

**Request for Proposals:
Early Career Research Grants to Advance the Science of Love, 2027-2028**

The Love Consortium is pleased to announce a competition to fund innovative research on foundational questions about love. This call for proposals is supported by a broader initiative that seeks to understand whether and how love may serve as the basis for ethical behavior and decision-making processes across ages, relationship types, groups, and geographies.

Areas of Funding

The purpose of the award is to assist early career scholars with costs associated with conducting collaborative and groundbreaking research on love. We recognize that scholars approach the construct of love from many different perspectives and definitions. You may study love as a discrete emotion, a behavior (or set of behaviors), or a virtue, to list a few possibilities. Whichever perspective you take, the focus should be on the construct of love, operationalized in a way the researcher can measure, observe or manipulate in their research. We do not adopt a single definition because establishing what love is remains part of the empirical work that needs to be done, and a researcher may make the case that an existing measure (e.g., for secondary data analysis) represents the construct of love. We are particularly invested in fundamental research that would illuminate the role of love in caring connections across relationship types and across the developmental trajectory. It is our belief that such research will lend itself best to deepening our understanding of love in general as well as its ethical implications more specifically. We provide more information about the latter in the next section.

Proposals are due by January 15, 2027 to fund research projects conducted between May 2027 and April 2028.

The Love Consortium intends to award multiple grants of up to \$20,000 USD in May 2027. Awardees will be expected to submit quarterly reports of their progress, publish at least one peer-reviewed paper within three years of their funding period, and present their work at an in-person TLC conference in North Carolina in mid-2028 (expenses paid by TLC, separate from the grant itself; some well-reasoned exceptions may apply) and at least one other major disciplinary conference or workshop.

Love and the Development of the “Love Ethic”

The Love Consortium is focused on advancing the scientific study of all processes related to love and social connection. [Our latest project](#) funded by the John Templeton Foundation and in collaboration with the Institute for Ethics and the Common Good at the University of Notre Dame, focuses on love as a foundation for ethical frameworks.

What if our evaluations of and behaviors toward others were rooted in love? What if we extended the same care and compassion to strangers that we offer to our closest loved ones? [“The Love Ethic,”](#) primarily discussed among philosophers, centers on these questions and prompts us to love others to the same degree we love ourselves. The Love Ethic reframes basic, everyday interactions and serves as a lens for imagining a more humane and connected world. It also raises important questions about moral development, relationships, conflict, and culture. This call for proposals is a way for scientists from an array of disciplines (e.g., clinical psychology, social psychology, human development) to join that philosophical conversation, with data that addresses what love is, how it develops, and how it operates in day-to-day life.

Open Questions

We invite applicants to submit proposals about love that align with their own interests and work. However, to underscore the breadth of opportunity that we see in this space, examples of the types of open questions that could be empirically addressed through this funding mechanism include but are not limited to:

- How do we measure “love”?
- What are the developmental antecedents to the experience and expression of love? Is this similar or varied across cultures?
- Which behaviors best indicate love between people? How, when, and why does this vary across cultures and contexts?
- Do children whose parents show love to strangers become more loving themselves? Do they reap developmental benefits?
- Can love be cultivated as a virtue, the same way one might cultivate patience?
- What factors (e.g., emotional state, threat, bias, relationship history) predict an individual’s likelihood to respond with love in any given situation?
- How might love help people navigate conflicts or ethical dilemmas involving family members, friends, or romantic partners? How can love be restored when it has been damaged?
- Under what circumstances might someone fail to respond with love, despite their intentions? What behavioral or psychological interventions may prove beneficial?
- What are the biological underpinnings or neural correlates of individuals who exhibit more loving behavior?
- Does the experience, expression, or consequence of love change across the lifespan?
- Are there benefits of love that extend beyond the dyad? Can simply observing another’s loving behavior influence one’s own behavior, attitudes, or well-being? Might love be contagious?

- How does love operate in the context of intergroup conflict or cooperation? Are there boundary conditions for its effects?
- In what ways might technology support or inhibit the development or consequences of love across relationship types?
- What are the consequences / benefits of adopting an ethical framework centered on love (e.g., health consequences, character development, meaning in life)?

Interdisciplinary Focus

As it may be clear from the questions we list above, we believe the best research in this domain is inherently interdisciplinary. It relies on insights from all subfields of psychology, anthropology, neuroscience, philosophy, sociology, and other sciences to better understand love and its role in ethical decision-making. As such, we encourage applicants to consider how they might draw from multiple disciplines to strengthen their proposals.

Although not required, we also encourage applicants to search The Love Consortium Dataverse for existing datasets that may supplement their proposals (e.g., by providing opportunities for exploratory hypotheses or replication of findings across samples and/or geographies).

Eligibility

For the applicant

1. Applicants must have a doctorate degree in Psychology or other related field (e.g., Neuroscience, Human Development) at the time of submission. They must have earned their degree within the past 6 years (i.e., after January 15, 2021), excluding any medical or parental leave.
2. Applicants must not have been previously awarded research funding from The Love Consortium. Those who applied for but did not receive funding in the past are welcome to apply again.
3. Among other uses, funds may be used for a summer stipend for the applicant if they do not have another source of funding; for course buyouts during the academic year; for supplies and services to conduct biological assays on stored specimens; for participant compensation; for paying research assistants; for software to conduct behavioral coding on video records; for registration fees or costs associated with statistical methods workshops or academic conferences; and, where justified, to cover costs for the grantee to travel to live/work on site for research activities or to travel to workshops or academic conferences.

How to Apply

All applications should be submitted online by January 15, 2027 at 11:59PM IDLW (the last time zone on Earth). The online submission form can be accessed by clicking [this link](#).

The application consists of six components, detailed below. The first five components require that you download and complete the provided templates, which can then be uploaded via the submission form alongside a copy of your CV. Please be sure to use the provided templates, rather than creating your own documents, as they help to ensure a consistent and streamlined review process.

We recommend having all materials completed prior to beginning the submission form.

[Template 1](#): Download and complete this template for your Research Proposal, Statement of Readiness/Feasibility, Contribution to Diversity, and Budget Justification.

[Template 2](#): Download and complete this template for your Budget.

1. **Research Proposal**: Describe your proposed research project in 1500 words or less. References as well as up to one Table or Figure may be included beyond the 1500-word limit.

Your proposal should address:

- a. The gap in understanding and theoretical justification for the investigation
- b. The hypothesis/hypotheses or research question(s)
- c. Proposed methods and analysis plan
- d. Statement of contribution to research on love
- e. Relevance of the proposed work to understanding love
- f. Statement of anticipated consequences of these activities (e.g., manuscript submission, conference presentation, future collaborations, consequences for this area of research, for the public, etc.)

Note: To reduce biases in the review process, this portion of your application will be reviewed via masked review. As such, we ask that you please **DO NOT** include any identifying information within the body of your research proposal.

2. **Statement of Readiness/Feasibility**: In 300 words or less, describe your readiness to conduct this particular research project in a timely manner. This statement might include details about your prior experience conducting

similar research in the past, any supporting statistical or methodological skills you possess, or other relevant knowledge. Please also include a timeline of activities for this project with clear milestone dates to show that this project can be completed within a reasonable timeframe.

3. **Contribution to Diversity:** The Love Consortium is committed to promoting diversity in science. This includes promoting trainees and scholarship from people with historically under-represented backgrounds, studying people from a wide range of backgrounds, and even in the theories and methods brought to bear on a given research question.

In 200 words or less, please describe how your proposed project will help advance diversity in the science of love.

4. **Budget:** The purpose of this grant is to enable dedicated research time for one scholar to make groundbreaking advances to the science of love. As such, we encourage funds to be used for summer salary or to cover a course release during the academic year. Beyond those uses, funds may be used for participant compensation; for paying research assistants; for supplies and services to conduct biological assays on stored specimens; for software to conduct behavioral coding on existing video records; for registration fees or costs associated with statistical methods workshops or academic conferences; and, where necessary, to cover costs for the scholar to travel to live/work on site for research activities or to travel to workshops or academic conferences.

You may request up to \$20,000 USD in direct costs. You may also request a maximum of 5% for your university's indirect/F&A costs, beyond the direct costs mentioned above. We encourage universities to waive indirect costs if possible.

Please use the budget template spreadsheet to list the items and associated costs for which you would like to use the requested funds.

5. **Budget justification:** Describe how each of the requested budget items will support the proposed research project.
6. **Curriculum Vitae:** Please submit your curriculum vitae, saved as a PDF file with your full name and "CV" in the file name (e.g., Alex Garcia CV).

Submission Checklist

___Research proposal*

___Statement of readiness/feasibility*

___Contribution to diversity*

___Budget**

___Budget justification*

___Your CV

Notes:

**Your research proposal, statement of readiness, contribution to diversity, and budget justification should be uploaded together as one PDF using the provided template.*

***Your budget should be uploaded separately in CSV format using the provided template.*

Evaluation

Within our focus on advancing understanding of love and its relevance to ethical frameworks, priority will be given to scientific rigor as well as theoretical and/or methodological innovation. Additional consideration will be given to the feasibility of the proposed research for contributing to a high-quality publication and to advancing diversity in the field.

We welcome all applications and want to encourage individuals whose primary area of research has not historically been in the domains of love, affective science, wellbeing, or interpersonal relationships to submit proposals. We also especially want to encourage applications from scholars whose backgrounds enhance the diversity of representation in the field across race, ethnicity, country of residence, gender, age, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, identity, and experience.

Award decisions will be announced no later than February 12, 2027.