

Developmental Approaches Certification Board (DACB)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS Health Services Research Student Mini-Grant Opportunity

The Developmental Approaches Certification Board (DACB) (<https://cert-board.org/>) is a newly formed national (U.S.) organization working to create a certification process for providers of Developmental, Relationship-Based Interventions (DRBI).

A class of behavioral health services for autism, DRBI are evidence-based approaches that support autistic and other neurodivergent children through responsive relationships, child-led interaction, caregiver participation, and individualized developmental support. A variety of approaches that meet the criteria for DRBI have been developed and implemented around the world, including DIRFloortime, PLAY Project, PACT, SCERTS, Inklings-iBasis, JAML/BISC, Responsive Teaching, Rhythmic Relating, the Positive Development Model, and the Neurorelational Framework (NRF). (For details, see Cullinane et al., 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1177/02711214241303695>)

This health services research study intends to examine the use of DRBI within the U.S. healthcare system. The purpose of the study is to raise public and payer awareness of DRBI as well as to provide data required for new billing code applications to the American Medical Association.

The DACB is offering a grant opportunity to answer the following research questions:

1. Providers
 - a. How many providers in the United States offer one or more of the approaches classified as DRBI?
 - b. How many providers in the United States have some level of formal training or certification in one or more of the approaches classified as DRBI?
2. Disciplines
 - a. Which healthcare disciplines offer services that use one or more of the DRBI approaches?
3. Service provision
 - a. What is the percentage of each provider's monthly service hours which could be classified as a DRBI approach?
4. Funding
 - a. What are the various funding sources/payment means for DRBI services?
 - b. What billing codes are used for each funding source/payment means?

A strong proposal is expected to use methods or datasets such as provider surveys, de-identified clinical records, and/or payer data (from Medicaid, commercial insurance, or agencies such as California Regional Centers).

The grant amount is \$1,800 to support completion of the project, with 50% of the funds disbursed upon selection, and the remainder disbursed upon submission of final deliverables. While specific project timeline and deliverables are to be included in the proposal, applicants should generally plan to provide to the DACB a submission-ready paper in mid-December 2026.

Grant Requirements:

- Applicants must be students (undergraduate or graduate) enrolled at least half-time at an accredited university within the United States
 - Either an individual or a team may apply; however, the grant amount remains the same regardless of the number of team members
- Applicants must be actively mentored by a faculty member (whether as part of coursework or independently)
- Applicants and their faculty mentor/sponsor take responsibility for submission to Institutional Review Board (IRB) if appropriate to proposed project methods
- Applicants and their faculty mentor/sponsor take responsibility for compliance with their institution's procedures to receive funds

Application Requirements:

- Applicant personal statement (max 1 page): briefly outline interest in this project and any professional / personal connection to the work
- Applicant CV
 - If team submission, CV for each applicant
- Proof of student status (e.g., unofficial transcript)
- Proposal (no more than 2 pages): a letter from the applicant outlining the approach to accomplishing the research goals outlined and project timeline; include 2-3 references from the literature that support this approach
- Mentor/sponsor letter (1 page expected, 2 pages max): a letter from faculty mentor/sponsor describing the level of support that will be provided to applicant for this project, including guidance re: methods, IRB submission, project management, and final report
 - Please include link(s) to mentor/sponsor webpage OR attach CV

Application Procedures:

- Applications must be submitted via email to info@cert-board.org, ~~no later than 08:00 am Pacific on Tuesday, September 8, 2026.~~ **Deadline has been extended to 11:59pm on Tuesday, September 15, 2026.**
- Applications must include all components to be considered.

Administrative cost of review is small as reviewers are members of the DACB's expert scientific colloquium and volunteer their time to evaluate applications; therefore, **no feedback can be provided to applicants.**