ASCA Research Grant Program—Special Project
2020 Call for Proposals

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is now accepting research proposals for a special project to examine and recommend optimal student-to-school-counselor ratios. Numerous studies support the impact of low student-to-school-counselor ratios on students’ academic success, college and career readiness and social/emotional wellness. But is the current 250:1 ratio still ideal? How should ratios differ based on grade level – elementary, middle and high school – and other school factors?

ASCA seeks a meta-analysis that reviews existing studies and research on student-to-school-counselor ratios to identify optimal ratios based on available data. Several ASCA grant-funded studies have produced valuable research in this area and would be expected to be part of the analysis. (ASCA will provide grant study reports.) This study requires a condensed timeframe with a final report delivered no later than May 18, 2020.

DESCRIPTION
ASCA works to expand the image and influence of school counselors through advocacy, leadership, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA empowers school counselors with the knowledge, skills, linkages and resources to promote student success in the school, the home, the community and the world. ASCA’s mission is to represent school counselors and to promote professionalism and ethical practices. Since launching the grants program in 2017, ASCA has awarded approximately $125,000 in funding for a total of 14 research projects. These projects have provided valuable research supporting the effectiveness of school counselors and school counseling programs in improving student outcomes.

AWARDS
ASCA will fund and award individual grants of $5,000 for this meta-analysis research project. Although ASCA does not want to determine the specific use of these awarded funds, the proposed budget outlined in the proposal will be evaluated for efficient and effective use of the awarded funds.

ELIGIBILITY
To be eligible for an ASCA grant, your institution and proposal must meet the following requirements.

- Applicants must be affiliated with or employed by an accredited degree-granting university with a nonprofit status or a research institution with nonprofit status and based in the United States.
- Institutions must have access to the knowledge, resources and skills necessary to carry out the proposed research.
- Applicants cannot be (nor related to) ASCA board members and staff or grant selection committee members.
- Incomplete proposals or those requesting funds in excess of the maximum award will be excluded from the selection process.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Proposals submitted for consideration should contain the following information and be no longer than five pages in length (12-point font), not including appendices (curriculum vitae for each researcher, instrumentation for research methods, letters of support, etc.). Please also submit a blind version of your proposal for review by the ASCA grants committee.

**Project title and abstract.** The abstract must contain:
- A non-technical description of the project stating the problem to be studied and explaining the project’s broader significance and importance.
- A technical description of the project stating the research’s goals and scope and the methods and approaches to be used.

**Project description:** Describe the set of research questions that will be addressed, research methods that will be used to answer the questions and the significance of the findings for the school counseling profession.

**Biographical information, contact information and letters of support.** This section must contain:
- Brief description of institution and its program to prepare school counselors, including number of graduates in the past five years.
- Brief description of each researcher to include affiliation, relevant prior research, publications and professional experience. Describe the role of individual researchers on the project and how their skills and knowledge enable them to address the question proposed. (Include researchers’ CV in appendix.)
- Contact information for principal investigator.

**Research approach.** This section must contain:
- Description of the theoretical framework and approach (for the meta-analysis) the researchers will use to address the research question(s). Include a discussion of the research methods and planned data analysis.
- Description of how researchers will use the data to identify and recommend specific ratios.

**Use of funds and other support.** Provide a detailed budget (U.S. dollars) describing how the award will be used. The budget should be presented as a table with the total budget request clearly indicated. Include other contributions to this project (cash, goods and services), if any, but do not include the use of university facilities that are otherwise provided on an ongoing basis. Grant funds will not provide for institutional indirect costs or overhead, including salaries. (Note: Grant funds may be used to fund the work of research assistants.) Grants may not be used to fund travel to promote or present research. Note that grant recipients will be required to submit an original letter on department letterhead certifying the commitment of any additional or matching support described in the proposal.
Schedule. Present a plan for completion of the project, including milestones that will be used to measure progress. A brief status update is due to ASCA at the halfway point of the project schedule.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA
All proposals received by the submission deadline and in compliance with the eligibility criteria will be reviewed by a panel of school counseling and educational professionals appointed by ASCA. Based on evaluations by the review panel, ASCA will select the worthiest proposal for funding. All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Addresses the specific project outlined here.
- Ability to complete the project, including adequacy of resources available and qualifications of identified contributors.
- Qualifications of principal investigator including previous history of work in the area, successful completion of previous funded projects, research or teaching awards and books published.
- Possible additional information as requested by the review panel.

CONDITIONS
Grant recipients agree to the following as a condition of this award:

- Researchers agree that ASCA may use their name and likeness to publicize their proposals (including all proposal content) in connections with the promotion of the research award in all media now known or later developed.
- Researchers agree to contribute to presentations or publications to describe their project experiences.
- ASCA makes no claims on any of the data collected as a part of this research but, at the completion of the project, requires funded researchers to submit to ASCA a report describing the project and its findings, with recommendations.

TIMELINE AND SUBMISSION
Proposals must be submitted electronically to ahickman@schoolcounselor.org no later than Dec. 1, 2019. Send questions to the same address. Grant recipients will be notified no later than Dec. 31, 2019. Funding will be sent to grant recipients no later than 30 days after notification, assuming eligibility requirements have been met.

Notes: ASCA shall have no obligation to maintain the confidentiality of any submitted proposals. Therefore, proposals should not contain information that is confidential, restricted or sensitive. ASCA reserves the right to make the selected proposals publicly available, except those portions containing budgetary or personally identifiable information. Because of the anticipated volume of submissions, ASCA cannot provide individual feedback on proposals that are not funded.