intentions from behavior and descriptive findings from causal effects.

The kinds of proposals we welcome

Diagnostic work. Use surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, cognitive tests of how men interpret recruitment materials, or analysis of existing data to identify knowledge gaps, overlooked options, or perceived barriers. Explain how the findings would inform further research or an intervention.

Survey experiments. Randomly vary a brief factual module, career prompt, job preview, message, or messenger. Measure knowledge, beliefs, perceived fit, consideration, or stated likelihood of pursuing a course or career.

Field tests. Embed a brief intervention in an existing class, advising email, learning platform, career service, or nonprofit program. Track feasible outcomes such as information requests, advising take-up, or course registration.

Other ideas are welcome. Have another idea for helping more men explore, enter, or succeed in the care professions? Please submit it. We want to learn about and support promising approaches that fit a modest grant and include a practical way to evaluate results.

Who can apply and what funding supports

Researchers, nonprofits, colleges, workforce organizations, and employers may apply alone or together, but the recipient of funds must be a 501(c)3. Nonprofits do not need an academic partner if they have the capacity to deploy and assess strategies. Eligible costs include staff time, survey recruitment and incentives, materials, data collection, and analysis, as well as implementation and delivery costs. Student projects are welcome.

Compliance with applicable law. All funded activities must comply with applicable law, including nondiscrimination requirements in recruitment, admissions, training, and hiring. Proposals must not involve unlawful sex-based exclusions, preferences, or hiring practices.

Application

Submit a one- to two-page concept to admin@aibm.org, describing the population and occupation, question and approach, participant access and sample, measures and any comparison, funding requested, and timeline. Include a simple budget. Grants may range from $10k-20k for smaller projects, student research, or supplemental support, up to $100k for larger projects. Extremely well-aligned projects above the range will be considered.

We prioritize studies with a clear question and a design suited to the budget and timeline, focused on affordable approaches practitioners can readily adopt and lessons that apply across settings. Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Concept notes due: 11/15/2026

Submit to: admin@aibm.org