

Grant: Historical Research on the Practices and Institutions of Social and Natural Science (Deadline 16 March)

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Call for Letters of Inquiry

Historical Research on the Practices and Institutions of Social and Natural Science

Submission Deadline: Thursday, March 16, 2023

Grants of \$75,000 - \$250,000 to be awarded for original research in the history of science, technology, economics, and social science, focusing on areas of broad programmatic interest to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Overview

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation supports basic research and public understanding of science, technology, and economic behavior. We believe that historical scholarship is valuable to understand the contemporary context of scientific research and that historical scholarship can be critically important to informing current and future research and policy practices. The Sloan Foundation is currently soliciting Letters of Inquiry for research projects to advance historical scholarship on thematic areas of interest to the Foundation as discussed below. A small number of full proposals will be invited based on submissions received in response to this Call.

Letters of Inquiry are invited between \$75,000 - \$250,000 and can be for the following types of research projects:

- *Faculty-led research projects* of up to \$250,000, with the aim of advancing original scholarship on a topic or theme of interest to the Foundation in the history of science, technology, economics, and social science
- *Dissertation improvement and completion projects* of up to \$75,000, to specifically support dissertation research expenses including travel, archival fees, and data collection, and up to one year of graduate student stipend (including summer funding, but not tuition) on a topic or theme of interest to the Foundation in the history of science, technology, economics, and social science. A faculty member must serve as the principal investigator for dissertation improvement and completion projects.

Themes and Topics of Interest

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/24846/discussions/12319992/grant-historical-research-practices-and-institutions-social-and>
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Through this Call for Letters of Inquiry, the Sloan Foundation is focused on advancing historical scholarship on the practices and institutions of natural and social science, engineering, and technology in order to better understand and strengthen the research enterprise.

Themes of interest include but are not limited to: the changing nature of interdisciplinary research and collaborative team structures; the role of instrumentation, data, and computational tools within and across disciplines; the changing nature of research organizations; the formation and development of professional societies, conferences, and scholarly communication systems; the establishment and evolution of fellowship and training programs; and the formation and development of research funding agencies. These themes are directly related to some of the Foundation's current programmatic and strategic interests. Cutting across all topics and thematic areas is an interest in examining issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and illuminating the role played by under-represented scholars and perspectives in the advancement and development of these areas.

Projects are expected to be predominantly focused on the United States, with a particular focus on the 20th and 21st Centuries. While broadly interested in the history of the natural and social sciences, engineering, and technology, we especially encourage projects that relate to [current areas of grantmaking](#) or [previously completed programs](#).

Expected Research Approach and Outputs

- Proposed projects are expected to involve historically oriented archival, oral history, or other documentary research and analysis techniques.
- Research outputs expected to include scholarly works including monographs, articles, and dissertations.
- Other outputs may include reports, workshops and other convenings, or presentations that share historical scholarship with scholars and practitioners.

Expected Team Structure and Eligibility

- Lead principal investigator must be a faculty member either based at a United States university or college or working through an existing 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor organization.
- A faculty member must serve as the principal investigator for dissertation improvement and completion projects.
- Submissions from diverse teams led by Black, Indigenous, and Latina/o researchers and/or women are strongly encouraged. Submissions from researchers based at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) are strongly encouraged.
- Projects involving advocacy or lobbying activities are out of scope and not eligible for consideration.
- Researchers may participate in a maximum of two proposed projects.

Submission Deadline

Letter of Inquiry submissions are due on Thursday, March 16, 2023, by 5:00pm Eastern.

Submission materials should be uploaded directly to the application portal at https://apply.sloan.org/prog/history_of_science/. Any questions related to the application portal can be sent to energy@sloan.org.

Submission Components

Complete submissions should include 5 components in the following order:

(1) 1-page Sloan Foundation Proposal Cover Sheet, summarizing key project details. Projects should have a proposed start date of **September 1, 2023**. The Proposal Cover Sheet is available at: <https://sloan.org/proposal-cover-sheet>

(2) Letter of Inquiry 3-4 pages in length (excluding budget table and other supplemental material), in 11-point font. Submissions should address the following questions, with each question serving as a section heading:

1. What is the primary topic and what are the guiding research question(s)?
2. What is the landscape of work in this area and what gap(s) will this research address?
3. What are the archival collections or other resources on which the work will draw?
4. Who are the key members of the research team?
5. What is the project timeline, and what are its expected outputs?

The first and second sections should be roughly a page in length each, with the other sections being shorter in length.

(3) Budget Table for the proposed project. Total funding requests are allowed up to \$250,000, with sub-awards to collaborating institutions allowed where appropriate. A sample Budget Table is available at: <https://sloan.org/grants/apply#tab-grant-forms>. Allowable expenses include:

1. For faculty: up to two-months summer salary per investigator per year, plus benefits, capped at \$35,000 per investigator per year, based on project time commitments. In addition, sabbatical support will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. For graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or undergraduate students: salary/stipend, plus benefits, based on project time commitment.
3. Tuition reimbursement: Requests for graduate student tuition reimbursement are allowed up

to a maximum of \$12,000 per student per academic year, with justification provided.

- Tuition is not an allowable expense for dissertation improvement and completion grants.

4. For project-related administrative and research staff: salary, plus benefits.
5. Research implementation expenses: data acquisition, archive fees, travel, computing, transcription, and other direct research expenses.
6. Dissemination and presentation expenses: travel, meals, lodging, conference fees, room rentals, speaker stipends, audio-visual equipment, and other dissemination expenses.
7. Indirect overhead expenses, capped at 20% of direct costs (overhead expenses are not allowed on tuition reimbursement).

(4) References/Bibliography List of up to one additional page

(5) Brief CVs of key project leads and personnel (no more than 2 pages per person)

Submission Review Process

Given the large number of expected submissions, we will be unable to discuss the details of any potential submissions in advance. Following initial review, a small number of selected submissions will then be invited to prepare full proposals for consideration. Depending on the number of submissions received, it is expected that 4-8 grants may be awarded, with award decisions expected by August 2023.

About the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a nonpartisan not-for-profit, grantmaking institution dedicated to improving the welfare of all through the advancement of scientific knowledge. Established in 1934 by Alfred Pritchard Sloan Jr., then-President and Chief Executive Officer of the General Motors Corporation, the Foundation makes grants in four broad areas: direct support of research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics; initiatives to increase the quality and diversity of scientific institutions and the science workforce; projects to develop or leverage technology to empower research; and efforts to enhance and deepen public engagement with science and scientists.

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