Request for Proposals

NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

An Invitation to the **College and University Fund for the Social Sciences**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The spaces between fields—or the "borderlands" between disciplines—represent unique opportunities for social inquiry. The Social Science Research Council's (SSRC) **Scholarly Borderlands** initiative invites proposals for interdisciplinary working groups that ask novel questions, develop new frameworks, rethink methodological approaches, and find innovative answers. Scholarly Borderlands incubates high-risk, high-rewards research efforts. Recent projects include Cultural Influences in Regulatory Capture, Uncertainty in Extreme Weather Events, and Forced Migration and Mental Health.

Convening researchers of different backgrounds, disciplines, and institutions, the **New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences** initiative acts as a catalyst for dialogue and collaboration that produces creative scholarship and builds fresh ties within the social sciences, while connecting them more robustly to work in the natural sciences and humanities. **New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences** working groups may be composed of any cross-disciplinary arrangement of social scientists and other researchers. Projects may address any new or enduring scholarly question, debate, or issue. Additional information about last year's funded projects can be found [here](#).

This call will fund up to three two-year working groups between 2020 and 2022. A maximum award of $50,000 will be provided to each working group toward direct costs associated with project-related meetings and similar activities, such as travel, accommodations, meals, or research assistance. Funds may not be used for release time for participants. Matching funds provided by the sponsoring colleges or universities are not required, but applications including a commitment to match resources in some manner will be viewed favorably. SSRC staff will be available for consultations regarding project implementation.

ELIGIBILITY

This **New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences** RFP is open exclusively to faculty of the College and University Fund for the Social Sciences (CUF) [member institutions](#). Proposed projects must be led by a principal investigator (PI) from a CUF institution in collaboration with one or two additional co-PIs. Working group leadership should represent at least two different disciplines. Participants in the project (apart from the PI) may be from any institution, and the SSRC strongly encourages collaborations that draw together faculty from R1 universities and small liberal arts colleges. A proposed project may be housed within any appropriate institutional entity of the sponsoring college or university (e.g., graduate school, research center).

HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for applications is Tuesday, June 30, 2020 at 11:59 PM. Please visit apply.ssrc.org to access the application portal.

Applicants should prepare a PDF document formatted as follows, single-spaced with a font between 10-12 points:
- Project Description (2 pages): please address the significance of the project and general goals for the grant period, making clear the transformative potential of the funding for the long-term impact of the project as well as the rationale behind the proposed group of participants
- Works Cited (1 page)
- Budget (1 page): a budget outline of proposed expenses for the two-year period, noting any matching funds or resources provided by the host or partnering institutions
- Timeframe (1 page): please outline a timeline for activities no more than 24-months from when funds become available

Participants will also be asked to provide the following within the application portal:
- 250-word bio-sketches of the PI and co-PIs
- A list of likely participants, noting disciplinary or other relevant expertise

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SELECTION CRITERIA

Criteria for selection, apart from the usual standards of rigorous academic inquiry, will emphasize the innovative groupings of scholars and approaches proposed, including demonstration projects that pursue the application of new methodologies or analytical frameworks or that combine existing approaches in novel ways. Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of the field(s) and the project's potential to meet specific needs or attain goals within that/those field(s). If similar projects have been conducted in the past or are currently underway, applicants should discuss how the proposed project differs from them, and possibilities for engaging these other researchers.

Each project will be evaluated based on its strength in four key areas: contribution to the social sciences, networks and participants, project design, and potential contribution to social science in the public interest.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary committee of scholars convened by the SSRC whose work represents the type of border-crossing approaches we are supporting through this program.

GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION

We welcome graduate student and postdoc involvement in the proposed activities, and modest budget allocations for research assistance are permitted. Funds are not intended to cover salary expenses for any project participants.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

While we anticipate that all sponsored projects will produce scholarly journal articles and other publications, these need not be the sole projected products of these collaborations. We are especially interested in projects that broaden reach or impact, such as (but not limited to) the establishment of new pedagogical resources, methodological toolkits for approaching complex research questions, or more public-facing publications and reports. Working group members may also be invited to contribute to the SSRC blog *Items*.

REPORTING

Funds will be available for a two-year period starting in Fall 2020 for grant activities beginning on or after September 15, 2020. Payment will be made in two installments, with the second installment paid following the receipt of an interim report after one year. A final report will be due two months following the conclusion of the grant period.

CONTACT

Please contact Scholarly Borderlands program staff at scholarlyborderlands@ssrc.org for further guidance in preparing your application.