



FOR NURSING LEADERSHIP  
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION™

**Mission:** To provide resources that create opportunities to bridge science and practice to shape the future of nursing leadership.  
**Vision:** A healthier tomorrow advanced through nursing leadership.

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## 2025 Nursing Leadership Research Grant

### The Nurses' Leadership Journey - Transitions in Leadership Practice

### Request for Proposals

#### Introduction:

The AONL Foundation envisions a healthier tomorrow advanced through nursing leadership and strives to achieve that vision by providing resources to create opportunities to bridge science and practice to shape the future of nursing leadership.

The AONL Foundation in partnership with the Association for Leadership Science (ASLN) conducted a study that identified key priorities for nursing leadership practice and science. The AONL Foundation embraces its vision and mission by supporting the generation of new knowledge through six key priorities:

1. Nurses' Health, wellbeing, resilience, safety in the workplace
2. Develop and manage a nursing workforce to meet current and future needs
3. Healthy work and practice environments for direct care nurses as a result of nurse leader interventions
4. Health work and practice environments for nurse leaders
5. Quantification of nursing's value across the health care delivery system
6. ***Nurse leader development and essential competencies***

Priority 6, nurse leader development and essential competencies, is the focus of this year's grant. The grant is focused on transitions to leadership practice and roles. Why this focus for 2025? Retirements, consolidations and mergers are creating leadership opportunities for novice leaders at all levels of leadership practice. In an AONL report with Laudio, over 50% of nurse managers had less than 3.5 years of experience. Additionally, the complexities and scope of nursing leadership roles are evolving.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to understand how organizations can recruit, retain and cultivate qualified nurse leaders. The AONL Foundation aims to optimize outcomes and generate knowledge related to the direct care nurse's transition to leadership or transitions into a new leadership position through promotion. Through this funding the AONL Foundation aims to support the generation of timely, innovative and cost-effective solutions that can be implemented in the near future to proactively improve the effectiveness nurse leaders at all levels of nursing leadership. Research projects should outline clear metrics and demonstrate, when possible, a return on investment. Research may be related to creating new programs or testing and evaluating current programs.

The Foundation seeks to fund a study related to the transitions in nurse leadership. These topics include, but are not limited to,

- Transition to leadership practice programs
- Transition planning
- Succession planning
- Identification and cultivation of potential leaders

- Role development and related competencies
- Retention planning
- Recruitment
- Innovative onboarding

This grant award can support observational, interventional or translational research to address the stated priorities. Investigators may use any of the qualitative traditions (ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, etc.), descriptive quantitative designs, or mixed methods to explore these topics. Studies that are translatable to current or future practice or set groundwork for continued funded outcome-focused research are encouraged.

Proposals need to be embraced by appropriate organizational stakeholders and demonstrate a collaborative approach. It is expected that the outcomes will have the potential to be sustained in the organization or setting and should be scalable for implementation in other settings.

### Eligibility Criteria

1. The principal investigator must be a current licensed Registered Nurse.
2. The principal investigator is a member of AONL or an affiliate
3. Members of the board of directors, officers, and staff of the AONL Foundation, AONL, the American Hospital Association and its affiliates are not eligible to apply.
4. Researchers currently funded by the AONL Foundation are not eligible for this award.

**\*\*Preference is given to nurses conducting research as part of their doctoral studies.**

### Funding Details

Grants available: One (1) grant of \$10,000  
 Online Submissions Open: May 1, 2025  
 Deadline for Submissions: August 29, 2025 – 3:00pm Central Standard Time  
 Award Notification: October 2025  
 Public Announcement: December 2025  
 Funding Dates: January 2025 – February 2026.

The grant is distributed in the following manner Within 30 days of award	After submission of 6-month report	Within 30 days of final report submission
\$4,000	\$4,000	\$2,000

One 6-month extension of the funding timeline will be considered due to unforeseen circumstances impacting the research. A written request must be submitted to the AONL Foundation research coordinator 30 days prior to the end of the funding period. The grant funding is for the approved study only and funds are not transferable to other researchers or studies. If funds remain unused at the end of the funding period, the AONL Foundation reserves the right to retain the fund balance for funding of future projects. Funds are received by means of a paper check mailed to the principal investigator.

### Proposal Application

An electronic copy (Microsoft Word or PDF) of the entire proposal shall be submitted online via AONL

Foundation's website. Applications should be no longer than eight single-spaced pages with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman or Arial 12-Point font. References should be cited using APA format and are to be included within the 8-page limit. Copies of planned surveys or other measures are to be included as appendices.

A second copy (Microsoft Word or PDF) of the entire proposal – **with all identifying information of researcher(s) and institution(s) removed** – shall also be submitted. The same page limit applies.

**Format of Application:** *(Please note all elements listed below are required for consideration of this grant award.)*

*Title Page:*

- Name, title, organizational affiliation, email address, phone number, address of each investigator
- Project Title
  
- *Proposal:*
- Abstract (400 words maximum – not to be included in the 8-page limit)
- Introduction
- Background/Literature Review/Conceptual Model or Framework
- Specific Aims/Purpose of Study
- Alignment with AONL Foundation Strategic Priorities
- Anticipated Impacts (How will this study add to the body of knowledge? What is the potential for future research studies?)
- Research Design and Methods (Setting, Sample, Measures, Plans for Data Analysis)
- Plans for Protection of Human Subjects
- Plans for Dissemination
- Plans for Translation and Potential Implementation of Findings
- Timeline
- Budget
  - AONL Foundation provides funding for direct expenses and allows up to 10% of total grant funds to be used for indirect expenses or overhead expenses.
  - Investigator time will not be supported. All other research-related expenditures including salary support for research assistants or statisticians, incentivizing study participants, supplies, software, printed materials, copying, communications, and expenses related to attending and presenting study findings at conferences are acceptable expenses.
- References

*Support Documents:*

1. Two letters of support (at least one letter of support from the organization at which the study will be conducted)
2. Letter of IRB approval or exemption
3. Instrument(s) to be used in study
4. Proof of author permission to use proposed instrument(s)
5. Curriculum Vitae, resume, or bio sketch for each investigator
6. Declaration of any other funding sources for this project

**Review Process:**

All submitted proposals will undergo a blind review by members of the AONL Foundation Research Review Committee and the Senior Director of AONL Professional Practice. The grant award recipient

will be selected based on consideration of eligibility and merit of the research proposal. Review criteria will include, but may not be limited to:

1. Overall potential impact of the proposed research
2. The significance and innovativeness of the planned study
3. The study strategy, methodology and data analysis plan is rigorous and can be accomplished in the projected timeframe
4. The funding requested is justified to support the proposed research
5. There is a clear contribution to the practice of nursing leadership
6. Professionalism and comprehensiveness of the grant application

### **Expectations of Grant Recipient**

- The research is conducted with professionalism, integrity, and following ethical principles.
- At the beginning of the grant period, the principal investigators will provide a jpg head shot and a narrative biography of no more than 300 words for each investigator.
- At the midpoint and at the conclusion of the research study the principal investigators will submit an interim and final report, respectively, on the progress of the study.
- Quarterly meetings will be scheduled with the principal investigator(s), study team, and AONL Foundation staff including a member of the research committee designated as the study's research liaison. The meetings are intended to inform the AONL Foundation and assigned research liaison of the study successes, challenges, milestones, and progress according to the timeline.
- Upon conclusion of the study and within the timeline the principal investigator will:
  - Submit an abstract for presentation at national or regional conference. If the abstract is not accepted for presentation, a webinar or alternative method of dissemination may be considered.
  - Submit manuscript for publication to at least one peer reviewed nursing research journal
  - Submit a summary of the study to be added to the online AONL Foundation's Research Repository
  - Permit study findings to be incorporated into the AONL Foundation's marketing and communications
  - Aid the AONL Foundation in demonstrating impact of the research
- Principal investigator will ensure proper acknowledgment of AONL Foundation and the underwriting donor in all publications and presentations.

### **Application Checklist**

- ☐ Eligibility criteria met
- ☐ Proposed study aligns with the AONL Foundation priorities and the annual focus
- ☐ IRB approval received (For more information, [here](#))
- ☐ Supporting documents collected
  - Two letters of support (at least one letter of support from the organization at which the study will be conducted)
  - Letter of IRB approval or exemption

- Instrument(s) to be used in study
  - Proof of author permission to use proposed instrument(s)
  - Curriculum Vitae, resume, or bio sketch for each investigator
  - Declaration of any other funding sources for this project
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- ☐ Study can be performed within the grant funding period
  - ☐ Application document developed per guidelines outlined

## **Acknowledgment**

Funding for this research study is made possible thanks to the generous donors supporting the AONL Foundation. Thank you for your support.

## **Inquiries**

For questions about the submission or review process, please contact Erica Cheng, AONL Foundation Program Specialist, at [echeng@aha.org](mailto:echeng@aha.org).