Request for Proposals

The Social Science Research Commons (SSRC) invites proposals for collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects advancing social science research on the IU Bloomington campus. Specifically, we invite proposals in two priority areas: (1) mixed-methods social science research that integrates quantitative and qualitative methods, and (2) big data for the social sciences. Each priority area is discussed in turn on the next page.

All proposals should include:
- A short (2-3 page) statement of the project's purpose, goals, and significance to social science research in one of the above priority areas.
- A one-page budget of up to $15,000.
- At least one IUB faculty member as a principal investigator.
- A list of faculty and graduate students involved in the project, and their departmental affiliations.
- A list of any other funding sources that might be used to supplement SSRC funding, including other internal or external funding and the development of future proposals for external funding.

Evaluation of proposals:
Funding decisions will be made by a subcommittee of the SSRC Board no later than May 31, 2017. The subcommittee will evaluate the merits and potential contributions of each proposal, including:
- Scientific merit and the potential for generating new knowledge
- The extent to which the proposal will use novel methodological approaches (or novel combinations of methodological approaches) to generate new insights
- The extent to which the proposal includes interdisciplinary collaboration (across disciplines, schools, and/or departments)
- The extent to which the proposal includes clear and specific plans for pursuing external funding in the future

Deliverables:
All projects receiving funding will be expected to:
- Provide a short progress update one year after the award date
- Present at a workshop or event at the Social Science Research Commons

Deadline: Tuesday, May 2, 2017

Priority Area 1: Mixed-Methods Social Science Research

Social scientists increasingly recognize that understanding social trends, processes, and outcomes requires both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed-methods research (also called multi-method research), combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the same project, has thus received increasing attention from both social science researchers and funding agencies. Collaboration between researchers, especially across different methodological and disciplinary traditions and backgrounds, is especially important for this research. This request for proposals is designed to stimulate and support collaborative, interdisciplinary social science research that combines both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to generate new insights that could not be gained through one methodological approach alone.

Projects in this area could include:

- Projects incorporating concurrent collection and/or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data for the purposes of triangulation or confirmation of findings.
- Projects incorporating sequential collection and/or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data such that one phase of data collection will inform the other(s).
- Projects combining quantitative and qualitative data or analysis approaches in novel ways to generate new insights.

Priority Area 2: Big data for the Social Sciences

The growth of "big data" drawn from social media, smart phones, web queries, consumer behavior, and more provides the social and behavioral sciences with new lenses for studying human behavior. Social scientists are beginning to explore the ways that this data can be used to analyze and identify the social and contextual factors that shape human behavior. The collection and analysis of big data may either supplement or replace traditional research methods. Yet big data also presents challenges, both in terms of the computing and storage capacities needed to manage and analyze data and in terms of issues of personal privacy and cybersecurity. This request for proposals is motivated by the goal of stimulating further collaboration in social science research using big data on the Bloomington campus.

Projects in this area could include:

- Projects using big data to address specific research questions in novel ways.
- Projects exploring the efficacy of using big data in comparison to or as complementary to traditional social science methods.
- Collaborative efforts to develop the data infrastructure and tools needed to allow the encoding, analysis, and modeling of big data.