

American Council of Learned Societies: Digital Justice Seed Grants

Unrestricted funding opportunity

From: Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations
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Website: <https://www.acls.org/competitions/acls-digital-justice-seed-grants/>
Submission Limitations: None
Foundation Deadline: **February 15, 2022, 9 pm EST**

Please contact your RAS unit ***and Nicole Dancz-Bal to inform them of your intent to submit.***

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The American Council of Learned Societies is pleased to invite applications for Digital Justice Seed Grants, which are made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. ACLS Digital Justice Seed Grants are designed to promote and provide resources for newly formulated projects that diversify the digital domain, advance justice and equity in digital scholarly practice, and/or contribute to public understanding of racial and social justice issues.

This program addresses the inequities in the distribution of access to tools and support for digital work among scholars across various fields, those working with under-utilized or understudied source materials, and those in institutions with less support for digital projects. It promotes inclusion and sustainability by extending the opportunity to participate in the digital transformation of humanistic inquiry to a greater number of humanities scholars and projects at the beginning stages of development. Finally, ACLS Digital Justice Seed Grants offer scholars and project leaders general financial planning coaching from the Nonprofit Finance Fund. Such an opportunity provides a foundation upon which grant recipients can envision the possible long-term financial options for supporting their digital projects. ACLS Digital Justice Seed Grants support projects that pursue any of the following activities:

- Engage with the interests and histories of people of color and other historically marginalized communities, including (but not limited to) Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities; people with disabilities; and queer, trans, and gender nonconforming people.
- Explore or experiment with new materials, methodologies, and research agendas by way of planning workshops, prototyping, and/or testing products.
- Cultivate greater openness to new sources of knowledge and strategic approaches to content building and knowledge dissemination.

ACLS Digital Justice Seed Grants range in the amount of \$10,000-\$25,000. Seed grants may be held for 12-18 months.

ACLS grants may not support projects whose focus is the production of creative works (e.g., novels or films), textbooks, straightforward translations, or purely pedagogical projects. Institutional indirect costs will not be covered.

GRANT DETAILS

- Amount: between \$10,000 and \$25,000
- Tenure: 12-18 months to be initiated as early as July 1, 2022 and no later than December 31, 2022
- Completed applications must be submitted through the ACLS online fellowship and grant administration system (ofa.acls.org) no later than 9 pm Eastern Standard Time, February 15, 2022.
- Notifications will be sent via email by mid-May 2022.

ELIGIBILITY

- Projects must be hosted by an institution of higher education in the United States.

- Project's principal investigator must be a scholar in a field of the humanities or of the interpretative social sciences.
- Project must be within the start-up or prototyping phase of development.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Peer reviewers in this program are asked to evaluate all eligible proposals on the following criteria:

- The project's engagement with understudied, underfunded, or otherwise marginalized topics of scholarly inquiry.
- The project's capacity to advance justice and equity by addressing subjects and materials of significance for society and scholarship.
- The feasibility of the project plans, as well as a realistic assessment of how risks and challenges will be managed.
- The project's positive *potential* contribution with respect to its respective field(s).
- The project's clarity about intended audiences and its plans for how the project team will engage those constituencies.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications for **seed grants** must contain the following components:

- **Project Narrative**, seven pages, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 11-point font. The narrative must include the following sections:
 - **Project overview and intended intervention:** This section should provide an overview of the work, including: a clear articulation of the project's intervention, an assessment of any potential barriers to achieving those goals, and finally, a rationale for the project's potential to make a significant difference to field building, digital scholarship, and/or public understanding of racial and social justice issues. Applicants should describe, briefly but specifically, the project team's plans, methods, and rationale. What is the significance of the material and for which target audiences? What particular value do digital methods bring to the project? How do these methods bear on subjects that have historically been underrepresented or under-studied in academe? Applicants should discuss both the programmatic ambitions of the project and its technological underpinnings, including any potential plans for data management once or if the project is no longer active.
 - **Infrastructure:** Applicants should indicate how their projects utilize the software, hardware, and staff support that constitute the local infrastructure at their home institutions or the institutions hosting the projects.
- **Bibliography**, no more than two pages, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 11-point font. The bibliography should reflect works cited in the proposal and other key scholarship from the fields in which the project will intervene.
- **Project Timeline**, no more than two pages, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 11-point font. The project timeline should demonstrate a coherent plan for the development and execution of the project, including the sequence of tasks to be accomplished within the grant period.
- **Budget and Budget Description**, no more than two pages, in Times New Roman 11-point font. The budget should provide a detailed account of the proposed use of the grant funds, such as purchasing equipment or software, funding graduate or undergraduate research assistants, or planning conferences, round tables, or focus groups. Grant funds may not pay for institutional overhead. However, direct administrative costs, such as office expenses and an honorarium for office assistance, are allowed. If applicable, the budget plan can include any proposed cost-sharing measures undertaken by the host institution or a third party.
- **Intellectual Property Statement**, one page, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 11-point font. Applicants must commit to: (a) making any software developed with grant funds available pursuant to an open-source license located at www.opensource.org and in a public repository (such as GitHub or Sourceforge); (b) making any digital content broadly available; and (c) no infringement of third-party rights with respect to the development, dissemination, and use of the software and/or digital content. The creators of the software,

digital products, and content created with support of ACLS grant funds will retain intellectual property ownership rights of those materials. Digital content should be made as widely available as intellectual property constraints allow, ideally with the most liberal Creative Commons license that is appropriate to the underlying content. In addition, applicants should explain how they propose to maintain software developed with grant funds after the end of the grant term and for how long they would maintain it in a usable form. ACLS will require grantees to report on whether and how they have complied with the commitments regarding intellectual property made in the proposal.

- **Project Staffing**

Please provide a list of the names and institutional affiliations of members of the project team, along with a description of no more than one paragraph of each member's role(s) and capacities on the project.

- **One Reference Letter**, to be submitted separately by a referee via ACLS's online portal. Referees are asked to comment on the degree to which the specific proposal represents a potentially significant contribution to humanistic digital scholarship. They are asked to evaluate the scholar's achievements and ability to conduct and complete the project proposed, as well as the importance of this project within the general and specific field(s) to which it relates.

- **Institutional Statement**, to be submitted separately via ACLS's online portal.

The institutional statement should be submitted by a senior official of the principal investigator's home institution or the institution hosting the project (i.e., a dean, provost, president, or other appropriate senior administrator). The form asks the institutional representative to confirm that the institution's existing infrastructure complements and supports the technologies to be developed and the related program activities to be undertaken for the specified project, and how the activities supported by the grant would be counted for purposes of promotion and tenure at the host institution.