

2026 Research Grant Guidelines and Application



Environmental Programs
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RESEARCH GRANTS GUIDELINES

1. Purpose.

- 1.1 The GCSAA provides research funding that advances scientific knowledge and provides agronomic, economic, and environmental solutions that directly benefit the management of golf courses and the professionals who manage them. The outcomes from this research should lead to a healthier environment and community and improve the playing conditions for the game of golf. GCSAA does not fund breeding or germplasm enhancements projects that lead to the development of improved turfgrass cultivars.

2. Qualifying organizations shall include:

- 2.1 Universities/Colleges recognized and accredited by U.S. Department of Education (ED) and/or ED recognized higher education accredited entities.

3. Research Grant Priorities

- 3.1 **As funding is available**, GCSAA will provide grant opportunities for qualifying universities/colleges that fit within the following GCSAA priority areas:
 - 3.1.1 Chapter Cooperative Research Grant: GCSAA encourages scientists and chapters to collaborate and expand GCSAA's research grant investments. GCSAA will cooperate with chapters by providing matching funds for research that has been identified by the chapter as a significant local issue. The goal is to fund research that is important to superintendents and aligns with any of the specific grant activities listed in this section 3.1. Chapter Cooperative Research applications are not guaranteed funding and must go through the evaluation and selection process. Upon recommendations by the committee, the board will approve final funding by project.
 - 3.1.2 Water Use and Water Quality Protection: Research that contributes to the conservation, efficiency, or optimization of applied (irrigation) water for golf course turfgrass. Or Research that develops, enhances, or measures/quantifies the effectiveness of golf course Best Management Practices related to water use as well as surface and/or ground water quality protection. Research must be applicable to golf course management and use by superintendents.
 - 3.1.3 Sustainable Golf Course Turfgrass and Other Landscape Management: Research that optimizes the growing environment for golf course turf or contributes to sustainable golf course management, including but not limited to increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, or conservation of inputs (fertilizers, bio-products, pest control resources, soil amendments, etc.) and resources (energy, air, land, etc.) for use on all golf course landscapes. Or Research that develops, enhances, or measures/quantifies the effectiveness of golf course Best Management Practices related to these inputs, healthy turfgrass and quality playing surfaces as well as out of play surfaces/landscapes and other environmental protection. Research must be applicable to golf course management and use by superintendents. Example areas may include Integrated Pest Management, Pest Resistance Management, non-

chemical pest control, development/management of healthy soils, irrigation water quality, native area management, disease management, pollinator/wildlife habitat/protection, other environmental protection pollution prevention, enhanced playing surfaces, pond management, etc.

4. Requirements and preferences for research proposals to receive funding:

- 4.1 The Chapter Cooperative Research, Water Use and Water Quality Protection, and Sustainable Golf Course Turfgrass and Other Landscape Management grants will be offered as they are available and based upon a single year or maximum two-year cycle. Projects will have a maximum two-year period to complete their objectives.
 - 4.1.1 Projects may be submitted without matching funds, but **preference and priority will be given to those that have secured matching funds**. Regardless of matching funds, letters of support are strongly encouraged.
 - 4.1.1.1 Letters of Support: Projects without matching funds and with letters of support from local / regional Golf Course Superintendent Associations or related turfgrass foundations will be given preference over those applications without letters of support, but not over those with matching funds (universities, golf associations or the USGA, section 4.1.2). Matching funds do not include other sources of external funding beyond those listed below.
 - 4.1.2 Project requests with matching funds including Chapter Cooperative Research grant applications may be from one or more chapters, turfgrass foundations, golf associations, or participating universities depending upon the type of grant.
 - 4.1.2.1 Letters of Support with Matching Funds: A letter from local / regional Golf Course Superintendent Associations or related turfgrass foundations is required for Chapter Cooperative Research grant proposals and the letter must include the amount of matching funds For universities, golf associations, or the USGA providing match, a letter from the organization's official representative indicating the matching funds is required as well.

5. Final Grant Determination, Funding Amounts, Maximums, and Overhead / Administrative Fees:

- 5.1 Grant applicants will indicate their matching funds (applied for or promised) and the amounts. Regardless of matching funds, support letters and the proposal's research focus, GCSAA reserves the right to determine the final grant type and funding sources for approved applications / projects.
- 5.2 Projects may be funded up to \$50,000 maximum per year for up to two years for all projects. The maximum project funding total is \$100,000 for the life of the project.
 - 5.2.1 Grant applications should specify the project's other funding sources that the investigator(s) are seeking and any that they may have already secured. **The supplemental budget worksheet should be completed and submitted with the application.**
- 5.3 Qualifying organizations that are providing the matching funds may provide more than \$50,000 per year or \$100,000 over two years of the project, but the GCSAA Foundation and GCSAA will not match additional funds as stated above.

- 5.4 Administrative fees will be considered on a case-by-case basis but shall not exceed 16% as described in 5.4.1. **Grant applications should include the supplemental budget worksheet in addition to the coversheet, and project proposal.**
- 5.4.1 Applications may include administrative fees. However, when administrative or overhead fees are approved the amount will not exceed 16% for projects receiving GCSAA grants (not including matching funds) of \$10,000 or more annually. No overhead or administrative fees are allowed for projects funded less than \$10,000 annually.

Proposal Submittal Process

6. Proposals along with any supporting letters are due to GCSAA on Sept. 18, 2026.

- 6.1 Proposals may be submitted electronically or in hard copy. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.
- 6.1.1 If submitted electronically, include the principal investigator's last name in the file name.
- 6.2 Proposals should be typed, single-spaced and use a font no less than 10-points.
- 6.3 Proposals must not exceed seven total pages including the cover sheet(s) and supplemental budget worksheet. Letters of support are not included within the page limit.

Letters of Support and Letters of Support with Matching Funds

7. Letters supporting the project are to accompany the application and are due Sept. 18, 2026

- 7.1 The Research Committee carefully reviews all letters and the information in the letter plays an important role in making funding decisions.
- 7.2 If two or more chapters are cooperating to fund a proposal, each letter submitted in support of the proposal should be unique. It is not helpful to the chapter or the committee to receive duplicate copies of the same letter.
- 7.3 The Research Committee relies on the integrity of the chapter officer writing the letter to express their honest opinion of the value of the proposed research to superintendents.
- 7.4 The letter for chapter cooperative grants should indicate the severity of the problem being addressed by the research. As an example, the problem is a minor inconvenience some years or the problem is troublesome and needs special attention most years or this is a devastating problem and needs considerable effort to manage every year.
- 7.5 The letter should describe the benefits superintendents would realize if a solution to the problem is discovered.
- 7.6 If the chapter is providing funding for the project, the Chapter must state the total funding that it is providing and the amount of funding that it is providing each year if the project will last more than one year.

Checklist

Proposals must include the following to be eligible for review:

- Cover sheet – the cover sheet is available online.
- Proposal, maximum of seven pages (including cover sheet and supplemental budget worksheet), and must include the following:
 - Project title
 - Rationale for research/description of problem
 - Benefits of the research to golf course superintendents
 - Objectives
 - Materials/methods, including the location of the experiments and a list of treatments, if applicable
 - Expected results/outcomes
 - Brief section of literature cited (if desired)
 - Detailed budget showing expenses and all sources of funding within the budget worksheet
 - Letters of Support and Support with Matching Funds

Proposal Review Process

Only proposals that are received by Sept. 18, 2026, and contain the required information will be reviewed by the Research Committee. The Research Committee is comprised of golf course superintendents and professional scientists. Notifications to applicants will begin in December after the winter Board of Directors meeting.

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Alignment with GCSAA research grant objectives and importance to golf course superintendents
- Clarity of experimental objectives and methodology (including technical merit)
- Demonstrated support from GCSAA chapters (letters) including matching funds

Proposals must be received by Sept. 18, 2026.

Submit your proposals electronically to:

research@gcsaa.org or

Mail your proposals to:

GCSAA Research Department

1421 Research Park Drive

Lawrence, KS 66049-3859

2026 GCSAA Research Proposal Application Cover Sheet

Cover Sheet

Title of Project:

Principal Investigator(s):

Title(s):

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Amount Requested from GCSAA Each Year:

2027	2028	TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED
\$	\$	\$

Please Select Which Grant Opportunity You Are Applying For (**Check One**):

- Water Use and Water Quality Protection
 Sustainable Golf Course Turfgrass and Other Landscapes Management
 Chapter Cooperative Research Grant

Please Provide Name(s) and Contact Information of University, Chapter, Foundation or Association Providing Matching Funding and Amount of Funding Requested from Each Organization per Year (see grant guidelines):

1. Name of Organization:

2027: \$	2028: \$	Total: \$
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Contact Person:

Title:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

2026 GCSAA Research Proposal Application Cover Sheet

2. Name of Organization:

2027: \$

2028: \$

Total: \$

Contact Person:

Title:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

3. Name of Organization:

2027: \$

2028: \$

Total: \$

Contact Person:

Title:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

4. Name of Organization:

2027: \$

2028: \$

Total: \$

Contact Person:

Title:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax: