REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS:
NCRG CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN GAMBLING RESEARCH

Deadline for Letters of Intent: June 1, 2016

The study of gambling disorder remains an emerging field. In order to advance understanding of this disorder, the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) created the NCRG Center of Excellence in Gambling Research grants program in 2009. The first recipients of center grants—the University of Minnesota, The University of Chicago and Yale University—have made exceptional strides in advancing research on disordered gambling behavior. The NCRG is pleased to continue this program in 2016 by inviting proposals for the third round of grants in support of Centers of Excellence in Gambling Research in 2016.

PURPOSE OF THE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE GRANTS
The purpose of this funding mechanism is to advance understanding of gambling disorder through innovative, multi-disciplinary research investigations. The center grants provide funding for a stable, long-term institutional focus on a complex set of gambling-related problems requiring an innovative, multi-disciplinary approach. Recipients are expected to provide leadership in the field by (1) conducting cutting-edge investigations of gambling disorder; (2) translating research findings for non-academic audiences; and (3) cultivating the next generation of gambling researchers by mentoring young investigators.

Investigative efforts should be broadly based, encompassing a variety of areas, including biological, biomedical, social, behavioral and/or clinical sciences.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING
The National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that has served as the only national, private funder of scientific research on gambling disorder in the United States since 1996. (For a list of grants supported by the NCRG since 1996, go to www.ncrg.org.) The NCRG awards grants on a competitive basis under the leadership of the Scientific Advisory Board. Composed of leading scientists with expertise in addiction and related topics, the Scientific Advisory Board plays a vital role by ensuring
that NCRG follows rigorous standards in awarding grants for only the highest quality research proposals. The following is the current roster of members:

**Chair**

**Linda B. Cottler, Ph.D., M.P.H.**  
Associate Dean for Research and Planning  
College of Public Health and Health Professions  
Dean’s Professor of Epidemiology  
Chair, Department of Epidemiology  
College of Public Health & Health Professions  
University of Florida College of Medicine

**Board Members**

**Tammy Chung, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Psychiatry  
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

**David C. Hodgins, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Calgary

**Miriam Jorgensen, Ph.D.**  
Research Director, Native Nations Institute  
University of Arizona  
Research Director, Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development

**Gloria Miele, Ph.D.**  
Instructor of Psychology  
Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

**AVAILABLE FUNDING**

Applicants may request up to a total of $350,000 plus 15 percent in Facilities & Administration costs) for a period not to exceed 3 years. Total amount that may be requested is $402,500. The NCRG expects to award up to two Centers of Excellence in 2016.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Domestic or international, public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for NCRG funding. The Principal Investigator (PI) must have a Ph.D., MD, other terminal degree and an impressive record of research on gambling disorder. Principal Investigators on past NCRG Center of Excellence Grants are not eligible to apply.
REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The NCRG seeks proposals of high scientific merit from investigators who show promise of disseminating their work at high-impact conferences and in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

An appropriate scientific review group convened in accordance with the standard NCRG peer review procedures, modeled on those of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will evaluate applications for scientific and technical merit.

As part of the initial merit review, all applications:

- May undergo a selection process in which only those applications deemed to have the highest scientific merit, generally the top half of applications under review, will be discussed and assigned a priority score.
- Will receive a written critique.
- Will receive a second level of review by the Scientific Advisory Board.

The peer review panel will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria, adopted from the National Institutes of Health:

1. **Significance.** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventative interventions that drive this field?

2. **Investigator(s).** Are the Principal Investigator (PI), collaborators and other researchers well suited to the project? If the project is collaborative, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?

3. **Innovation.** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions proposed?

4. **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, methodology and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success presented? If the project involves clinical
research, are the plans for protection of human subjects from research risks justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

5. **Environment.** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations or collaborative arrangements?

**Additional Review Criteria**

In addition to the above criteria, the following items will be considered in the determination of scientific merit and the priority score:

- **Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk:** The involvement of human subjects and protections from research risk relating to their participation in the proposed research will be assessed.

- **Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children in Research:** The adequacy of plans to include subjects from both genders, all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups), and children as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research will be assessed. Plans for the recruitment and retention of subjects will also be evaluated.

- **Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research:** If vertebrate animals are to be used in the project, the five items described in PHS Form 398 research grant application instructions will be assessed.

- **Biohazards:** If materials or procedures are proposed that are potentially hazardous to research personnel and/or the environment, determine if the proposed protection is adequate.

**Additional Review Considerations**

- **Budget:** The reasonableness of the proposed budget and the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research plan

- **Plans for Education and Dissemination** of research findings

- **Plans for mentoring young investigators**

**LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY**

Applicants will be invited to apply based on their letter of intent. The three-page letter of intent should include the following:

- Descriptive title of proposed research
• Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the principal investigator
• Name of the Applicant Organization
• Description of the proposed research investigation that addresses the public health significance and innovation of the proposed research.
• Key personnel

Present the letter of intent in your own document. Use any word processing software to create the text. Then, convert the document to a PDF. The letter should reflect the following formatting requirements:

• Arial 11-point font
• Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. Type may be no more than 6 lines per inch.
• Margins of at least one-half inch
• Single-column format for text
• Standard paper size (8-1/2 X 11”)

Upload the letter of intent to the NCRG Review Express website (https://editorialexpress.com/ncrg) by June 1, 2016. The letters of intent will be reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Board. Applicants will be notified by July 1, 2016.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Only applicants invited to apply for a NCRG Center of Excellence in Gambling Research Grant on the basis of their letters of intent are allowed to submit a full application. The first section of the application is available for download for download from www.ncrg.org/research-center/apply-ncrg-funding. The application form provides the Face Page, page two and the Budget pages. You may use the NIH Biosketch form or the one provided on the NCRG’s website. The narrative section should be presented in your own document.

Application Outline

I. Face Page (form provided)
II. Project Summary/Abstract, Senior/Key Personnel, Previous Support (form provided)
III. Biographical Sketches (form provided or use NIH form)
IV. Budget Summary and Justification for Years 1, 2 and 3 (form provided)
V. Research Plan (your own document)
VI. Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals (if applicable) (your own document)
VII. Plan for Mentoring Young Investigators (your own document)
VIII. Education and Dissemination Plan (your own document)
IX. Appendix: references, letters of support, other materials (your own document)

I. FACE PAGE (1 page)

Insert text in the shaded areas on the Face Page form.

The Principal Investigator (PI) is the person responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the project and is the primary contact for the NCRG. Provide full name, degree(s), title, department, institution, mailing address, telephone number and email address.


Funds Requested. Fill in the amounts requested for years 1, 2 and 3. Total requests may not exceed $350,000 in direct costs. A Facilities & Administration rate higher than 15 percent of direct costs is not allowable.

Applicant Organization. The Applicant Organization is legally and financially responsible for the conduct of activities supported by the award. Provide the name and contact information of the Applicant Organization’s Administrative Contact.

Regulatory Approvals. Please check the appropriate box to indicate the use of animals (IACUC) or human subjects (IRB) in the proposed project. Note that the Principal Investigator must provide a copy of the IACUC and/or IRB letter before award funds will be released. Pending approvals at the time of application submission are acceptable.

Certifications. The signatures of the Principal Investigator and the Official Signing for the Organization are required only on the original hard copy of the application.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT; SENIOR/KEY PERSONNEL; PREVIOUS SUPPORT (1 page)

Insert text in the shaded areas on the form provided.

Project Summary/Abstract. Provide a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. State the application's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims. Describe concisely the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals.
Senior/Key Personnel. In addition to the Principal Investigator, Senior/Key Personnel are defined as individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not salaries are requested. List the Principal Investigator, last name first. Then list all other Senior/Key Personnel in alphabetical order, last name first. For each individual, provide name, institutional affiliation and role on the project.

Previous Support from the NCRG. Please list the title of any grant awards to the Principal Investigator from the National Center for Responsible Gaming, the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders and/or the Institute for Research on Gambling Disorders. Identify products resulting from the grant(s), such as publication in a peer-reviewed journal, a poster or presentation at a conference, or subsequent support from NIH or another funding entity to continue the development of the research project.

III. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Biographical Sketches of the Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel should be included (maximum of four pages each). Please use the NIH form or download the biosketch form from www.ncrg.org/research-center.

IV. BUDGET (3 pages) Present the proposed budget for years 1, 2 and 3 on the forms provided. The total requested should not exceed $402,500 ($350,000 + Facilities & Administration rate of 15 percent).

Allowable Cost Items:

- Personnel. Allowable personnel expenses include salary and applicable fringe benefits for the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, post-docs and graduate students (if they receive a salary) and other professional and technical staff.
- Consultant Costs. Identify consultants by name and estimate the number of days of service and rate of compensation.
- Equipment. Only equipment essential to the conduct of this project is allowed. In the Budget Justification section, explain how it directly relates to this project. Equipment is defined as items > $5,000 and having a useful life of more than two years. Items costing less than $5,000 should be included in the Supplies category.
- Human subjects. Costs of recruitment (e.g., purchase of advertising), payments to subjects, patient care and other costs associated with the use of participants in the study.
- Facilities & Administration costs. Fifteen (15) percent of the total direct costs.
• Travel. NCRG grantees are required to present a poster at the annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction. Budget for travel to the conference in Las Vegas, Nev.

Unallowable Cost Items

Funding will not be provided for the following:

• Administrative personnel
• Stipends
• Office equipment and furniture
• Tuition
• Dues and membership fees
• Maintenance/service contracts
• Construction, alteration, maintenance or rental of buildings or building space
• Recruiting/relocation expenses
• Entertainment/social expenses
• Pre-award costs

Budget Justification

In the space below the Budget Summary, explain and justify costs presented, providing calculations to demonstrate how amounts were determined. Enter text in the shaded area on the form provided.

V. RESEARCH PLAN  
(Maximum 15 pages)

This section should be presented in your own document. Please observe the formatting requirements:

• Arial 11-point font
• A smaller type size may be used in figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, figure legends and footnotes. However, applicants should use their judgment and avoid the use of excessively small type that would be difficult to read.
• Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
• Margins of at least one half inch on all sides on all pages.
• Single-column format for text
• Standard paper size (8.5” X 11”)
• Paginate all pages

Use any word processing software to create the text. Then, convert to a PDF using a PDF-creation software such as Adobe® Acrobat® Professional. Scanning hard copies to produce a PDF typically results in excessively large files that can be difficult to e-mail or open and, therefore, will not be accepted for review.

Please follow the outline provided below.

**Specific Aims.** State the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field or develop new technology).

**Research Strategy.** Organize the Research Strategy section according to the following outline:

(a) **Significance**

• Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.

• Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.

• Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

(b) **Innovation**

• Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.

• Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s).

• Explain any refinements, improvements or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.
(c) Approach

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans, as appropriate.

- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims

VI. PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS/VERTEBRATE ANIMALS (Maximum 2 pages)

Protection of Human Subjects

If applicable, summarize your plan to protect human subjects according to the following outline:

1) Risks to Human Subjects

a) Human Subjects’ Involvement and Characteristics

- Describe the proposed involvement of human subjects in the work outlined in the Research Plan Narrative section.

- Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range and health status.

- Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation.

- Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as fetuses, neonates, pregnant women, children, prisoners, institutionalized individuals or others who may be considered vulnerable populations. Note that “prisoners” includes all subjects involuntarily incarcerated (for example, in detention centers) as well as subjects who become incarcerated after the study begins.

- List any collaborating sites where human subjects research will be performed, and describe the role of those sites and collaborating investigators in performing the proposed research.

b) Sources of Materials

- Describe the research material obtained from living individuals in the form of specimens, records or data.
• Describe any data that will be collected from human subjects for the project described in the application.

• Indicate who will have access to individually identifiable private information about human subjects. Provide information about how the specimens, records or data are collected and whether material or data will be collected specifically for the proposed research project.

c) Potential Risks

• Describe the potential risks to subjects (physical, psychological, financial, legal or other), and assess their likelihood and seriousness to the subjects.

• Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures, including the risks and potential benefits of the alternative treatments and procedures, to participants in the proposed research.

2) Adequacy of Protection Against Risks

a) Recruitment and Informed Consent

• Describe plans for the recruitment of subjects (where appropriate) and the process for obtaining informed consent. If the proposed studies will include children, describe the process for meeting requirements for parental permission and child assent.

• Include a description of the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. If a waiver of some or all of the elements of informed consent will be sought, provide justification for the waiver.

b) Protections Against Risk

• Describe planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to privacy of individuals or confidentiality of data, and assess their likely effectiveness.

• Research involving vulnerable populations, as described in the DHHS regulations, Subparts B-D, must include additional protections. Refer to DHHS regulations, and OHRP guidance (www.hhs.gov/ohrp).

• Where appropriate, discuss plans for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Studies that involve
clinical trials (biomedical and behavioral intervention studies) must include a general description of the plan for data and safety monitoring of the research and adverse event reporting to the IRB and others, as appropriate, to ensure the safety of subjects.

3) Potential Benefits of the Proposed Research to Human Subjects and Others
   • Discuss the potential benefits of the research to human subjects and others.
   • Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to research participants and others.

4) Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained
   • Discuss the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained as a result of the proposed research.
   • Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the importance of the knowledge that reasonably may be expected to result.

5) Data and Safety Monitoring Plan
If the research includes a clinical trial, create a heading entitled “Data and Safety Monitoring Plan.”
   • Provide a general description of a monitoring plan that you plan to establish as the overall framework for data and safety monitoring.
   • Describe the entity that will be responsible for monitoring and the process by which Adverse Events will be reported.

Vertebrate Animals
If vertebrate animals are involved in the project, address each of the five points below.

1) Provide a detailed description of the proposed use of the animals for the work outlined in the Research Plan Narrative. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex and numbers of animals to be used in the proposed work.

2) Justify the use of animals, the choice of species and the numbers to be used. If animals are in short supply, costly, or to be used in large numbers, provide an additional rationale for their selection and numbers.

3) Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals involved.

4) Describe the procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain and injury will be limited to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research.
Describe the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs, and/or comfortable restraining devices, where appropriate, to minimize discomfort, distress, pain and injury.

5) Describe any method of euthanasia to be used and the reason(s) for its selection. State whether this method is consistent with the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia. If not, include a scientific justification for not following the recommendations.

VII. PLAN FOR MENTORING EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS (maximum 2 pages)

Explain how early career investigators will be involved in the conduct of the research project. List other proposed training activities.

VIII. EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN (maximum 2 pages)

Propose ideas for disseminating research findings as a supplement to or in collaboration with the educational outreach activities of the NCRG. Current dissemination and educational programs include the annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction in Las Vegas, Nev., regional treatment provider workshops, webinars and the blog, Gambling Disorders 360°. For more information, visit www.ncrg.org.

IX. APPENDIX

The Appendix should include items such as a list of references cited, letters of support (e.g., to demonstrate institutional support for the project) and other supporting materials. If human subjects are involved in the research project, download the Targeted/Planned Enrollment Form from the NCRG website and include in the Appendix.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Use any word processing software to create the text. Then, convert to a PDF using a PDF-creation software such as Adobe® Acrobat® Professional. Scanning hard copies to produce a PDF typically results in excessively large files that can be difficult to e-mail or open and, therefore, will not be accepted for review. Use one of the free PDF merge programs available online to combine the application form with the narrative section and appendix. The application must be submitted as one PDF document.


Mail the original hard copy, with original signatures, to Christine Reilly, NCRG, 900 Cummings Center, Suite 216-U, Beverly, MA 01915 (telephone: 978-338-6610). Applicants will be notified by December 1, 2016.
Questions? Contact Christine Reilly (creilly@ncrg.org; 978-338-6610) or Nathan Smith (nsmith@ncrg.org; 978-338-6610).