

Centennial Center Grant Guide

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Applying for grants can often be a confusing and even frustrating process. Too often, grant seekers feel like they spend hours and hours putting together a meticulously crafted proposal, only to submit that proposal into what feels like a black box to then wait for weeks or even months to learn if they will be receiving the funds they need. As part of the Centennial Center's work to serve APSA's members in the most transparent and equitable way possible, we have put together this grant guide to shine a light on how the Center approaches its grantmaking in the hopes that this will make the process less mystifying and intimidating to

prospective applicants. Grantmaking is at the core of what the Centennial Center does, and it is our hope that this guide will encourage APSA's members to take advantage of the opportunities for funding we offer.

Below you will find a quick overview of each of our annual grant programs as well as the answers to some frequently asked questions about our grantmaking process. Each grant overview provides a brief description of the purpose of the grant, the maximum amount of money we offer for each award, application data from 2021, and the questions we ask each reviewer.

Growing Democracy

Growing Democracy grants support community-based programming led by political scientists that aim to bridge the boundaries between academia and communities and break down the barriers between people and governing institutions.

Grant Amount: Up to \$10,000

Number of applicants in 2021: 14

Number of grants awarded in 2021: 2 (14% acceptance rate)

Questions we ask our reviewers:

1. Does the proposed work address pressing real world problems with the aim of advancing the public good?
2. Does the proposed work bring together experts with divergent ideological perspectives and/or methodological approaches?
3. Does the proposed work address topics on which political scientists have something distinctive to offer and will findings be shared with policy makers?

Research Partnerships on Critical Issues (RPCI)

APSA's Research Partnerships on Critical Issues program provides grants to diverse groups of academics and outside experts from different methodological and ideological backgrounds for collaborative, research-based projects aimed at advancing the public good.

Grant Amount: Up to \$20,000

Number of applicants in 2021: 3

Number of grants awarded in 2021: 1 (33% acceptance rate)

Questions we ask our reviewers:

1. Does this project address pressing real world problems

with the aim of advancing the public good?

2. Does this project bring together experts with divergent ideological orientations, perspectives, and/or methodological priors to deepen our understanding and suggest ways forward on areas where debate is stagnant and/or polarized?
3. Does this project include a feasible plan for the researchers to share their research and findings with policy makers, stakeholders, and the general public.
4. Does this project address topics on which political scientists have something distinctive to offer?

Peer-to-Peer Pedagogical Partnerships (P4)

APSA seeks proposals from members for projects that will bring together political science from research-intensive institutions and teaching-intensive institutions, including community colleges, to share expertise and produce cutting-edge teaching resources. These partnerships can be between scholars in a similar geographic area or from across the nation or world via Zoom.

Grant Amount: Up to \$20,000

Number of applicants in 2021: 2

Number of grants awarded in 2021: 1 (50% acceptance rate)

Questions we ask our reviewers:

1. Does the proposed work create partnerships among colleagues at different kinds of higher education institutions?
2. Does the proposed work support colleagues in generating cutting-edge teaching materials highlighting best practices and/or innovative methods and current research?
3. Does the proposed work assist faculty at more research-intensive institutions in teaching and mentoring first-generation, under-represented minority, and economically disadvantaged students?
4. Does the proposed work enable colleagues at more teaching-intensive institutions to teach materials that they would not otherwise have the time or inclination to teach?

Spring Centennial Center Research Grants (CCRG)

Supports research in all fields of political science conducted by political scientists in non-tenure track or contingent positions who are ineligible for departmental funding; political science faculty of all ranks who are employed in departments that do not grant PhDs; and graduate students.

Grant Amount: Up to \$2,500

Number of applicants in 2021: 70

Number of grants awarded in 2021: 17 (24% acceptance rate)

Questions we ask our reviewers:

1. To what extent do the proposed research activities suggest

and explore creative, original, under-studied or potentially transformative topics?

2. Does the proposed work contribute to existing scholarship?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
4. How well-qualified is the individual or team to conduct the proposed activities?

Summer Centennial Center Research Grants (CCRG)

Summer Centennial Center Research Grants are open to all APSA members. Grants are supported by a set of endowed funds, ten of which are managed by the Centennial Center for the purpose of supporting specific areas of research. The full descriptions of these funds can be found on the Centennial Center's website. The Summer CCRG program also offers a limited number of grants for mini-conferences, workshops, and other collaborative projects.

Grant Amount: Individual projects up to \$2,500 and collaborative projects up to \$10,000

Number of applicants in 2021: 150

Number of grants awarded in 2021: 41 (27% acceptance rate)

Questions we ask our reviewers:

1. To what extent do the proposed research activities suggest and explore creative, original, under-studied or potentially transformative topics?
2. Does the proposed work contribute to existing scholarship?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
4. How well-qualified is the individual or team to conduct the proposed activities?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are Centennial Center grants funded?

Most of our grant funds are drawn from a collection of restricted and unrestricted investment accounts dedicated to supporting APSA members. Over the years, individual members and organizations have donated funds to support specific types of research activity, to encourage research on various topics or research themes, to support scholars of specific backgrounds, or to support the Association's work in general. The largest of these funds, the Second Century Fund, was the outcome of the development campaign that ran from 1998 to 2003 that created the Centennial Center. Finally, the Centennial Center's Winter Grants (Growing Democracy, Research Partnerships on Critical Issues, and Pedagogical Partnerships) are funded through a generous grant we received from the Ivywood Foundation, a family philanthropy run in part by former APSA president Rodgers Smith, who chaired the task force that created the Center's Winter Grants.

How does the Centennial Center evaluate grant applications?

Each grant cycle, Centennial Center staff create a pool of approximately 6-20 reviewers depending on the number of applications received. All completed applications are read by two external reviewers. To create this pool of judges, APSA solicits volunteers, engages with members of the Centennial Center Advisory Board, and also invites members to serve as reviewers. All reviewers are mid- to senior-level political scientists and are drawn from both inside the academy (associate or full professors) and outside of academia (typically from the managerial and executive ranks of their organizations). Centennial Center staff take care to create a pool of judges that reflects the gender and racial diversity of APSA's membership, as well as the methodological and topical scope of work that is undertaken by political scientists. Once the judge pool is created, judges

are assigned by Centennial Center staff so that at least one of the two reviewers for each application is an expert in that research area and/or methodology. The Centennial Center also provides each judge with a guide for reviewing that includes information about recognizing implicit bias. Judges are assigned approximately 10-12 applications each and are given access to application materials through a secure online portal. For each application, judges answer a series of 3-4 open-ended questions and then provide an overall numerical score. Once all applications are reviewed, Centennial Center staff assess these reviews to determine awards. Centennial Center staff use the reviewers' numerical scores as a guide, but do not base award decisions off of these numbers exclusively. Instead, staff make a holistic determination based on reviewers' comments, an application's fit with the purpose of different funds, and fund availability.

What does the post-award process look like?

Grant winners will receive a packet of documents once they are notified of their award. This packet includes a grant agreement and two financial forms. All these forms typically need to be signed by a university grant administrator before being returned to the Centennial Center staff. Once the award packet is returned, the Centennial Center staff will submit a payment request to APSA's finance department, and funds should arrive within one to two weeks. Once a grantee receives their money, they are free to work on their projects as outlined in their application. Of course, we understand that unpredictable things happen all the time in research, and the Centennial Center staff is very open to any requests for project extensions or modifications as needed. All the Centennial Center staff asks from its grantees once an award is made is for an annual progress report (typically a page) for multi-year projects, and a final report and budget (typically two to three pages) one month after a project is finished. ■