



## Funding Opportunity Announcement

Title: High-Priority Health Services and Policy Research: Nurse Anesthesiology Workforce

**Purpose and Goals:** The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement is to encourage research on the nurse anesthesiology workforce. Funding will support survey research to better understand the demographics of the workforce, including type and location of practice, institutional characteristics, dual/concomitant practice arrangements, working conditions in those settings, and the barriers and facilitators to delivering high-quality care.

Funding Amount: up to \$100,000

Deadline: April 30, 2026

**Application Submissions:** Applications are to be submitted online through the link on the Foundation website.

### **Background and Scope**

The mission of AANA Foundation is to advance the science of anesthesia through education and research. AANA Foundation aims to support investigators across the CRNA development lifecycle from student residents through program directors and established research faculty. Programs are designed to develop research careers in nurse anesthesia. AANA Foundation funds research, evidence-based practice, and education grants. ***This Funding Opportunity Announcement solicits high-priority health services research related to the nurse anesthesiology workforce.***

The landscape of CRNA service delivery has shifted significantly over the past 15 years. Practice models have evolved across states (consultive/collaborative, medical direction, solo) with CRNA solo practice increasing significantly compared to other billed services (Quraishi et al., 2017). Although CRNAs have increased in number, excess demand for CRNAs remains (Negrusa et al., 2021). Education requirements have changed with new doctoral-entry requirements (<https://www.coacrna.org/about-coa/position-statements/>) which has the potential to impact the supply of CRNAs. CRNAs have a stronger presence in areas with lower-income/Medicaid-eligible/uninsured populations that struggle with care

(Liao et al., 2015), making it critical to understand how policy decisions impact the CRNA workforce and shortages in underserved areas, in particular.

Prior AANA surveys have focused on identifying drivers of CRNA satisfaction, revealing that income, independent practice, working in an ambulatory center of physician/dentist office, working hours, and gender were drivers of satisfaction (Negrusa et al 2021). New survey research on the CRNA workforce is needed to better understand the demographics of the workforce, including type and location of practice (e.g., outpatient settings, rural), institutional characteristics, dual/concomitant practice arrangements, working conditions in those settings, and the barriers and facilitators to delivering high-quality care. While some studies have been conducted at the state level (Giron et al., 2023), national-level data that allow for the examination of regional differences are still lacking. Such information could help inform more nuanced research questions about how federal, state, and local policy decision-making impacts the CRNA workforce and care model implementation, particularly in settings that have been studied less frequently (e.g., outpatient settings, underserved areas).

Studies are expected to employ a targeted survey approach with purposive sampling and intensive exploration of practice setting characteristics and factors driving quality service delivery could effectively answer the research questions. The following are example research questions that are of greatest interest:

- What are the demographic and educational characteristics of CRNAs?
- How are CRNAs distributed across practice settings (e.g., ambulatory surgical settings, hospitals, office-based settings, pain clinics, military/VA facilities) and specialties (e.g., general, obstetrics, orthopedic, dental, etc.)?
- How many hours per week do CRNAs typically work, in which settings, including within W2 hospital facility/anesthesia group employment arrangements versus independent contracting?
- What is the nature of dual/concomitant practice arrangements and how can capturing them more in depth provide an enhanced understanding of practice settings and care access?
- What are the institutional characteristics, working conditions, and practice patterns in different settings?
- How do institutional characteristics, working conditions, and practice patterns vary across settings and geospatial elements (e.g., state, region, urban-rural areas, socioeconomic continuum)? What do conditions look like state-by-state?
- How are such characteristics, conditions, and patterns perceived to influence the delivery of high-quality anesthesia services?

Investigators are expected to develop a dissemination plan to share study findings. Investigators may consider development of translation tools informed by study findings to assist policy makers and healthcare system leadership in decision making about the CRNA workforce.

## **Award Period**

The award period is expected to be 18 months.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible investigators include Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologists (CRNAs) or investigators holding a PhD in a discipline related to nurse anesthesia/health services, typically with prior research grant experience (although not required). If the applicant Principal Investigator is not a CRNA, at least one Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI; in a Multiple PI application) or one Co-Investigator (Co-I) must be a CRNA and an AANA Member. Eligible organizations include institutions of higher education; nonprofit organizations; for-profit organizations; and nonprofit/for-profit/government-owned health systems.

## **Application and Submission Information**

Applicants are to follow all instructions delineated in the application guide, available through the link on the Foundation website.

## **Allowable Costs**

Allowable costs include salary, consultancy, equipment, supplies, travel, and other miscellaneous direct costs. Indirect costs are capped at 15%.

## **Human Subjects/Animal Research Requirements**

Applicants are encouraged to submit documentation of a Human Subjects Determination at the time of application, if possible, to adequately anticipate project classification (e.g., research/not research; human subjects/not human subjects) and potential needs for Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) review. Once an application is approved for funding by the Foundation Board of Trustees and notice is sent to the recipient, recipients are required to submit documentation related to human subjects or animal research. If a project is determined to be research and human subjects or vertebrate animals are involved, investigators are expected to submit IRB/IACUC documentation to the Foundation within 12 months of award and before any research activities are initiated or funds are released.

## **Review and Award Information**

Peer reviewers for grant applications are selected from the AANA Foundation Reviewer Corps, a repository of qualified peer reviewers. Reviewers are assigned to review specific applications based on relevant expertise.

The first level of review is conducted by a peer review panel, comprised of members from the Reviewer Corps. This Primary Review is focused on scientific merit and the potential for impact.

The second level of review is conducted by the Research and Scholarly Activities Committee (RSAC) and the Board of Trustees (BOT). This Programmatic Review reflects on scientific merit and impact judged in the primary review and places additional focus on alignment with Foundation research priorities.

The Foundation uses a 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional, 9 = poor) for each scored criteria and overall impact score. Narrative justification for each review criteria is required that outlines strengths and weaknesses.

Individual Review Criteria include:

- **Importance:** Including significance and innovation (numeric score 1-9; strengths and weaknesses)
- **Rigor and feasibility:** Including approach and study timeline (numeric score 1-9; strengths and weaknesses)
- **Expertise and resources:** Including investigators and environment (narrative only with strengths and weaknesses, with no numeric score but considered in overall impact)

An Overall Impact Score Overall is issued (rating scale 1 to 9, x 10 for scores ranging from 10 to 100), including all individual criteria considered as a whole (not necessarily an average of numeric scores).

***Specific to this funding opportunity, peer reviewers will consider the following in their individual reviews:***

- **Importance:** To what extent does the applicant employ innovative survey methods to capture hours worked in various practice settings under different employment arrangements? To what degree are findings expected to be able to inform decision-making about workforce and care models? Are dissemination strategies sufficient to reach workforce decision-makers?
- **Rigor and feasibility:** Have the target populations for data collection been sufficiently defined? To what extent are methods expected to obtain sufficient sample size to address the research questions (e.g., state-by-state analysis)? Is the sample expected to be representative of different settings?
- **Expertise and resources:** To what extent do the investigators have multidisciplinary expertise across nursing anesthesiology and workforce planning? In survey research methodologies? Is at least one co-investigator a CRNA and AANA member?

After review, a Summary Statement is generated that outlines the overall review scores and includes a summary of key strengths and weaknesses. The Summary Statement is provided to the RSAC and BOT for funding consideration and to the applicant once a funding decision is made.

Funding decisions may include Approve, Approve with conditions/stipulations, or Reject.

Applicants are notified of the funding decision by either a letter (in the case of approval with conditions/stipulations or rejection) or Notice of Award (in the case of approval), issued by the Foundation CEO and Research Director.

### **Anticipated Award Date**

October 2026

### **Administrative Requirements**

All grant recipients must comply with policies outlined in AANA Foundation Grantmaking Policy.

Documentation of Human Subjects Determination or IRB/IACUC Approval is required for funding (see the Human Subjects/Animal Research Requirements section for more details). Grant recipients will receive a Notice of Award outlining the terms and conditions of the award. Grant recipients are required to follow all policies outlined in AANA Foundation Grantmaking Policy.

Prior approval is required for reallocation of budget items exceeding 25% of the total budget category, significant changes (e.g., in scope, PI, cost), and no cost extensions. If additional research that would efficiently leverage and complement the project is identified, the recipient would need to apply for additional funds.

Awards of \$10,000 or less are typically distributed in full after appropriate award documents are submitted. Awards of over \$10,000 are typically distributed in increments after the recipient submits appropriate documents. Funding policies are outlined in full in the AANA Grantmaking Policy.

Publication of results in peer-reviewed scientific or professional journals is expected. Recipients are encouraged to submit an abstract application for presentation at the AANA Foundation Poster Session at the AANA Annual Congress and publish results in the AANA Journal or other scientific publication.

Data from investigator-initiated research awards supported by the AANA Foundation are owned by the investigator. The investigator will own copyright to the data. Title to any Invention shall reside with the recipient or the recipient's institution. Inventions will be reported to the AANA Foundation by the recipients of the grant. See AANA Grantmaking Policy for more details and guidelines related to net royalty income.

Recipients are required to submit Annual and Final Progress Reports and Final Expenditure Reports. Failure to submit complete, accurate, and timely final reports indicates the need for closer monitoring by AANA Foundation. Lack of compliance may result in award delays

or enforcement actions, including return of unexpended funds and prohibition from receipt of future grant awards.

### **Foundation Contacts**

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