

# Research Grants on Reducing Inequality

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## 2019 APPLICATION GUIDE

Updated November 2018

### Application Deadlines:

January 9, 2019, 3:00 PM EST

May 1, 2019, 3:00 PM EST

August 1, 2019, 3:00 PM EST

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# Overview

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The research grants programs support high-quality field-initiated studies that are relevant to policies and practices that affect the lives of young people ages 5 to 25 in the United States.

Research proposals are evaluated on the basis of their fit with a given focus area; the strength and feasibility of their designs, methods, and analyses; their potential to inform change; and their contribution to theory and empirical evidence.

## Focus Areas

The Foundation's mission is to support research to improve the lives of young people ages 5-25 in the United States. We pursue this mission by supporting research within two focus areas. Researchers interested in applying for a research grant must select one focus area:

### **Reducing Inequality**

In this focus area, we support research to build, test, and increase understanding of approaches to reducing inequality in youth outcomes, especially on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origins. We are interested in research on programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, and economic outcomes.

### **Improving the Use of Research Evidence**

In this focus area, we support research to identify, build, and test strategies to ensure that research evidence is used in ways that benefit youth. We are particularly interested in research on improving the use of research evidence by state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries.

## Considerations

The Foundation does not have a preference for a particular research design or method. We begin application reviews by looking at the research questions or hypotheses. Then we evaluate whether the proposed research designs and methods will provide empirical evidence on those questions. The strongest proposals incorporate data from multiple sources and often involve multi-disciplinary teams.

Across all of our programs, we strive to support a diverse group of researchers in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and seniority, and we encourage research projects led by African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American researchers.

This application guide details our interests in reducing inequality, as well as the eligibility requirements, application procedures, submission instructions, and selection criteria for research grants. It also provides suggestions for developing strong applications, answers to frequently asked questions, and brief profiles of recently funded grants. Descriptions of all grants funded in the past ten years are available on our website.

# Background

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Our focus on reducing inequality grew out of our view that research can do more than help us understand the problem of inequality—it can point us toward effective responses. There is mounting research evidence about the scope, causes, and consequences of inequality in the United States, but we believe that it is time to build stronger bodies of knowledge on how to reduce inequality.

In this focus area, we support research to build, test, and increase understanding of approaches to reducing inequality in youth outcomes, particularly on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origin status. We are interested in research on programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, and economic outcomes.

To address this complex challenge, we support research from a range of disciplines and methodologies, and we encourage investigations into various systems, including justice, housing, child welfare, mental health, and education.

# Proposing Research on Reducing Inequality

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The primary line of inquiry in this focus area is building, testing, and increasing understanding of responses to inequality in youth outcomes. We welcome descriptive studies that clarify mechanisms for reducing inequality or elucidate how or why a specific program, policy, or practice operates to reduce inequality. We also welcome intervention studies that examine attempts to reduce inequality. In addition, we seek studies that improve the measurement of inequality in ways that can enhance the work of researchers, practitioners, or policymakers. The common thread across all of this work, however, is a distinct and explicit focus on reducing inequality—one that goes beyond describing the causes or consequences of unequal outcomes and, instead, aims to build, test, or understand policy, program, or practice responses.

## **Applications for research in this focus area must:**

- Identify a specific inequality in youth outcomes, and show that the outcomes are currently unequal. We are especially interested in supporting research to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes.
- Clearly identify the basis on which these outcomes are unequal, and articulate its importance. We are especially interested in research to reduce inequality on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origin status. Proposals for research on reducing inequality on a basis not listed here, or on ways in which a basis of inequality intersects with another, must make a compelling case that this research will improve youth outcomes.
- Articulate how findings from your research will help build, test, or increase understanding of a specific program, policy, or practice to reduce the specific inequality that you have identified.

In sum, proposals for research on reducing inequality should make a compelling case that the inequality exists, why the inequality exists, and why the study's findings will be crucial to informing a policy, program, or practice to reduce it.

We know that tackling a problem as large as inequality will require fresh, innovative ideas, and we welcome creative studies that have potential to advance or even transform the field.

## DEFINITIONS

**“Programs”** are coordinated sets of activities designed to achieve specific aims in youth development.

**“Policies”** are broader initiatives intended to promote success through the allocation of resources or regulation of activities. Policies may be located at the federal, state, local, or organizational level.

**“Practices”** consist of the materials and activities through which youth development is enabled (e.g., coaching, mentoring, parenting, peer interactions, teaching). Practices involve direct interaction with youth (though not necessarily in person, as technology affords direct interaction from anywhere).

## ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

### **Is your interest in reducing inequality in economic outcomes limited to studies of poverty?**

Our interest in economic inequality is not exclusively about poverty. Although we have special concern for the outcomes of youth in the most difficult circumstances, we are interested in reducing inequality across the entire spectrum—not just for the least fortunate. Some studies may focus on middle-class families who are increasingly challenged to provide resources to support their children’s development, such as high-quality youth programs or college tuition. Moreover, our interest is in promoting better outcomes for youth who have been underserved, not in diminishing outcomes for youth who have been successful in the past.

## RECENT GRANTS ON REDUCING INEQUALITY

### Immigration Status and Higher Education: Evidence from a Large Urban University

Principal Investigators: Amy Hsin and Holly Reed, Queens College, City University of New York; Sofya Aptekar, University of Massachusetts Boston; and Thomas DiPrete, Columbia University

Amy Hsin and her team are examining whether recent national, state, and university policies improve the educational outcomes of undocumented students.

Because they are not eligible for government financial aid and they attend school under threat of deportation, the roughly 250,000 undocumented immigrants currently enrolled in college nationwide are assumed to have lower odds of graduating than immigrant students with legal status. But researchers looking to test this assumption have lacked reliable data to track legal status and to include undocumented students from a range of countries. As a result, much of what we know about the college experiences of undocumented youth comes from qualitative studies of youth from Mexico. Thus we have less understanding of a broader cross-section of undocumented immigrants from different countries. Further, previous studies have disproportionately centered on selective four-

year institutions rather than the community colleges that many undocumented students attend. Finally, although those undocumented students that graduate often later face legal barriers to employment, most existing studies have not looked beyond college attendance as the main outcome.

With this study, Hsin and colleagues will advance the field by investigating how legal status and immigration reforms affect the educational outcomes and behaviors of a large and ethnically diverse population of undocumented students who attended two-year and four-year colleges within a large, public university system between 1999–2015. Further, whereas earlier research either inferred legal status or studied non-representative samples, Hsin and colleagues will draw on unique administrative data that will enable them to accurately identify legal status and study the population of undocumented students attending college in a large metropolitan area.

The team is examining the effects of two policies intended to increase the college persistence of undocumented youth: President Obama's 2012 executive order known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allows youth who arrived before their 16th birthday to work legally on a temporary basis and provides temporary relief from deportation; and changes to

professional licensing laws that allow eligible DACA recipients to obtain occupational licenses if they meet all other requirements for licensure except for documentation status. They will also identify institutional policies and practices that create a supportive environment for undocumented students and analyze how they affect outcomes.

By matching undocumented students to similar peers with legal status, the team will identify the causal effect of DACA on college performance, transfer, graduation, and attendance, as well as the impact of professional licensing reforms on these indicators and choice of major. In addition, interviews will be conducted with past and present students, family members, staff and faculty, and campus and community leaders.

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## Talking Justice: Identifying Interactional Practices to Improve the Quality of Police–Civilian Encounters

Principal Investigators: Nikki Jones, University of California, Berkeley, and Geoffrey Raymond, University of California, Santa Barbara

Nikki Jones and Geoffrey Raymond are investigating the kinds of interactions between police and youth that can build trust, encourage civilian cooperation, and reduce the use of force by officers.

The challenges confronting police reform stem in part from the frequency of encounters between police and people of color, especially young Black men, the quality of these interactions, and accountability when these encounters go poorly. To address these issues, Jones and Raymond will identify a set of practices that officers can use when they encounter youth to increase trust, reduce the likelihood of violence, and strengthen perceptions of police legitimacy.

Research shows that police legitimacy is lower among minority groups and that frequent encounters with the police can negatively impact the mental health of young men of color. While extant research studies have documented encounters between the police and civilians, they tend to treat officer and civilian interactions as static variables rather than a dynamic interplay in which one party influences the behavior of the other.

In prior work, the team used video recordings collected with law enforcement agencies to examine how officers respond when civilians ask questions or make complaints challenging the officer's agenda. In this study, Jones and Raymond will use a combination of video analysis, conversation analysis, ethnographic methods, and statistical analysis to measure the emergence and management of trust/mistrust for the police officer and the youth and adult civilians. They anticipate that improved police and civilian encounters will reduce the likelihood that youth of color will be arrested for minor crimes such as loitering. They also expect that youth in high surveillance areas may have better mental health, as they will witness fewer aggressive police encounters, which have been found to traumatize bystander witnesses.

Jones and Raymond will examine three collections of video recorded encounters: two were collected in collaboration with law enforcement agencies. The third was collected by a civilian videographer. The team will code law enforcement video data for indicators of civilian mistrust and officer responses to these indicators, as well as how police suspicions inform how they initiate and manage civilian encounters. Policing patterns will be tabulated, and observed associations will be tested, controlling for civilian characteristics, officer gender, and time of day. The team will analyze the ethnographic interviews for

how officers evaluate the trustworthiness of civilians, and will use the civilian video data to focus on civilian complaints and how police officers respond.

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## **The Connection Project: A Social Intervention to Reduce Drivers of Disparity for Disadvantaged Youth**

Principal Investigators: Joseph Allen, University of Virginia, and Karen Guskin, Washington University in St. Louis

In collaboration with a leading practitioner group, Joseph Allen is investigating a school-based intervention to enhance students' social supports and reduce racial and socioeconomic inequalities in academic, behavioral, and health outcomes.

Research shows that academic underachievement, school failure, and behavioral and health problems are drivers of economic disadvantage for racial/ethnic minority youth and those living in poverty. While poverty and discrimination undermine the social supports that can mediate against material and structural disadvantage, a growing body of evidence suggests that enhancing a sense of connection, support, and belonging can

improve life outcomes for these young people. Allen and his team are examining whether peer relationships can help buffer adolescents in low-resource communities from risk factors such as social isolation and alienation, which can lead to negative long-term outcomes.

For three years prior to receiving funding from the Foundation, Allen and his practitioner partners developed, refined, and implemented a theory-driven intervention to alter and strengthen peer networks. Allen's proposal clearly describes the theoretical and empirical bases of four program components that undergird the 12-session intervention: values affirmation, social belonging, reaching out, and narrative identity construction. The intervention, piloted with more than 90 youth participants across three geographic locations, received overwhelmingly positive qualitative feedback from youth, and preliminary quantitative data was encouraging in terms of reducing depression and increasing self-worth and resilience for participating youth.

The current study extends the team's prior work and will evaluate its impact. Allen and colleagues are using a multi-site, randomized design of 864 10th- and 11th-graders to test a social-emotional learning intervention that aims to create a sense of belonging, acceptance, and support among youth who are often more likely to feel alienated and threatened within a mainstream school environment. They are examining the impact

of the intervention on academic, behavioral, and psychosocial outcomes, as well as potential mediating factors like self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and intergroup anxiety. Students receive either the intervention or regular schooling during the fall or spring of an academic year, and the team are collecting data in pre-, post-, and half-academic year follow-up assessments. Allen's hope is that the intervention will prove to be a cost-effective, scalable lever to reduce inequality for youth who are at risk of poor academic, behavioral, and health outcomes.

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# Awards

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## Major research grants

Research grants on reducing inequality typically range between \$100,000 and \$600,000 and cover two to three years of support.

Projects involving secondary data analysis are at the lower end of the budget range, whereas projects involving new data collection and sample recruitment can be at the higher end. Proposals to launch experiments in which settings (e.g., classrooms, schools, youth programs) are randomly assigned to conditions sometimes have higher awards.

In addition to financial support, the Foundation invests significant time and resources in capacity-building for research grantees. We provide opportunities for connections with other scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, and we organize learning communities for grantees in each focus area. Such meetings allow grantees to discuss challenges, seek advice from peers and colleagues, and collaborate across projects. To strengthen our grantees' capacities to conduct and implement strong qualitative and mixed-methods work, the Foundation provides access to a consultation service.

## Officers' research grants

Officers' research grants on reducing inequality are a separate funding mechanism for smaller projects with budgets ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Some are stand-alone projects; others build off larger projects. The budget should be appropriate for the activities proposed. Projects involving secondary data analysis are typically at the lower end of the budget range, whereas projects involving new data collection and sample recruitment can be at the higher end.

Submissions for the Officers' research grants will be accepted on the January 9, 2019 and August 1, 2019 deadlines. Letters of inquiry for the Officer's research grants will not be accepted for the May 1, 2019 deadline.

Similar to the major grants program, we encourage research projects led by African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American researchers. Early career scholars are also encouraged to apply for these grants as a way to build their research programs.

## ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

### **What do you look for in measurement studies?**

We encourage development of practical, cost-effective measures.

Proposals for studies to develop or improve measures should provide 1) a strong theoretical and empirical rationale for the importance of the constructs or phenomena that will be the focus of the work, 2) the utility of the measures, tools, or analysis strategies beyond their use in the proposed study, and 3) detailed plans for establishing reliability and validity.

### **What do you look for in evaluation studies?**

Proposals must specify a theoretical basis for the program, policy, or practice interventions under study. We are interested in investigations of the mechanisms through which intervention effects occur, as well as variation in intervention effects. Thus, studies should shed light not solely on “what works,” but on what works for whom, under what conditions, and why. We are more likely to fund thoughtful, exploratory studies than work that is narrow, even if it involves random assignment. The project should produce findings that have broader relevance to the field, beyond the particular program, policy or practice being studied.

Many studies will provide direct evidence of impact on youth outcomes, but we will consider studies that examine intermediate outcomes shown in other work to reduce inequality in youth outcomes.

### **Do you fund pilot studies, feasibility studies, or the planning stages of studies?**

Rarely. We focus our support on empirical studies in which applicants have already performed a literature review, have identified specific research questions and/or hypotheses, and possess sufficiently detailed research methods and data analysis plans so that reviewers can evaluate their rigor. Intervention studies should be beyond the pilot phase.

### **Do you fund international studies?**

Rarely. Our mission focuses on supporting research to improve the lives of young people in the United States.

### **The Foundation encourages interdisciplinary research teams. How should applicants indicate the composition of their team in their applications?**

Within the narrative, investigators can describe how the research team is well-positioned to address the varied tasks demanded by the study’s conceptualization and research design. This might include combining expertise across disciplines or methods. We encourage applicants to be specific about the value of each member’s contributions to the team, and strongly discourage teams that comprise many senior investigators for very limited time and effort.

# Eligibility

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## **Eligible Organizations**

Grants are made to organizations, not individuals. Grants are limited, without exception, to tax-exempt organizations. A copy of the Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status determination letter is required from each applying organization. We do not support or make contributions to building funds, fundraising drives, endowment funds, general operating budgets, or scholarships.

## **Eligible Principal Investigators**

Please consult with your institution about their eligibility criteria regarding who can act as Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Principal Investigator on a grant.

## ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

### What are the Foundation's top recommendations for applicants for research grants on reducing inequality?

- Provide a clear conceptualization and operational definition of inequality. Clearly identify, conceptualize, and make a compelling case for the dimension of inequality you will study. The Foundation is primarily interested in research that examines ways to reduce inequality that exists along one or more of the following dimensions: race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origin status. In addition to clearly naming the dimension of inequality to be studied, applicants should also draw on extant literature to conceptualize the inequality, document unequal outcomes, and make a case for the importance of studying it. Note that it is inadequate to refer to inequality through umbrella terms (i.e., “at-risk youth”) or to simply list dimensions of inequality as variables.
- Specify the youth outcomes to be studied (e.g., academic, social, behavioral, and/or economic), and show that the outcomes are currently unequal. This should include a demonstration of why the outcomes selected are relevant to the dimension of inequality, and what theory and empirical work tell us about this relationship.
- Clearly describe the theory or conceptual frame guiding the study. This helps reviewers understand why you are approaching the project in a particular way and how your study relates to the approaches others have taken. It also helps reviewers anticipate how findings from the project may challenge or change key assumptions about reducing inequality.
- Focus on doing a few things well rather than trying to cover the waterfront. For example, pursue a few key research questions or hypotheses thoroughly and rigorously, rather than proposing an extensive list.
- Propose research methods that are tightly aligned with the project's research questions or hypotheses. Offer a convincing rationale for why your methods are well-suited to answering the research questions.
- Make a strong case for how the study will help build, test, or increase understanding of a program, policy, or practice for reducing inequality in youth outcomes, and how it will advance work on those issues. In intervention studies, the potential of the research to build, test, or increase understanding usually goes beyond the specific program, policy, or practice being studied.

# Application Materials

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## For Major Research Grants Letters of Inquiry

The application process for all research grants begins with a letter of inquiry (LOI). Letters of inquiry for research grants are accepted three times per year (in the winter, spring, and summer). Officers' research grants are accepted two times per year (in the winter and summer). All must include the following:

### **Project Information**

Enter into the online application your project title (120 characters MAXIMUM, including spaces), brief description (see below), start and end dates, and total requested amount, which includes the combined direct and indirect costs for the full grant period.

### **Brief Description of the Project (1,500 characters MAXIMUM, including spaces)**

- Start with the major research questions.
- Briefly summarize the project's rationale and background.
- Describe the intervention (if applicable), research methods, and data analysis plan.
- Language should be appropriate for an educated lay audience.

### **Project Narrative (FIVE PAGES TOTAL)**

Format your narrative as follows: 12-point font, single-spaced text with a line between each paragraph, numbered pages, and 1-inch margins on all sides.

- State the major research questions or aims guiding the proposal.
- Provide a strong rationale, including:
  - a brief literature review indicating how the project complements and extends prior and concurrent research;
  - a clear description of the theories providing the foundation or organizing frame for the work;

- how the project advances theory; and
- the project’s relevance for policy or practice.
- Include specific hypotheses and/or research questions to be tested or addressed.
- Describe the methods and data collection plan.
  - Describe the research methods, including:
    - Sample/case definition and selection procedures;
    - research design;
    - key constructs, measures and data sources; and procedures for data collection; and
    - intervention (if applicable).
- Summarize the data analysis plan for addressing the hypotheses and/or research questions.
  - Identify the key measures.
  - If you are using qualitative data, you should provide some detail about coding processes and the plan for establishing that the coding is reliable.
  - If you are proposing to develop or improve measures, you should discuss how you will show that the measures are valid and reliable.
- If you have a reference page, include it in this upload. It will not be counted toward the five-page maximum.

**Curriculum Vitae, Biographical Sketch or Resume (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM)**

Include a one-page curriculum vitae, biographical sketch, or resume for each Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator. Be sure to include education and training, peer-reviewed publications, and grants. Do not send full curricula vitae or resumes. There are no specific formatting requirements for curricula vitae, biographical sketches, or resumes.

## For Officers' Research Grants Letters of Inquiry

Letters of inquiry for Officers' research grants should include all of the materials required for major research grants.

In addition to the all of the materials required for major research grants, letters of inquiry for Officers' research grants must include the following: budget, budget justification form, IRS tax exempt status determination letter, and a copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statement.

*The following additional materials are only required for Officers' research grants and should not be submitted as part of the major research grants letters of inquiry:*

### **Budget**

The template for the Budget can be found within the Budget tab of your online application. Applicants may take an indirect cost allowance of up to 15 percent of total direct costs.

### **Budget Justification Form**

The template of this form can be found within the Uploads tab of your online application.

### **IRS Tax-Exempt Status Determination Letter**

You will be required to submit a copy of your institution's IRS tax-exempt status determination letter.

# Submission Instructions

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The William T. Grant Foundation accepts applications only through our online application system, which is accessible through our website at [wtgrantfoundation.org](http://wtgrantfoundation.org). For specific deadlines, please visit the Grants page of our website.

We encourage applicants to begin the LOI as early as possible to ensure the timely completion of the online application and to allow sufficient time to resolve any technical issues that may arise.

## **Step 1: Log in (or register if you are a new user).**

- Go to [wtgrantfoundation.org](http://wtgrantfoundation.org) and click “LOG IN” at the top right of any page. If you forgot your password, click the link to reset your password.
- If you are the principal investigator (PI), and do not have an account, register on our website to create one. If you are not the PI, obtain the account login information from that person or help the PI create an account.

## **Step 2: Select the research grants funding opportunity or the Officers’ research grants funding opportunity, and complete the eligibility quiz.**

- Once you have completed the eligibility quiz, return to your Easygrants homepage and click on the ‘Letter of Inquiry’ link to enter the application.

## **Step 3: Enter PI contact information, PI demographic information, and contact information for each additional Co-Principal Investigator.**

- Enter the PI’s contact information. Note that the PI must also be listed as the primary contact for all correspondence related to the LOI.
- Enter the PI’s demographic information.
- In the “Contacts – Project Personnel” section, add the contact information for any co-principal investigators and institutional contacts that would be involved with grant administration.

**Step 4: Provide project information.**

**Step 5: Enter and upload all required information.**

- Refer to the Application Materials sections for major research grants or Officers' research grants.

**Step 6: Review and Submit.**

- Review the application PDF to make sure that your materials are in order. Once the application is submitted, you will not be able to make any changes.

# Selection Criteria

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All letters of inquiry for research grants on reducing inequality—for both major grants and Officer’s grants—will be reviewed internally. The letter of inquiry functions as a mini-proposal, and should meet the selection criteria detailed below:

## Focus Area

- The proposed research should aim to build, test, and increase understanding of a program, policy, or practice to reduce inequality in the academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes of young people on the basis of race, ethnicity, language minority status, immigrant origins, or another compelling dimension.

## Conceptualization and Relevance

- Proposals must reflect a mastery of relevant theory and empirical findings, and clearly state the theoretical and empirical contributions they will make to the existing research base.
- Projects may focus on either generating or testing theory, depending on the state of knowledge about a topic.
- Although we do not expect that any one project will or should impact policy or practice, all proposals should discuss how the findings will be relevant to policy or practice.

## Methods

- Projects should employ rigorous methods that are commensurate with the proposal’s goals. The Foundation welcomes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods projects.
- The study’s design, methods, and analysis plan should fit the research questions. Further, the description of the research design should make clear

how the empirical work will test, refine, or elaborate specific theoretical notions. Quantitative analyses might emphasize hypotheses and plans for testing them, while qualitative analyses might elaborate on how the research will illuminate processes underlying programs, policies, or practices.

- Plans for case selection, sampling, and measurement should clearly state why they are well-suited to address the research questions or hypotheses. For example, samples should be appropriate in size and composition to answer the study's questions. Qualitative case selection—whether critical, comparative, or otherwise—should also be appropriate to answer the proposed questions.
- The quantitative and/or qualitative analysis plan should demonstrate awareness of the strengths and limits of the specific analytic techniques and how they will be applied in the current case.
- If proposing mixed methods, plans for integrating the methods and data should be clear and compelling.
- Where relevant, attention should be paid to the generalizability of findings.
- Quantitative studies should describe the statistical power to detect meaningful effects.
- The proposal must demonstrate adequate consideration of the gender, ethnic, and cultural appropriateness of concepts, methods, and measures.

## **Feasibility**

- The methods, time frame, staffing plan, and other resources must be realistic.
- Prior training and publications should demonstrate that the applicant has a track record of conducting strong research and communicating it successfully.

## Where appropriate, we value projects that:

- harness the learning potential of mixed methods and interdisciplinary work;
- involve practitioners or policymakers in meaningful ways to shape the research questions, interpret preliminary and final results, and communicate their implications for policy and practice;
- combine senior and junior staff in ways that facilitate mentoring of junior staff;
- are led by members of racial or ethnic groups underrepresented in academic fields;
- generate data useful to other researchers and make such data available for public use; and
- demonstrate significant creativity and the potential to change the field by, for example, introducing new research paradigms or challenging existing ones.

# Application Review Process

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## Major research grants

Letters of inquiry are reviewed internally by staff with social science expertise. Given the breadth of work presented in LOIs, internal reviewers may lack deep knowledge of an applicant's specific area of work, so applications should be written with this in mind. On occasion, internal reviewers will request more information from applicants or solicit expert opinions in order to more adequately assess a project.

After internal review of a letter of inquiry, the Foundation will decide whether to decline the LOI or invite a full proposal for further consideration. The investigator will be notified of this decision within eight weeks of the LOI deadline. In recent years, about fifteen percent of the letters received for major grants have been invited to submit a full proposal. Typically, applicants are offered two deadlines for full proposals, ranging from approximately six weeks to six months from the time of the invitation. We do not accept unsolicited full proposals.

The full proposal follows a format similar to that of the letter of inquiry, and includes a proposal narrative of about 25 pages, a budget and budget justification, and full curriculum vitae or resumes for key staff and investigators. (Institutional Review Board Approval is not required at the time of the proposal's submission, but is required before issuing grant funds.) Full proposals are reviewed using a scientific peer review process involving two or more external reviewers. The Foundation chooses reviewers with content, methodological, and disciplinary expertise in the proposed work. The Foundation's Senior Program Team then reviews promising proposals and offers additional feedback.

Applicants who receive positive reviews with critiques that can be addressed within a short time frame are given an opportunity to provide written responses to reviewers' comments. Full proposals, external reviews, and applicants' responses to external reviews are then further reviewed by the Senior Program Team. The Team makes funding recommendations to the Program Committee and Board of Trustees. Approved awards are made available shortly after Board meetings, which occur in late March, June, and October.

The review process for a successful application, beginning with the submission of a letter of inquiry and ending with approval by our Board of Trustees, is 10 to 15 months.

## **Officers' research grants**

Applications for Officers' research grants are accepted two times per year, and share the same deadlines in January and August as the larger research grants program. Officers' research grants are awarded on the merit of the letter of inquiry alone and the review process is usually eight weeks from the corresponding deadline. Awards are made available after internal review.

Investigators will receive an email notification of staff's decision within eight weeks of the LOI submission date.

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Having problems? For questions about application instructions and procedures, contact Cristina Fernandez, research assistant, at [cfernandez@wtgrantfdn.org](mailto:cfernandez@wtgrantfdn.org). If you encounter technical difficulties, please use the contact form that is located at the bottom of each page on the application website.



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