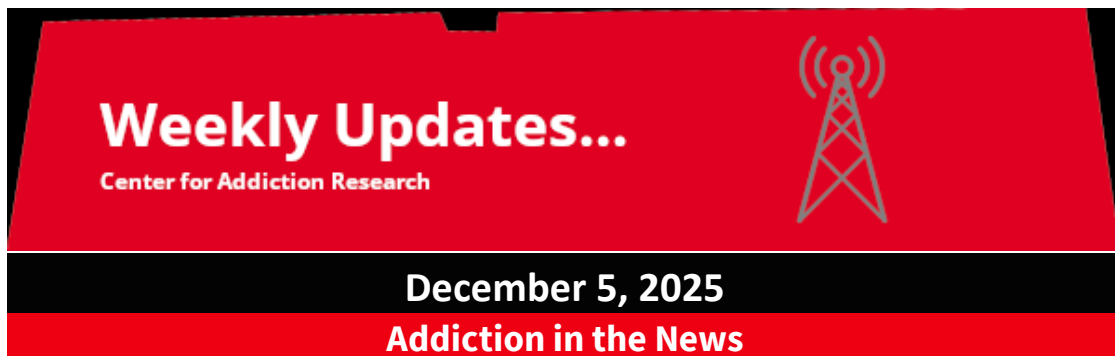


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) to change your communication preferences. Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the Center for Addiction Research - our mission is to accelerate scientific progress in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and their consequences by fostering research collaborations across: 1) UC departments, colleges, and centers including Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; 2) Local, regional, and state community and governmental partners; and 3) Other academic institutions and industry."



UC/ Regional News

Ohio could soon see stricter penalties, mandatory minimum sentencing for drug dealers

CINCINNATI (WKRC) - Ohio lawmakers are intensifying efforts to combat the spread of fentanyl by proposing stricter penalties for drug dealers. State Rep. Phil Plummer, a former Montgomery County sheriff, is sponsoring a bill aimed at increasing prison sentences for those trafficking the deadly drug. "We've been fighting this for a long time," Plummer said. "It's very important to us that we just increase penalties and stop the flow. Stop the sale of fentanyl in our communities." The Ohio Department of Health reported that in 2023, fentanyl was involved in 78% of unintentional drug overdoses in the state. The proposed...

How a text alert system is saving lives one "bad batch" at a time

A new harm reduction technique that started as a student project at Ohio State University is getting attention — and thousands of dollars in opioid settlement dollars — from Franklin County and the OneOhio Recovery Foundation. The SOAR Initiative's Bad Batch Text Alert system aims to alert drug users and health officials if there is a deadly contaminant in the local drug supply. It also allows anyone to report contaminated drugs anonymously. Now, Ohio's most populous county and OneOhio — the statewide organization tasked with doling out billions of dollars from the opioid settlements — are trying the text alert system to...

Ohio Republican lawmaker wants to regulate kratom products and ban synthetic kratom

A Republican Ohio Senator wants to regulate natural kratom products and ban the synthetic version, while Gov. Mike DeWine wants to ban all kratom products. Ohio Senate Bill 299 would require those who sell, distribute and make kratom to register with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The bill would also prohibit synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine, known as 7-OH, limiting it to no more than one milligram in products. Kratom products would only be sold to adults 18 and older under the bill. Ohio Sen. Bill Blessing, R-Colerain Township, introduced the bill which had sponsor testimony Tuesday during the Ohio...

Gov. Beshear designates 4 new counties as 'Recovery Ready'

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Gov. Andy Beshear, D-Ky., has designated Estill, Henderson, Lewis and Warren counties as Recovery Ready Communities. More than 30 counties have received the designation since 2023. The program has provided 1.9 million Kentuckians with access to addiction treatment and recovery support. Beshear's office said an additional 219,000 Kentuckians will now receive drug and alcohol addiction assistance. Beshear's office said since the initiative's inception in 2023, 35 counties have been designated as Recovery Ready, providing 1.9 million Kentuckians with access to addiction treatment and recovery...

Ky. moving toward making forms of 7-OH products Schedule I substance

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Justice, has announced that the U.S. Marshals Service seized approximately 73,000 units of 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) products—valued at roughly \$1 million—from three firms in Missouri. The seizure focused on foods and dietary supplement products—including liquid shots and tablets—containing concentrated 7-OH as an added ingredient. Concentrated 7-OH is increasingly recognized as having potential for abuse because of its ability to bind to opioid receptors. It cannot be lawfully added to dietary supplements...

President Trump Signs Barr-Led Bill to Curb Opioid Deaths

Washington, D.C.— This week, President Trump signed legislation boosting funding to an opioid recovery grant program, authored and championed by U.S. Congressman Andy Barr (R-KY). First enacted in 2018, the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry (CAREER) Act created a targeted funding stream for treatment recovery centers to help individuals overcome addiction and successfully transition back into the workforce. The CAREER Act grant program was included in the comprehensive SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025, an extensive package...

National News

Specific brain activity patterns predict greater control over drinking behavior, study finds

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is among the most widespread substance use disorders (SUDs) worldwide, characterized by an impaired ability to control the intake of alcohol. For many years, psychologists and psychiatrists have linked this disorder with a shift away from so-called goal-directed behaviors. Goal-directed, or model-based, behaviors are those behaviors that are guided by learned mental models of actions and their consequences. Individuals with AUD and other disorders that entail the uncontrolled use of substances have often been hypothesized to engage more in model-free (i.e., habit-driven behavior) than goal-...

Autonomy and intrinsic sense of control linked to drinking behaviors and alcohol consequences

Individuals' autonomy and sense of control are associated with the quantity and frequency of their alcohol consumption and its consequences, according to a new study examining latent self-determined motivational profiles underlying drinking behaviors. Drinking motives and personality traits predict alcohol use and outcomes. Better understanding these could help steer people who drink dangerously—e.g., young adults engaged in heavy episodic (binge) drinking—toward lower-risk consumption. Arguably, research on drinking motives has overly focused on drinking for social or coping reasons. Self-Determination Theory...

Steep rise in alcohol-related liver disease contributing to 'deaths of despair' phenomenon, study warns

A striking rise in deaths from alcohol-related liver disease (ALD) is disproportionately impacting people without a college degree, flagging the heightened risk facing economically disadvantaged groups. That said, almost all demographic groups, including those with a college degree, are experiencing increased ALD death rates, according to an analysis in *Alcohol: Clinical & Experimental Research*. ALD is a leading contributor to alcohol-induced mortality in the US. Its growing threat is not fully explained by changes in alcohol use, and the socioeconomic disparities in alcohol-related mortality are widening. This...

Thinking of Dry January? One month without alcohol linked to better sleep, mood and health, study finds

With the new year on the horizon and resolutions brewing, more people are saying cheers to a booze-free January, a choice that might come with some real health benefits and, ultimately, help some people cut back for good. Published in *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, the review from researchers at the Brown University School of Public Health and the Warren E. Alpert Medical School analyzed 16 studies on the popular month-long alcohol-free challenge known as "Dry January." Looking at over 150,000 participants, the review examined who takes part in Dry January, how they are affected, and what factors helped people succeed. The study, led...

Before the party starts: Parental attitudes linked to college binge drinking

College students who binge drink may be acting on influences they brought from home, a new Washington State University-led study suggests. A recent survey shows that students who binge drink more than other students tend to have grown up in a home with more permissive attitudes toward drinking. Those students are also more likely to join Greek-affiliated organizations like fraternities or sororities. In a study published in the journal Behavioral Sciences, researchers surveyed parents and students about drinking attitudes and behaviors, especially binge drinking. They found that parents of students who joined...

Reducing alcohol use may reduce falls risk in people with mild cognitive impairment

Older adults with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) who drink heavily may be at higher risk for falls than those with MCI who do not have alcohol use disorder. A preliminary study of adults published in Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research found that heavy drinkers with MCI are less stable on their feet compared to similarly aged people, both with and without MCI, who do not drink heavily. The strongest correlates of postural instability were age and past-year alcohol use, suggesting that reducing or stopping drinking may lower the risk of falls and maybe even dementia. MCI refers to a slight yet detectable decline in memory and...

Negative consequences do not deter young adults from using alcohol and cannabis together, study finds

Young adults who experience negative consequences from using both alcohol and cannabis simultaneously are likely to have fewer drinks the next time they drink, but are more likely to use cannabis and alcohol together. This unexpected finding from a study just published in Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research may suggest that young adults associate negative consequences with their drinking, not the combination of alcohol and cannabis use. The study highlights nuanced opportunities for 'teachable moments' to help reduce the harmful consequences of using cannabis and alcohol together. Prior studies have...

Could CBD in cannabis help protect the livers of heavy drinkers?

A study of more than 66,000 U.S. adults finds that heavy drinkers who also used cannabis were less likely to develop liver disease than those who drank heavily without using weed. While the study authors were quick to say that this isn't a recommendation to start smoking cannabis, the CBD component of the plant might help protect imperiled livers. "CBD appears to calm inflammation and reduce some of the chemical signals that drive liver scarring," said study senior author Dr. Juan Pablo Arab. "Our findings show that real-world cannabis use may have some of these same protective effects in people who drink heavily." He directs...

Having a cannabis dispensary in the neighborhood linked to increased harm rates

A population-based natural experiment study examined the association between exposure to cannabis retail stores and cannabis-related harms. The study found that exposure to retail stores was associated with increased rates of harm, particularly in neighborhoods with greater densities of stores. The findings suggest that restrictions on the overall number of cannabis retail stores, on store concentrations, or on being located in certain areas could offer public health benefits. The study is published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Researchers from North York General Hospital and colleagues studied data from...

Chronic cannabis use, vomiting and compulsive bathing—symptoms of a hidden syndrome

Researchers at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois Chicago have found that cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, a vomiting condition tied to chronic cannabis use, rose sharply in US emergency departments between 2016 and 2022 and has stayed elevated. As of June 2025, nearly half of US residents live in states with legalized recreational cannabis, and policy shifts have expanded adult-use access through legalization, medical programs, and decriminalization. Among cannabis-related harms, cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) has been described as a growing concern in clinical and...

Increased use of cannabis seen among adolescents with psychiatric illnesses after cannabis sales became legal

In November 2018, retailers in Massachusetts began selling recreational cannabis to adults 21 years and older. A study by investigators from Mass General Brigham found that, after commercialization, rates of cannabis use and cannabis-related disorders (i.e., cannabis use disorder, cannabis-induced psychiatric symptoms), disproportionately increased among adolescents, aged 12 to 17 years, presenting for a psychiatric emergency. They found there was an almost fourfold increase in cannabis use for this age group, rising from 5% to more than 17%, and a similar increase in cannabis-related disorders, among people presenting...

Addiction Policy Forum Webinar: Cannabis Use Disorder: Prevention and Treatment

December 12, 2025, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET

Cannabis is one of the most commonly used substances in the United States, and while often perceived as low risk, use can lead to the development of cannabis use disorder (CUD). CUD can affect brain function, behavior, and overall health, and the risk is especially concerning among adolescents and young adults. Despite its prevalence, effective prevention and treatment strategies for CUD are often less well known than those for other substance use disorders. This webinar will focus on the science of CUD, including its neurobiology, risk factors, and the intersections between cannabis use, CUD, and other forms of substance use disorders. Presenters

will also discuss evidence-based prevention and treatment strategies to reduce initiation and harms and improve health outcomes. Participants will also learn about available resources and best practices to support individuals and families affected by cannabis use disorder.

Cannabis use disorder adversely affects inpatient asthma outcomes

Patients with cannabis use disorder (CUD) admitted for asthma have an increased risk of severe asthma exacerbations and inpatient mortality, according to a study published online Oct. 20 in *Cureus*. Using data for asthma admissions from the Nationwide Inpatient Sample database, Samuel Sule-Saa, from the Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, and colleagues examined the association between CUD and asthma outcomes, focusing on mortality and morbidity trends between 2016 and 2021. A total of 552,160 cases of asthma hospitalization were classified into CUD and non-CUD cases; 4.2% of patients had...

'Hemp loophole' closure pits patient access against a runaway marijuana industry

In the mid-2010s, families across the country uprooted themselves to move to Colorado for reasons unrelated to outdoor adventures or craft beer. Instead, they moved for the state's first-in-the-nation legal marijuana laws, which allowed access to cannabis-derived products they said were essential to their or their children's health. With marijuana now legal for medical purposes in 40 states and legal altogether in 24, Colorado's role as a haven for families of children with epilepsy or adults with chronic pain, among other conditions, has waned. But newly passed legislation that closes the "hemp loophole" threatens to turn...

More people are addicted to marijuana, but fewer of them are seeking help, experts say

Megan Feller smoked pot several times a day and couldn't eat, sleep or function without it. But at the time, she didn't see the need to reach out for help. "I didn't think cannabis was a big deal," the 24-year-old said. "It was really socially accepted." This attitude is common. As more states legalize marijuana, use has become more normalized and products have become more potent. But fewer of those who are addicted seek help for it. Pot use among young adults reached historic levels in recent years, according to a federally supported survey. Daily use even outpaced daily drinking, with nearly 18 million Americans reporting in...

Brain enzyme that drives nicotine addiction and smoking dependence identified

Nicotine addiction remains one of the most persistent public health challenges worldwide, driven by changes in the brain that reinforce repeated use and make quitting extremely difficult. For decades, scientists have focused primarily on neurons to explain how these changes occur. But growing evidence suggests that other brain cells may play a far more active role in shaping addictive behavior than

previously thought. Building on this shift in understanding, a team of researchers led by Professor Eun Sang Choe from the Department of Biological Sciences, Pusan National University, Republic of Korea, has uncovered...

From cessation to celebration: Nicotine pouches go viral on TikTok

While originally created as a way to help people stop smoking, a UBC Okanagan researcher is raising concerns about oral nicotine pouches being portrayed as trendy and pleasurable, especially among young people. Dr. Laura Struik, Associate Professor in UBCO's School of Nursing, recently published a study examining how the social media platform TikTok appears to promote nicotine pouches, particularly the brand Zyn, as a lifestyle rather than a way to quit smoking. "Oral nicotine pouches have become a popular alternative nicotine product, especially among youth," she says. "This is concerning, given the substantial health..."

Can vaping help wean people off cigarettes? Anti-smoking advocates are sharply split

To vape or not to vape? That is the question sparking a heated debate this week in Geneva where over 1,400 delegates have gathered to discuss the World Health Organization's tobacco control treaty and what they call "the tobacco epidemic." For years, there have been stories warning about the dangers of vapes, also known as e-cigarettes, and other non-cigarette products like heated tobacco and nicotine pouches. Many scientists and public health experts point out that the tobacco industry promotes and profits from these newer products and that many young non-smokers are using e-cigarettes and becoming addicted...

Nearly seven in 10 Medicaid patients not receiving treatment within six months of an opioid use disorder diagnosis, study finds

A US study of more than a million Medicaid enrollees, newly diagnosed with opioid use disorder (OUD), finds most – nearly seven in 10 – are not receiving access to potentially life-saving drugs within six months. The major gap in access to these medications – vital for those receiving free or low-cost healthcare and needing treatment for a dependency on heroin, painkillers and other opioids – is revealed ahead of looming Medicaid funding cuts, which threaten to further limit access to many various medications. The research, published today in the peer-reviewed publication *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*...

Take-home methadone at hospital discharge can be a critical turning point in opioid recovery

For patients recovering from opioid use disorder, particularly from drugs like fentanyl or heroin, the days immediately following a hospital stay are among the most dangerous. A new multi-state study led by researchers at CU Anschutz found that nearly half of patients discharged with take-home methadone successfully connected to follow-up treatment within 72 hours. That window can be the difference between relapse and recovery or even life and death. The study was

published today in JAMA Network Open. "This is a moment where a life can tip one way or the other," said Susan Calcaterra, MD, MPH, MS, the study's lead author...

How does Narcan work? How it reverses opioid overdose can provide a molecular blueprint for more effective drugs

Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, is one of the most important drugs in the United States' fight against the opioid crisis. It reverses an opioid overdose nearly instantly, restarting breathing in a person who was unresponsive moments before and on the brink of death. To bystanders witnessing it being administered, naloxone can appear almost supernatural. Although the Food and Drug Administration approved naloxone for medical use in 1971 and for over-the-counter purchase in 2023, exactly how it works is still unclear. Researchers know naloxone acts on opioid receptors, a family of proteins responsible...

Our bodies 'talk,' listen carefully: Researcher helps chronic pain sufferers reduce opioid misuse

Our bodies send us signals throughout the day to prompt us into action. Our stomachs growl to indicate we're hungry, so we eat. We shiver, so we put on a sweater. And when we feel pain, we may take medications to alleviate it. This is called interoceptive awareness. Our interoceptive awareness, the ability to recognize and interpret our body's signals, is imperative to addressing our bodies' needs and maintaining our health. However, individuals who experience chronic pain can experience altered awareness of these body signals, which may impact their risk of misusing prescription pain management medications. In a...

Methamphetamine impairs dopamine uptake by targeting a protein modification

Dopamine brings on a surge of pleasure, but too much dopamine in a synapse can ultimately lead to mood disorders and addiction. A recent preclinical study published in The FASEB Journal suggests that methamphetamine boosts dopamine levels by reversibly reducing the amount of a modification on the dopamine transporter. Loss of the modification decreases the transporter's ability to remove the neurotransmitter from synapses. The findings shed new light on how the transporter works and could help researchers develop new treatments for addiction and neurological disorders, such as depression and schizophrenia. The...

Few evidence-based medication options exist for teens with substance use disorder

According to national estimates, nearly 2.2 million U.S. adolescents aged 12–17 met the criteria for at least one substance use disorder (SUD) in 2023. Drug and alcohol-related concerns are the second leading cause of death and disability within this age group and the third leading cause of death for children nationally. For opioid, alcohol and nicotine use disorders, national experts recommend a comprehensive treatment approach that includes both medication-based and behavioral

interventions. For opioid use disorder, medication is the recommended first-line treatment. Nonetheless, access to medication among...

Early brain differences may explain sex-specific risks for addiction

The roots of addiction risk may lie in how young brains function long before substance use begins, according to a new study from Weill Cornell Medicine. The investigators found that children with a family history of substance use disorder (SUD) already showed distinctive patterns of brain activity that differ between boys and girls, which may reflect separate predispositions for addiction. The research, published in *Nature Mental Health*, analyzed brain scans from nearly 1,900 children ages 9 to 11 participating in the National Institutes of Health's Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study. "These findings may...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

UC Foundation Funding Opportunities

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or russeccg@foundation.uc.edu at **least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunities, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

PCORI to Make Other Major Awards for Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research

Letters of Intent Deadline: January 6, 2026 by 5:00 PM ET

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) intends to issue a PCORI Funding Announcement (PFA), addressing efforts to improve health decision making with comparative clinical effectiveness research in cancer, pain, substance use, maternal morbidity and mortality, intellectual and developmental disabilities, sensory health, metabolic and endocrine health, mental and behavioral health, and rare diseases: retrospective observational studies leveraging existing data sources. Investigators may request up to \$2 million in direct costs for up to 18 months duration (with peer review activities to occur beyond that duration). Data access fee reimbursement requests are not guaranteed and will only be considered if they represent a nominal proportion of the requested funds and provision of funds expedites data access such that it will be available no later than three months within the contract start date. This PFA will fund well-designed, methodologically robust retrospective observational patient-centered comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER) studies that will produce timely, impactful, and patient-centered results to inform healthcare decision making and improve health outcomes. This PFA seeks to fund retrospective observational studies that articulate a clear comparative effectiveness question by leveraging established data sources

and infrastructure ready for patient-centered CER, including but not limited to PCORnet. Given the retrospective observational nature of this PFA, applications are expected to compare existing interventions that represent a current decisional dilemma and have robust evidence of efficacy or are currently in widespread use. Clinical interventions (such as medications, diagnostic tests, or procedures) and delivery system interventions (such as workforce, technologies and healthcare service delivery designs) are appropriate for these studies. This funding opportunity is intended to leverage existing, ready-to-analyze data sources for proposed new CER studies and will not support the development or validation of new data networks, novel data linkages or novel patient registries. At the time of application, there should already be evidence of data access. All proposed applications must respond to at least one of the following topic themes approved by the PCORI board of governors: addressing cancer, improving outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, preventing maternal morbidity and mortality, improving mental and behavioral health, improving metabolic and endocrine health, managing pain, addressing rare diseases, addressing sensory health, and addressing substance use. Applications proposing longer-term comparative effectiveness and safety assessments (i.e., more than five years of post-intervention follow-up) and examining populations that are not easily randomized, as well as studies examining heterogeneity of treatment effects, are strongly encouraged. Applications are also encouraged to propose methods that represent state-of-the-art causal inference approaches for retrospective observational designs and utilize data from multiple health systems or multiple sites within large integrated health systems to facilitate generalizable CER results. Letters of intent will be due by 5 p.m. ET January 6, 2026. Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full application, to be due by 5 p.m. ET May 5, 2026.

Emergency Medicine Foundation Encourages Requests for Pilot Research Grants

Deadline: December 12, 2025

The Emergency Medicine Foundation (EMF) aims to promote education and research that develops career emergency medicine researchers, improves patient care, and provides the basis for effective health policy. The foundation has issued a request for proposals for its Pilot Research Grant program, which is intended to provide “starter” or pilot funding for preliminary data to help initiate a successful line of research that will ultimately lead to a larger project and result in subsequent “K of R” grant funding. The program is designed to lay groundwork for a project that will eventually meaningfully impact emergency care research and is intended for a broad audience, including both clinical, translational, and basic science researchers. Feasibility, and high risk/high reward applications are encouraged. Grants of up to \$100,000 will be awarded. EMF encourages application partnerships between research universities and community emergency departments along with the engagement of operational and policy partners. EMF priorities include clinical

relevance, infrastructure, future-focused emergency medicine, under-resourced areas, and basic science and translational research. To be eligible, the principal investigator must have a primary faculty appointment in emergency medicine (this includes pediatric emergency medicine). The applicant is required to demonstrate that the project will be successfully completed at their institution.

American Psychological Association Invites Applications for Congressional Fellowships

Deadline: January 4, 2026

The American Psychological Association (APA) invites applications for its Congressional Fellowship, which aims to provide psychologists with an invaluable public policy learning experience, contribute to the more effective use of psychological knowledge in government, and broaden awareness about the value of psychology-government interaction among psychologists and within the federal government. The stipend for this fellowship is \$93,750. In addition, the fellowship provides reimbursement for health insurance coverage and a \$3,500 stipend for professional development. Fellows spend a year working on the staff of a member of Congress or congressional committee. Activities may involve drafting legislation, conducting oversight work, assisting with congressional hearings and events, and preparing briefs and speeches. Fellows also attend a two-week orientation program on congressional and executive branch operations, which provides guidance for the congressional placement process, and participate in a yearlong seminar series on science and public policy issues. Applicants must demonstrate excellence in scientific and/or professional psychology, demonstrate knowledge of policy issues, have a strong interest in applying psychological knowledge to the solution of societal challenges, and be able to work quickly and communicate effectively on a wide variety of topics and be able to work cooperatively with individuals with diverse viewpoints. APA will sponsor a congressional fellow for a one-year appointment beginning approximately August 30, 2026. The APA fellowship is open to all full APA members. To be eligible, applicants must be a psychologist, a member of APA (or applicant for membership), and a U.S. citizen and have a doctorate in psychology (from an APA-accredited doctoral program and internship if in the area of professional psychology) or related field by the application deadline.

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