National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants

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Kate Lorenz
Institute for Policy and Social Research
katelorenz@ku.edu

Damon Talbott, Ph.D.
Office of Graduate Studies
dtalbott@ku.edu

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Purpose of Dissertation Research Improvement Grants

- To improve the quality of dissertation research
- To provide funds for resources not available through the student's PI and university
- To allow for significant data-gathering projects
- To conduct field research away from the student's campus
- NOTE: Grants are not meant to cover the full costs of student's dissertation research ("improvement")

Eligibility

- Student must be enrolled at a U.S. academic institution

- Student is <u>not</u> required to be a U.S. citizen

- Student must be at the point of initiating or already conducting dissertation research: a Ph.D. candidate, a student who has completed comprehensive exams, prospectus, and other pre-dissertation qualifications, and is solely working on the dissertation

Supported Research Programs

- Archaeology
- Cultural Anthropology
- Physical/Biological Anthropology
- Biological Sciences
- Decision, Risk, and Management Science
- Documenting Endangered Languages
- Economics
- Geography and Spatial Sciences
- Law and Social Science
- Linguistics
- Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics
- Political Science
- Research on Science and Technology: Surveys and Statistics
- Science of Science and Innovation Policy
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Sociology

** Please see the "Information Sheet" handout for links to each program's website

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Unsupported Research Programs

The DDRIG does not support research with disease-related goals, which includes:

• Research on the etiology, diagnosis, or treatment of physical or mental disease

• Abnormality or malfunction of human beings, animals, or plants

• Unsure if your research is unsupported?

  Ask your advisor!

Use of Funds

Award sizes vary greatly by individual programs. Funds are exclusively for necessary expenses for conducting dissertation research, which include:

- Travel costs associated with conducting field research or visiting archives and/or special collections
- Data collection and sample survey costs
- Payments to subjects or informants
- Specialized research equipment
- Analysis and services not otherwise available
- Supplies
- Partial living expenses for research away from the student's university

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Funds may not be used:

- As a stipend for the student

- For tuition

- For textbooks, notebooks, journals

- For the typing, reproduction, or publication costs of the student's dissertation

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Timeline

- Applications: Available online, see links on the "Information Sheet" handout
- Verify you have the correct solicitation – some programs post a new solicitation annually, others do not

- Deadlines vary greatly by program, see solicitation

- Award notices are usually sent out approximately six months after deadline

- Best Time to Start Preparing: NOW

Proposal Development & Submission

** Talk to your PI/advisor about what grant development resources are available to you: IPSR, KUCR, HGDO, etc.

Students submit proposal materials via FastLane or via Grants.gov
- Links to and Guides for FastLane and Grants.gov are at: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/preparing/
- FastLane submissions must follow the guidelines in the NSF FastLane Grant Proposal Guide on their website
- Grants.gov submissions must follow the guidelines of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide on their website
- NOTE: the PI must submit the grant proposal on the student's behalf

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Proposal Requirements

The following are common requirements but each program's solicitation might have different instructions for how to fulfill each requirement. Carefully consult your program's current solicitation for information on:

- Cover page
- Project Summary, which includes:
  - Overview, similar to an abstract
  - Intellectual Merit
  - Broader Impacts
- Project Description
  - Should describe the work's scientific significance
  - Should include a research schedule
  - Maximum proposal length varies by program
- Project budget

Proposal Requirements: Intellectual Merit

The project summary must address the project's intellectual merit.

- How important is the project to advancing knowledge?
- How well qualified is the proposer to conduct the research?
- To what extent will the project lead to creative, original or transformative concepts?
- How well conceived and organized is the proposed project?
- Is there a sufficient access to resources to complete the project?

Proposal Requirements: Broader Impacts

The project summary must address the project's broader impacts. Please see your program's solicitation for its statements on Broader Impacts. Across programs, common questions include but are not limited to:

• How well does the project advance discovery while promoting teaching, training, and learning?

• How does the project broaden participation of minorities?

• How will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education?

• Will the results be disseminated broadly?

• What are the project's benefits to society?

• Does it engage the public and increase scientific literacy?

• Does it increase partnerships between academe and industry?

• And more, see your program's solicitation

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Proposal Requirements: Project Description

The project description must explain:

- The scientific significance of the work
- The relationship of your research to other current research
- The design of the project in sufficient detail to permit evaluation
- Any progress to date if the research is already underway
- a Research Schedule should be included and should indicate the when funds are required
- As always, please consult the NSF FastLane Grant Proposal Guide and Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on formatting – for example, the FastLane system cannot read mathematical and scientific symbols in your documents so do not include them

Additional Proposal Requirements

Please consult your program's solicitation as additional proposal requirements vary. These may include but are not limited to:

- Biographical sketches of student and dissertation advisor
- Cited References
- Statement of student's academic status and progress
- Facilities, Equipment, and Resources form
- Data Management Plan
- Budget Justification
- Current and pending support forms, often for student *and* PI/advisor
- Other supplementary documentation – consult your program solicitation for these requirements

Successful Applicants…

- Start the process early

- Read the entire solicitation very carefully

- Ask questions of your PI, grant specialists, NSF program officers

- Demonstrate review criteria in application materials

- Be clear, concise, confident, & truthful

- Write multiple drafts and show them to others for review

- Draw on accomplishments more than promises

- Ensure the proposal addresses all proposal requirements

- Check for spelling, grammar, formatting

- Verify material is uploaded correctly in the appropriate place

- Press the "Submit" button and meet the deadline

- Regularly check application status

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