



Applicant Guidelines and Information
*Support of Research Studies on the
Therapeutic Effects of Horses on Humans*

Horses and Humans Research Foundation

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Mission

Horses and Humans Research Foundation is dedicated to facilitating universal understanding and appreciation of the significant influence of horses on humans. The foundation's goal is to promote research that will 1) Benefit special program participants by improving equine-assisted activity best practices; 2) Educate the public, including professional affiliates, regarding the value and benefits of horses and equine-assisted activities. More information at www.horsesandhumans.org.

History

In 2002 a group of people, led by Molly Sweeney's vision, gathered in Arizona intent on developing a plan to promote research in the field of therapeutic riding/equine-assisted activities. The prevailing philosophy in the Horses and Humans Research Foundation's founding stages was that when the resources, contacts and support are provided for quality research, quality research would result. A plan was drafted for a public foundation dedicated to developing, funding and promoting this research. By 2004 the Foundation had attained its 501(c)3 nonprofit status, contracted a project manager and established a central office in Cleveland, Ohio. The Foundation was blessed with a significant donation of \$500,000, contributed anonymously as a challenge fund, matching dollar for dollar any donor's contribution. By the following year the board was expanded, financial and operational policies and procedures were established, a website, newsletters and brochures were created, an annual fundraising campaign was established, a grant management process was adapted and a call for proposals was announced.

Research Purpose

The purpose of Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) is to fund research that investigates the therapeutic effects of horses on humans. The broad research agenda includes basic research, as well as clinical studies that will ultimately impact physical and mental health

and the quality of life for people with disabilities who are involved with equine-assisted activities/therapies (EAA/T). Basic research collects foundational data used to develop or refine theories. Clinical or applied research tests theories that direct practice or have a direct effect on the persons in the activity or therapy. HHRF exists to fund and support research projects that measure quantitative or qualitative evidence for EAA/T. Examples of areas that research questions could be based on (not necessarily reflecting foundation priorities):

Equine-assisted activities studies are needed that validate:

- Horse – rider combinations
- Therapeutic Riding lesson progression
 - Assistance to independence to competition level
- Professional qualifications
 - Registered to Advanced to Masters
- Lesson duration
- Lesson frequency
- Lesson effectiveness
 - Group size
 - Disability
 - Self-esteem

Equine-assisted therapy studies are needed that validate:

- Frequency of treatment
- Outcomes of treatment
- Efficacy for different diagnoses
- Efficacy within age ranges
- Duration of treatment
- Protocols during treatment
- Horse selection for treatment
- Equine movement during treatment
- Professional competency recommendations

Proposal Review and Award Process

Applications which have passed all procedural and eligibility requirements will be reviewed and ranked by members of the HHRF Scientific Review Committee, who represent areas of expertise relevant to the project. Every project/application submitted to this committee will be acknowledged and will receive a letter of review. The Foundation's board of directors will then review recommendations from the Scientific Review Committee and make final funding decisions.

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis, taking into account scientific merit, scientific and clinical significance and relevance to areas designated by the Foundation. The strongest proposals will fully and clearly cover all information and research requested, incorporate project intent and methodology, anticipate issues that may arise and are exceptionally easy to follow from processes to activities and results. Preference will be given to investigators with solid credentials and research experience. A grant for a maximum of \$100,000 may be awarded for up to a one and a half -year period.

See the Application Checklist (available at horsesandhumans.org/research) for evaluation priorities of the Scientific Review Committee.

Notification of awards will be announced within four months of the application deadline. Funding for selected projects will be contingent on Institutional Review Board approval. Evidence of final IRB will be presented to HHRF prior to the start date of the project.

The recipient of any research grant must certify that research will be conducted according to the rules and regulations of the United States Department of Health and Human Services or equivalent standards if located outside the USA. All studies involving horses must comply with accepted industry standards for care, treatment, and humane workload. All mounted work must comply with accepted industry standards for safety including employment of a certified instructor/therapist or evidence of equivalent standards. EAA/T program sites must be accredited by a qualified association or provide evidence of equivalent standards for facility and program safety.

A one and a half year grant period is assumed. Projects that do not comply with the approved timelines may be put into probationary measures and funding placed in fiscal holding (when placed on fiscal hold no further funds can be released without a hearing by HHRF board representatives who will review the entire grant history and determine any further actions)The final report shall include a scientific abstract, summary data tables, a financial report, and a less-technical lay language article (400 words) to potentially be used in HHRF and related publications as determined by HHRF.

Application Information

Amount of funding available: \$100,000 is the maximum amount for requests at this time.

Application deadline: Visit www.horsesandhumans.org for upcoming deadlines.

Application submission: **Both** paper and electronic formats are required.

HHRF accepts Letters of Intent and grant applications at any time throughout the year, though completed grant applications will be reviewed only once per year. Proposals may not receive a formal review by HHRF's advisors if it is determined that the project does not follow the published guidelines and priorities. Allow up to two months for LOI responses, and four months from the date of deadline for proposal response time. LOIs are NOT required but may be submitted if the applicant is seeking indication of appropriateness of research topic or input on scientific merit. **Please note that approval to apply for a full proposal does not guarantee funding at any level.**

Application information (including deadlines, procedure and forms) may be updated or changed at any time; check the *research section* of www.horsesandhumans.org for the most up-to-date information.

Academic Honesty Statement: Scientific research must be carried out in accordance with the highest ethical standards. Researchers should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fraud, lying or other types of wrong-doing in the conduct of scientific research.

Disclaimer: Submission of a proposal does not commit HHRF to awarding a grant. HHRF reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The HHRF Board is the sole judge as to whether a proposal has satisfactorily met the set requirements.

Note: It is never appropriate to discuss your application or research proposal with any board member. Any such discussions may bias the grant award decision-making process and may affect the eligibility of your proposal for funding.