

Instructions for Applicants

The Zikmund-Fisher Decision Psychology Pilot Research Award Program (Z-F Pilot Awards)

Awards from the Z-F Pilot Grant Program support **new, primary data collections** related to **applications of decision psychology to patient and/or clinician medical decision making**. Note that the Z-F Pilot Grants are NOT intended for tests of shared decision making interventions, interventions designed to influence the degree of patient involvement in real medical decisions, etc. A secondary purpose is to increase the number of decision psychologists pursuing MDM-related work and potentially to increase SMDM membership among psychologists.

Preference is to be given to proposals that address important practical questions grounded in specific health contexts (versus abstract scenarios testing psychological mechanisms), ideally with immediate real-world implications. Data may be from experiments, surveys, interviews, observations, or similar. For example: randomized tests of communication formats for decision-relevant medical / risk data, comparative tests of alternate framings or presentations of medical decision options, assessments of associations between patient or clinician cognitive characteristics with medical decisions. Primary outcome measurements should emphasize proximal outcomes such as information recall, contrasting of options, perceptions, emotions, behavioral intentions, preferences, etc.

Application Process

1. **All applicants must submit a 1-page Letter of Intent (due October 1, 2026)** outlining (a) the research question, (b) a discussion of its significance, and (c) a very preliminary outline of the possible study design (including data collection methodology). Send a PDF of your letter of intent by 1 October 2026 to info@smdm.org with the subject line “Lastname, Firstname LOI Zikmund-Fisher Award”.
2. Notification of finalists will occur on or before October 15, 2026
3. Feedback meetings: All finalists will meet briefly with representatives of the selection committee by Zoom in late October to receive constructive feedback on their application. The goal of this meeting is to offset variability in applicants’ access to guidance / mentorship in conceptualizing and operationalizing their study designs.
4. **Final applications will be due by November 15.** Total length should be <3 pages, single spaced, 11pt font (and possibly significantly shorter). Required sections are:
 - a. Background, problem framing, and study research question (<.5 page)

- b. Preliminary study design, measures, and analysis plan (<1 page)

NOTE: Applicants should openly discuss key design questions. The goal is to select the best research questions, with the idea that the SIG will then help make them into the best studies. Applicants should NOT have committed absolutely to a study design as of their application.

- c. Significance / Innovation of the proposed research (<.5 page)
- d. Discussion of how this study advances the applicant's career (<.5 page)
- e. Detailed budget (<.5 page)

Send a PDF of your final application by 15 November 2026 to info@smdm.org with the subject line "Lastname, Firstname Application Zikmund-Fisher Award"

- 5. Final award decisions to be made by December 15, 2026, with awards to be issued in January 2027

Terms and Conditions:

1. Eligibility: Awardees must be a member of SMDM at the time of their full application and throughout the period of the award. However, letters of intent are strongly encouraged from non-members, on the understanding that they will join SMDM if they are selected to submit a full application.
2. Preference for awards will be given to: Psychologists (and related social scientists) at any career stage who are making a new pivot towards applied medical decision making research, clinician investigators establishing new collaborations with psychologists to study medical decision making issues, student / trainee and early career researchers in medical decision making, and applicants who have not previously received a Z-F Pilot Award.
3. Amount: Maximum award request: USD\$8,000. Preference will be given to "right-sized" requests (vs. requests for the maximum award amount).
4. Recipient: Awards are to be made to the applicant's institution.
5. Term: Awards are to be issued for 1 year. Unused funds are to be returned to SMDM at the conclusion of the award period.
6. Reporting and review requirements:
 - 6.1. Awardees MUST attend and present at a meeting of the SMDM Decision Psychology Special Interest Group before data collection begins (i.e., during the first 6 months of the award) to receive further constructive feedback on study design, materials, measures, analysis plan, etc. Data collection should start within 6-9 months of the award and be completed within 12 months.

- 6.2. Awardees must provide by email to SMDM (and the selection committee) a progress report at 6 months and a final report by 12 months. Reports must document relevant IRB approvals obtained prior to data collection.
- 6.3. Awardees may apply for a 6-month extension due to unusual circumstances, but they must do so at least 1 month before the end of award. Requests will be reviewed by the Selection Committee, and extensions are NOT guaranteed.
7. Award funds MAY be used for:
 - 7.1. Research participant recruitment / incentives (e.g., online sample costs, direct incentives, participant expense reimbursements)
 - 7.2. Direct study data collection and curation costs (e.g., printing, mailing, recording, interview transcription services)
 - 7.3. Staff / student effort that is directly related to data collection (e.g., time spent doing survey or interview data collection, setting up interviews, transcription)
8. Award funds MAY NOT be used for:
 - 8.1. Indirect costs: Indirect costs are not allowed on the main award or on any subcontracts.
 - 8.2. Any faculty effort
 - 8.3. Student / staff effort unrelated to this particular data collection
 - 8.4. Equipment or technology (e.g., computers, recorders, statistical software or subscriptions)
9. Acknowledgements: Awardees must acknowledge funding from “the Zikmund-Fisher Pilot Grant Program of the Society for Medical Decision Making” in all presentations and publications resulting from this award.
10. Supplemental Funds:
 - 10.1. Once data collection is completed, awardees may apply separately to SMDM for reimbursement for the following expenses:
 - 10.1.1. Up to USD\$2,000 for travel expenses related to attendance at the SMDM annual meeting where this specific research work is being presented
 - 10.1.2. Up to USD\$2,000 for Article Publication Charges for publishing this specific research work in an academic journal
 - 10.2. Reimbursements will be paid directly to the awardee (upon receipt of appropriate expense documentation) and can be requested at any time up to 3 years after the completion of the primary award term.