



## AIM Clinical Science Fellowship Requirements & Application

Application window open from February 1, 2026 - March 15, 2026

### About AIM

AIM Youth Mental Health bridges the gap between youth mental health research and access to care by finding, funding, and implementing evidence-based treatments and empowering youth to discover their own mental health solutions. Guided by its Scientific Advisory Board, a diverse group of distinguished mental health researchers in the U.S. and around the world, AIM accelerates high-impact, game-changing youth mental health research and invests in researchers advancing prevention, early intervention, and innovation in youth mental health.

The AIM Research Impact Fund advances implementation-focused research in youth mental health. As the prevalence and severity of mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and young adults continue to rise, there is a critical need for research that not only generates knowledge, but also leads to action in communities with the young people who need it most. The AIM Research Impact Fund prioritizes investments in scientific researchers who are addressing pressing needs today while laying the groundwork for scalable, sustainable solutions for the future.

### About the AIM Clinical Science Fellowship

**The AIM Clinical Science Fellowship (“CSF”)** is a core program of the AIM Research Impact Fund. The CSF is designed to foster the next generation of youth mental health researchers by supporting postdoctoral fellows in implementing youth mental health research innovations, including new therapies, diagnostic tools, early interventions, and emerging technologies.

During the one-year Fellowship period, Fellows are expected to conduct a defined research project, meaningfully integrate a youth co-researcher through **AIM’s Ideas Lab**, and participate in regular engagement with the AIM team for coordination and support. As part of the program, Fellows receive funding and structured opportunities for connection and alignment with AIM, while maintaining scientific independence and leadership of their work.

### Fellowship Focus

Fellows (and their research labs/projects) may be situated in psychiatry, neuroscience, psychology, public health, or other social or behavioral sciences, provided there is a clear pathway to improving youth mental health care in real-world settings. All proposed research

must focus on the implementation or dissemination of evidence-based approaches and be positioned for short-term scale and impact.

Research supported through the Fellowship must be relevant to children, adolescents, or young adults from birth to age 26.

## 2026 Fellowship Program Details

- AIM anticipates supporting approximately **three to five Fellows** during the 2026 Fellowship cycle.

Applicants may propose a total project budget between **\$25,000 and \$50,000** for a one-year fellowship period.

Applicants are encouraged to request a budget that accurately reflects the needs of the proposed work. Projects of varying scope and budget size will be evaluated on equal footing, and smaller or more focused projects are not disadvantaged in the review process. AIM does not provide indirect costs or institutional overhead.

AIM's administrative cost of review is minimal, as application evaluation is conducted by members of our Scientific Advisory Board who generously volunteer their time and expertise. Due to capacity limitations, AIM is unable to provide individualized feedback to applicants.

## How Applications Will Be Reviewed

AIM conducts an initial review to assess eligibility, completeness, and alignment with program priorities. Final funding decisions are made by the AIM Scientific Advisory Board using the following considerations:

- Alignment with AIM's mission, including a focus on applied research that improves youth mental health outcomes in real-world settings
- Strength and feasibility of the proposed implementation approach, including readiness for short-term scale, dissemination, or adoption
- Relevance and potential impact for youth with lived experience, including children, adolescents, or young adults (birth to age 26)
- Scientific rigor and appropriateness of the proposed methods within a one-year fellowship period
- Applicant preparedness and supervisor/advisory support, including involvement of a senior researcher or program advisor
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed youth mentorship component, including meaningful inclusion of an AIM Youth Ambassador as a co-researcher
- Appropriateness of the proposed budget relative to project scope and goals

## Applicant Eligibility & Requirements

- Applicants must hold a **doctoral-level degree (Ph.D., Psy.D., Ed.D., or M.D.)**.
- Applicants must be currently employed in a postdoctoral position or have a confirmed commitment to begin a postdoctoral appointment by **July 1, 2026**.
- Applicants must be proficient in spoken and written English. All application materials must be submitted in English.
- Applicants must have the support of a **senior researcher or program advisor** who is well-established in the applicant's research area and will provide ongoing research guidance and professional mentorship throughout the fellowship period.
- AIM welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds and encourages applications that reflect diversity in **race, ethnicity, gender identity, culture, geography, and institutional context**, both within research teams and in the populations served.

## Research Project Requirements

- The AIM Clinical Science Fellowship is a **one-year program to include both a research project with an implementation focus and the mentorship of an AIM Youth Ambassador as a co-researcher**.
- Applicants may request support for research-related expenses, partial salary support, or a combination of both, within a total proposed budget of \$25,000-\$50,000.
  - Salary support, when requested, is intended to provide protected time for fellows to carry out the AIM-funded project and must be directly tied to the proposed research activities and level of effort. AIM does not provide full salary replacement and does not support ongoing employment beyond the fellowship period.
  - Allowable costs may include personnel support, participant or subject payments, supplies, travel, and other expenses necessary to complete the proposed project. Benefits (e.g., health insurance) may be included and should be incorporated into the total budget request.
- Fellows are expected to devote a **minimum of 50% effort** to their Fellowship project for the duration of the one-year Fellowship period. When salary support is requested, applicants should clearly describe how the requested support aligns with this effort and enables completion of the proposed work. AIM recognizes that the 50% effort requirement may be supported through a combination of Fellowship funds and other institutional or grant-based support.
- Fellows are responsible for obtaining all necessary institutional approvals (e.g., IRB or ethics review) prior to initiating research activities.
- Proposed projects must have a clear focus in **implementation science** and demonstrate readiness for **short-term scale, dissemination, or real-world adoption**. Research should address a timely challenge in youth mental health and have a clear pathway to impact for individuals with lived experience.

## Youth Mentorship & Co-Research Requirements

- Participation in the youth co-research component is a **core element** of the AIM Clinical Science Fellowship program. Selected Fellows will be required to meaningfully integrate **one to two youth co-researchers** into their lab or project during the Fellowship period.
- Each Fellow will be paired with **Youth Ambassador(s)** from AIM's high school Youth Participatory Action Research program, the **AIM Ideas Lab**, and will mentor the student(s) **virtually** over the course of the Fellowship. Youth Ambassadors are AIM-affiliated high school students who have foundational training in youth mental health and research methods.
- Youth co-researchers may assist with aspects of the project such as literature review, data collection, or other activities aligned with their interests and skills, as appropriate to the scope of the research and the Fellowship timeline.
- AIM provides guidance and support to Fellows to ensure youth engagement is **meaningful, ethical, and age-appropriate**, while allowing flexibility to adapt to the needs and structure of each project. Additional details and expectations related to youth co-research will be shared with Fellows following selection.

## Fellowship Timeline

- **Applications Open:** February 1, 2026
- **Application Deadline:** March 15, 2026 at 11:59 pm PST
- **Notification of Selection:** By May 30, 2026
- **Funding Disbursement:** Funding for the Fellow's research project will be disbursed according to a mutually agreed-upon schedule, with anticipated start dates of **July 1, 2026 or September 1, 2026**

All required application materials must be received by this deadline. **Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Due to staff capacity, AIM is unable to provide individualized feedback on applications.

## Application Materials

**Note:** Before beginning your application, please review and prepare all required narratives, **CV, and Senior Researcher / Program Advisor Letter of Support**. Once started, the application must be completed in a single session, as progress might not be saved.

## Applicant Background & Fellowship Goals

*(2,000 characters or less)*

Provide a brief overview of your background, training, and research experience that demonstrate your preparation for the **AIM Clinical Science Fellowship**. Applicants are encouraged to describe how participation in the Fellowship fits within their career trajectory and

how the proposed Fellowship project aligns with their longer-term research or implementation goals.

## CV & Professional Links

Please upload a current curriculum vitae (no more than 5 pages).

You may also include up to **three links** that demonstrate relevant scholarly or professional work (e.g., peer-reviewed publications, Google Scholar profile, personal or institutional website, LinkedIn, GitHub).

## Fellowship Project & Implementation Plan

*(6,000 characters or less)*

Please describe the **Fellowship research project** you intend to pursue during the one-year AIM Clinical Science Fellowship period. Descriptions of research projects should be concise, clearly written, and focused on applied, implementation-oriented research in youth mental health.

Your response should address the following components:

- **Research question and significance:** Clearly describe the youth mental health challenge being addressed and its relevance to children, adolescents, or young adults (birth to age 26).
- **Study design and methods:** Describe the research design, methodology, and analytic approach. Indicate whether the proposed work is an individual project or part of a broader team or laboratory effort, and clearly articulate your specific role and responsibilities.
- **Implementation focus and path to impact:** Explain how the proposed work aligns with implementation science, how the project could impact young people in real-world settings during the Fellowship period, and how findings could inform practice, systems, or policy. Projects should demonstrate readiness for short-term dissemination, adoption, or scale.
- **Research setting and partnerships:** Identify the proposed research site(s), institutional affiliation(s), and any collaborating programs, funding sources, or organizations involved in the project.

## Youth Co-Research Engagement Plan

*(2,000 characters or less)*

- Describe how you will engage an **AIM Youth Ambassador** as a co-researcher in your Fellowship project. Please include the types of activities a youth co-researcher might meaningfully support (e.g., literature review, data collection, dissemination activities) and how this engagement will be structured over the one-year Fellowship period.

## Project Budget

Applicants must submit a **detailed project budget** and **budget narrative** outlining how Fellowship funds will be used during the one-year program period. Total budget requests must fall between **\$25,000 and \$50,000**.

The budget should include line items for all anticipated costs (e.g., partial salary support, research personnel, participant costs, supplies, travel, and other project-related expenses). The budget narrative should clearly justify each major expense and explain how the requested funds support completion of the Fellowship project.

If requesting **salary support**, applicants must specify:

- The role(s) being supported
- The level of effort covered by Fellowship funds
- How this support provides protected time to complete the proposed work

AIM does **not** provide indirect costs or institutional overhead, and funds may not be used for general-purpose laboratory equipment or multipurpose software.

## Senior Researcher / Program Advisor Letter of Support

*(pdf upload - 3,000 characters or less)*

Applicants must submit **one letter of support** from the senior researcher or program advisor who will provide research guidance and professional mentorship throughout the Fellowship period. The letter should briefly describe:

- The advisor's relationship to the applicant
- The advisor's commitment to supporting the proposed Fellowship project and the applicant's professional development
- The feasibility of completing the proposed work within the one-year Fellowship period

Letters must be uploaded as part of the application submission. **Letters of support must be received by the application deadline (March 15 at 11:59 p.m. PST)**. Applications without a required letter of support submitted by the deadline will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.