



APRIL 2024

# 2024-2025 AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship

The 2024-2025 AAPA-PAEA Research Fellowship helps lower barriers to research and build a pipeline of PA faculty, full-time PA program staff, and practicing PAs who will become the next research leaders. The Fellowship provides **20 percent of the recipient's base salary (up to \$30,000 to each fellow's institution)** to permit a 20 percent time release from your primary responsibilities, such as teaching and clinical practice, allowing protected time for research and time to focus on scholarly activities of interest to the PA profession and education. Fellowship-related travel expenses to in-person seminar events, the PAEA Education Forum, and the AAPA Annual Conference are covered in addition to the 20 percent base pay stipend. There is no allowance for institutional indirect costs. Individuals selected for the Fellowship will be conferred the title of AAPA-PAEA Research Fellow or "fellow."

Fellows are expected to use the release time to complete their research project, develop their skills under the guidance of a mentor, engage in educational activities, and broaden their knowledge of PA education and the PA profession. By the conclusion of the Fellowship, fellows should be finished with or near completion of their project and preparing the findings for publication and presentation. It is the funder's expectation that by one year after the end of the Fellowship, a research manuscript resulting from the project will be submitted to a peer-reviewed publication.

The Fellowship will include virtual seminars and a two-to-four-day seminar in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The fellows will participate in exclusive Fellowship sessions and earn more than 25 CME hours. They will interact with leaders and experts in the fields of health, education, and workforce research and policy, with opportunities to meet with researchers from organizations such as the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Academy of Medicine, the Robert Graham Center, the National Association of Community Health Centers, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the National Center for Health Statistics, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

## Goal of the Fellowship

**The PAEA Research Fellowship seeks to build the research capacity of PAs and PA faculty and develop leaders to represent, advance, and elevate PAs in health professions research.**

The objectives of the Fellowship are to:

1. Fund-protected time to allow fellows to conduct research and expand their research agendas.
2. Broaden the fellows' knowledge of the medical research community and data sources and build their professional networks with prominent medical research organizations.
3. Build a strong cohort of research leaders who mentor future PA researchers and become PA research experts who advance the profession.



## Recommended Research Topics

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a proposed research plan that addresses one of the following topics. Please know that the application does not preclude an original and applicable topic outside these parameters:

- Workforce readiness of PA program graduates
- Understanding and improving PA education
- Challenges and solutions to clinical education site availability
- Equipping PAs and faculty for expanded leadership roles in healthcare
- Diversity and the PA student pipeline
- Barriers to the creation of progressive work environments for PAs

Applicants are asked to thoughtfully consider the feasibility of their proposed research, which will factor heavily into the selection process. The scope of the project must fit within the maximum two-year time frame, starting November 1, 2024, and be completed no later than October 31, 2026, including manuscript publication or submission. Fellows who do not meet this requirement may be ineligible to receive PAEA and/or AAPA research funding for five subsequent years.

## Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be PAs. PAEA and AAPA support is available to applicants employed as full-time PA faculty (at least 20 hours per week or 0.5 FTE) or as full-time PA program staff members. AAPA provides support to both clinician-researchers as well as to part-time faculty. Preference is given to PAs and PA program staff members who are AAPA members at a PAEA member program in good standing for at least one year.

Preference will be given to early career candidates who received their doctorate within the past five years. PAs (a) still in the doctoral phase of education, (b) who received their doctorate more than 10 years ago, and (c) PAs with strong research experience but no doctorate will also be considered. Applicants should have evidence of scholarly work accomplishments. While preference is given to early career researchers, all PA researchers are encouraged to apply. Only one candidate per institution will be accepted each year. In addition, candidates may receive direct funding from one AAPA funding stream i.e., Fellowship or Small Research Grant at a time.

PAEA and AAPA strongly encourage applications from all qualified candidates, particularly faculty, full-time PA program staff, and clinicians from diverse backgrounds.

## Work Requirements for Fellows

**The Funded Fellowship will run from November 1, 2024, until October 31, 2025**

- Commitment to scholarly activity for the equivalent of one day per week (.2 FTE)
- Completion of a research project, preferably using PAEA or AAPA dataset(s), including publication in or submission to a peer-reviewed journal or other project approved by PAEA within one year after the Fellowship is completed (i.e., by October 2026)
- Interim reports providing updates on project progress and obstacles are due to the funder at six and 12 months during the Fellowship
- Attendance at the 2024 PAEA Education Forum and 2025 AAPA Conference
- Presentation of research progress at 2025 PAEA Education Forum
- Attendance at webinar seminars

- Attendance at intermittent check-in meetings with the funder regarding project progress
- Attend one in-person meeting in the Washington, DC area (summer seminar series)

## Fellowship Application

### Pre-Application Process

If you are interested in applying for the Fellowship, please complete this [survey](#) and we will send you a packet that includes two successful proposals from previous grantees. This will provide applicants with an in-depth perspective on the rigorous, original research that fellows have conducted. While this step is not required, it is **highly recommended for new applicants and early-career faculty**. In the end, our goal is to expand Fellowship opportunities to as many different PAs and PA programs as possible.

### Proposal Format Requirements

The application should be paginated, in 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced, with one-inch margins. Citations or footnotes should be in 10-point Times New Roman font. Tables and figures are permitted if they do not impinge on the margins. The applicant must submit both a blinded and unblinded copy of their personal statement and proposed research plan.

The application should consist of the following components:

- Personal statement (blinded and unblinded; two-page limit)
- Proposed research plan including a timeline (blinded and unblinded; three-page limit)
- Mentor Letter of Support (blinded and unblinded)
- Professional Colleague Letter of Support (blinded and unblinded)
- Institutional Letter of Support (blinded and unblinded)
- Appendices

### Personal Statement (two-page limit, blinded and unblinded - see [blinding requirements](#))

Please provide a narrative that includes the following elements:

- Education and practice/faculty background
- Area(s) of research interest
- Personal goals to be accomplished as part of the Fellowship
- Brief information about the qualifications of their mentor and prior collaborations (research or otherwise)
- Reasons you should be selected

### Proposed Research Plan (three-page limit, blinded and unblinded- see [blinding requirements](#))

The proposed research plan should contain the following elements:

- Problem statement and research question(s)
- Background for your research question
- Methodology and analytic plan
- Statement of how the project will advance knowledge in the topic area(s)

If applicants intend to use PAEA and/or AAPA data, the research plan should detail which datasets and variables are of interest. For your convenience, PAEA and AAPA staff will be available for consultation



prior to submission. If you intend to collect your own data or need specialized resources and/or training, a description of what you will require to accomplish your research goal should be included. Accepted fellows will work with PAEA, AAPA, and their mentor to further refine their research question and methodology. PAEA and AAPA will have final approval of all fellows' research projects supported by the fellowship funding.

AAPA and PAEA deidentified data will be provided to the selected fellows at no cost. PAEA and AAPA staff may provide consultation and suggestions for working with proprietary data files. **However, data cleaning, merging, and analysis will fall under the fellows' responsibilities.**

The feasibility of the proposed research will factor heavily into the selection process. Fellows may be asked to consider changes and adjustments to the proposed methodology to accommodate limitations of existing data or the feasibility of completing the planned research project within the maximum two-year project period. The scope of proposals must fit within the maximum two-year time frame for completion and manuscript publication or submission. Fellows who do not meet this requirement may be ineligible to receive PAEA research funding for up to five subsequent years.

### **Letters of Commitment and Support (blinded and unblinded- see [blinding requirements](#))**

Three letters of support from the following sources are required:

- One letter of commitment from an experienced research mentor, either internal or external to your institution, who is familiar with the applicant's abilities and prior work. The mentor must agree to provide support over the course of the fellowship. This person does not have to be a PA. The letter should include a statement of the mentor's qualifications to support the proposed research, a description of prior or current collaborative projects with the applicant, and a commitment to providing adequate time for consultation.
- One letter of support from a professional colleague that specifically addresses the applicant's research interests and activities. This person does not have to be a PA. If applicable, the letter should describe prior or current collaborative projects with the applicant.
- One institutional commitment letter from the applicant's program director and the program director's immediate supervisor (or other work supervisor in a position to confirm .2 FTE release time). The letter should include an explicit statement of support for .2 FTE release time (i.e., 8 hours per week).

### **Appendices (no page limit, please note blinding requirements for each element)**

- Complete, current, and unblinded CV
- References in AMA style (may be single-spaced)
- Survey instruments/focus group questions
- Proof of IRB (unblinded). **IRB approval or exemption is required if your project is accepted.** You may provide evidence of either submission, approval, or exemption, but you must have IRB approval or exemption to be eligible to receive this award.

### **Blinding requirements**

Both the personal statement and research proposal must be fully blinded (i.e., no identifying information may be included). "Identifying information" means letterhead, as well as the following common information:

- Researcher's name and contact information

- Geographically or institutionally identifying information in proposal body (e.g., “We will collect data from PA students in Alabama”) or title (e.g., “Health outcomes among a sample of women in Philadelphia”)
- Mentions of participating institutions or organizations (e.g., “In partnership with PAEA University and the DC Health Center...”)

In addition, file names may not contain identifying information. For example, “PA University IRB approval.pdf” should be “IRB approval.pdf.” Overlaying a shape and/or changing the font or background of identifying text within a word processor application is not sufficient. This [guide](#) contains useful information on how to appropriately blind your application materials. Applicants may manually black out identifying information with a heavy black marker, then scan the document into a digital format, so long as the underlying, blinded text is not searchable, readable, or identifiable.

***Applications that do not meet the blinding requirements will not be reviewed.*** Please contact us at [Research@PAEAonline.org](mailto:Research@PAEAonline.org) or 703-651-8540 for more information.

## Application Review and Selection Process

### Phase 1: Blinded Review

All applications will be reviewed by a peer review panel according to the [proposal evaluation criteria](#). Reviewers will be asked to provide meaningful feedback to the applicants regarding study design and methodology to ensure that the use of PAEA/AAPA data sources will address the questions posed. Note: non-blinded applicant CVs and letters of support are reviewed after all blinded materials have been scored.

### Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will consider each of the criteria below in the determination of merit and assign a separate score for each.

- The personal statement provides education and work-related skills, experience, and persuasive reasons as to why the applicant should be selected.
- The proposed project addresses a novel and concise research question(s) or problem statement that is of critical importance to PA education or the PA profession.
- The background or literature review section identifies the search terms and summarizes the findings of the existing literature and
  - Adequately makes a case for the importance of the proposed research,
  - Demonstrates a gap that the proposed research will help fill,
  - Clearly identifies how the proposed research will advance the knowledge in the topic area.
- The proposed methods adequately address the research question(s).
- The proposed analyses appropriately and rigorously address the research question(s) and account for confounding variables and bias. Preference is given to studies that propose detailed and sophisticated analyses that move beyond descriptive statistics.
- Is the proposed research likely to be successfully completed within the 2-year timeframe (including project completion and manuscript submission or publication)?

- The applicant details a realistic timeline for completing the project, from obtaining data through presenting the findings. The proposed research is likely to be successfully completed within the 2-year timeframe.
- The designated mentor expresses enthusiasm for the candidate, a history of collaboration (research or other work), first-hand knowledge of the candidate's skills, and commitment to providing adequate time for consultation.
- The mentor is qualified to support the proposed research.
- Does the professional colleague address the candidate's research interests and activities?
- The professional colleague expresses enthusiasm for the candidate and illustrates first-hand knowledge of the candidate's skills and experience.
- The program director and/or other supervisor shows enthusiasm for the candidate, first-hand knowledge of their skills, and unambiguous commitment to release the candidate for .20 FTE/week.

### **Phase 2: Interview**

Select applicants will be invited to participate in a phone interview with the review panel. All application materials will be unblinded and shared with the review panel. During the interview, the candidate's willingness to take on the responsibilities of the fellowship and openness to recommendations provided in Phase 1 will be assessed (if applicable).

### **Phase 3: Selection**

The selected fellows will meet the basic requirements of the PAEA Research Fellowship. Additional criteria, including the mentor's research experience and expertise, as well as the fellow's potential contribution to the cohort of fellows, will be considered in the selection process. Fellows will propose work that is aligned with the supporting organizations' goals and can be accomplished (with milestones) within one year after completion of the fellowship for submission of a publishable manuscript.

### **Submission of Application**

Applications must be submitted through the PAEA Research **online application platform no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on June 3, 2024**. You may view a **user guide** for the application platform here. If you do not receive an email confirmation within two business days, please contact us at 703-651-8540 or [Research@PAEAonline.org](mailto:Research@PAEAonline.org) to verify that your submission was received.