

Request for Proposals

NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

An Invitation to **College and University Fund** members

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** program 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 Big Data and Historical Social Science, Root Causes of Polarization, and Cultural Influences in Regulatory Capture.

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.

PROGRAM TERMS

Three two-year **New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences** working groups will be funded between 2019 and 2020. Up to \$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. The SSRC will provide administrative support to the working groups, as necessary.

ELIGIBILITY

This **New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences** RFP is open exclusively to faculty of the College and University Fund (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

Applicants should prepare the following:

- A project description of no more than two pages, single spaced, addressing the significance of the project and general goals for the grant period. The description should make clear the transformative potential of the funding for the long-term impact of the project. Applications should also make clear the rationale behind the proposed group of participants, including the ways in which they complement one another's disciplines, backgrounds, and/or methodologies.
- A works cited list (maximum one page).
- 250-word bio-sketches of the PI and co-PIs.
- A budget outline of proposed expenses.
- A timeframe for activities of no more than 24 months from when funds become available.
- A list of likely participants, noting disciplinary or other relevant expertise.

The deadline for applications is April 30, 2019.

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

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. Applicants might discuss, for example, if similar projects have been conducted in the past or are currently underway, how the proposed project differs from them, and possibilities for engaging these other researchers. We also welcome interdisciplinary demonstration projects that pursue the application of new methodologies or analytical frameworks or that combine existing approaches in novel ways.

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. This committee will make recommendations to the SSRC president for final selection.

GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION

We welcome graduate student and postdoc involvement in the proposed activities, and modest budget allocations for research assistance are permitted.

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 September 1, 2019. An interim report will be due after one year. A final report will be due two months following the conclusion of the grant period.

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