COLLABORATIVE GRANTS IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

2007-2008 Large Grants Competition

Letters of Inquiry Due April 22, 2007

The SSRC is pleased to offer two types of 'Collaborative Grants' in 2007 for academic-advocacy partnerships in media and communications.

Small Grants provide up to $7500 for short-term academic research in support of advocacy and activism in media and communications. The next application deadline is April 4, 2007 with subsequent competitions held at roughly 4-month intervals. For application procedures, criteria, past recipients, and other details, see http://www.ssrc.org/programs/media/ .

Large Grants provide up to $30,000 in support for academic-advocacy research collaborations designed to change media / telecommunications infrastructure, practices, or policies. General areas of interest for the program include:

- Measuring the success or failure of mainstream media in advancing different public interest goals or values.
- Measuring the impact of existing alternative or community media systems on communities, public discourse, or democratic processes.
- Developing better, actionable accounts of the role of 'new media' in people's lives.
- Analyzing policymaking and/or regulatory systems.
- Analyzing emerging systems, frameworks, or models of media and communications that transcend the current regulatory framework.
- Analyzing economic models, industry structure, markets, or audiences for different kinds of media
- Creating analytical tools or research resources for use by advocates, communities, or the public.
- Documenting or evaluating advocacy or organizing strategies around communications and media issues.

Both large and small grants are awarded through competitive application processes, with recipients selected by an independent committee of researchers and advocates.

Grants are expected to fund up to 1 year of work.

Grant recipients will be part of a cohort that meets and communicates over the course of the program.

The Large Grants Competition: Process

Application for the Large Grants Competition consists of two stages:

- A 'Letter of Inquiry' of less than 1,000 words outlining the proposed project, partners, and goals. Entries will be vetted by program staff in order to help applicants navigate the challenges of building effective collaborations in this area. More substantial proposals will then be requested from those LOIs that meet the program criteria. The LOI must be submitted by *April 22, 2007*.

- A more detailed proposal describing the research, the partners, budget, timeline, and proposed outcomes.

The LOI must be submitted via email to mediahub@ssrc.org with subject line "Collaborative Grant Letter of Inquiry."

Applicant Criteria

Projects must involve substantive collaboration between:

- A researcher based at a university, college, or other academically-oriented research institution. Advanced graduate students are eligible.

- A US-based non-profit advocacy, organizing or community group working on media and/or telecommunications issues.

Letters of interest and proposals must be submitted by the person primarily responsible for conducting the proposed research.

Other Conditions:

- Public-interest groups with unusual financial status (e.g., non-profit fiscal sponsorship or non-commercial for-profit status) should contact SSRC program staff.
- The academic research partner cannot be a paid staff member of the partnering nonprofit organization.
- International proposals will be solicited from SSRC partner organizations.
- There are no citizenship requirements for participation in the program.
- Applicants may apply for both small grants and large grants. Applicants with current SSRC collaborative grant funding should explain how the new proposal builds on completed work from that grant.

Project Criteria

All projects must:

- Be strategically useful in their proposed advocacy and/or organizing context.
- Produce scholarship that meets academic standards.
- Have a realistic workflow, budget, and timeframe.

Collaborations will be evaluated in part on whether they meet some or all of the following criteria:

- Have a clear plan for the application of research findings in policy-making processes or advocacy campaigns. Research that facilitates field-building (i.e. curriculum development, tool-building, analysis of best practice) is also eligible.
- Are useful for organizations, communities, and advocacy efforts beyond the partner organization.
- Build new capacity—skills, tools, experience, access to data sets—within the "user" organization and/or community.

- Involve collaboration between two or more advocacy/community groups in the project design and the plan of use for the research.
- Use participatory methods to engage community and/or advocacy group members in framing the questions, data collection, and/or analysis.
- Use methods or models of research that have proved effective in analogous contexts.
- Address issues of disparate impact on communities on the basis of race, class, gender, ethnicity, age or other identity/status category.
- Reflect diversity in the staff or group involved with the project.

Letters of inquiry not exceeding 1,000 words should include the following:

- Name or topic of the proposed research project;
- A brief statement (two or three sentences) of the purpose and nature of the proposed study;
- The significance of the issue addressed by the project;
- How the research will address the issue;
- How the issue relates to the applying organization, and why the organization is qualified to undertake the project;
- Novelty and utility of the project vis à vis existing research;
- Geographic area or country where the work will take place;
- Time period for which funding is requested;
- Information about those who will be helped by and interested in the work and how you will communicate with them;
- Amount and breakdown of the funding requested (estimates are acceptable).

SSRC staff will respond to letters of inquiry within three weeks.

Contact Information
In order to expedite a letter of inquiry, the applicant must provide the following contact information in a separate memorandum:

- Name, address (and postal address if different), phone number, and fax number of principal researcher;
- Name of the partnering organization;
- Organization's address (and postal address if different), phone number, fax number, e-mail address and web address, if any;
- Name of the partnering organization's chief executive officer or equivalent;
- Name and title of the main project contact person at the organization, if different from the above;
- Address (and postal address if different), phone number, fax number and e-mail address of main contact.

Program Background

The Collaborative Grants project is part of the Necessary Knowledge for a Democratic Public Sphere (NKDPS) Program of the Social Science Research Council, working in partnership with the Center for International Media Action and the McGannon Center for Communications Research at Fordham University. The program is funded by the Knowledge, Creativity, and Freedom program of the Ford Foundation.

For more information on the program, see http://www.ssrc.org/programs/media. For all program-related inquiries, please write to mediahub@ssrc.org . Subscribe to MediaResearchHub-News for program updates, research funding opportunities, and conference information at http://listserve.ssrc.org/mailman/listinfo/mediaresearchhub-news .