



## **Political Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant FAQs**

**For comprehensive information about the program, please visit the [DDRIG page](#) on the American Political Science Association website or contact [dissertaions@apsanet.org](mailto:dissertaions@apsanet.org).**

### **Eligibility**

#### **Q: Which research areas are eligible for Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants?**

A: APSA expects the Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants to represent the wide range of methods and approaches to empirical political science, including, but not limited to, quantitative and experimental approaches, archival and historical research, interpretive and ethnographical approaches, and qualitative interview and field research. APSA also welcomes uncommon and emerging research approaches. Substantive areas of funded, research will include, but will not be limited to: American government and politics; comparative government and politics; Indigenous politics; international relations; race, ethnicity, and politics; urban and local politics; women and politics research; political violence; conflict processes; public administration; public policy; political behavior; political economy; political institutions; and sexuality and politics.

APSA Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants are intended to support basic, empirically oriented research. This grant cannot support applied research. Basic research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. Although basic research could result in a solution to a practical problem, that is not its primary aim. Applied research is designed to answer specific questions aimed at solving practical problems. Applied research is likely to directly make improvements on existing products, technologies, and processes.

#### **Q: I am a citizen of a foreign country. Am I eligible for the Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants?**

A: Yes. If you are at a university accredited in and having a campus physically located in the United States, you are eligible for the grant.

#### **Q: If I have applied for the Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant previously, can I re-apply?**

A: Yes. You are eligible to re-apply so long as you still meet all the application requirements. Grantees are not eligible to receive a second grant.

#### **Q: Can the Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant be held concurrently with other awards?**

A: Yes, the grant can be held concurrently with other awards and funding sources, though you are required to inform APSA of all additional sources of funding.

## **Application**

### **Q: What materials are required for the application?**

A: All proposals for APSA dissertation improvement grants are required to include:

- Proposal summary
- Project description and research plan
- Other sources of financial support
- Professional development plan
- Budget and budget justification
- Data management plan
- Adviser support form
- Institutional support form
- Research ethics requirement

For a full description of the application materials, please visit

<https://www.apsanet.org/PROGRAMS/Doctoral-Dissertation-Research-Improvement-Grants/Application-Materials-and-Format>

### **Q: What costs are considered direct research costs?**

A: Funds are to be used exclusively for direct costs for research activities. Costs that are covered by the APSA DDRIG include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Travel expenses (e.g. travel to field work or archives, including transportation, lodging, and reasonable travel associated expenses)
- Data collection (e.g. survey costs, payments to research subjects, archival photocopies)
- Research assistance (e.g. translation, transcription, and survey staff)
- Equipment, materials, and supplies (e.g. interview recording equipment, software & necessary office supplies)
- Training (e.g. methods or fieldwork training, training on software or other resources)

### **Q: What costs are not considered direct research costs?**

A: Funds are to be used exclusively for direct costs for research activities. Costs that are not covered by the APSA doctoral dissertation research improvement grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A stipend or salary for the grantee or advisor (note that salaries or payments for work by other individuals whose assistance may be essential to conduct the project may be permitted when there is sound justification for such expenses)
- Indirect costs, also known as facilities and administrative costs, for colleges and universities
- Costs for tuition, textbooks, or other items not directly related to the conduct of dissertation research
- Publication costs for articles based on the dissertation, except when the university's degree requirements permit the substitution of published research results for a free-standing dissertation
- Costs for travel of the adviser to the field site
- Costs of living

### **Q: What criteria is used to select grantees?**

A: Awardees are recommended for funding by a panel of experts based on the intellectual merit and broader impact of the proposed dissertation improvement activities. Intellectual merit will be evaluated based on the project's potential to advance knowledge and understanding within political science or across fields (including the field of political science), while broader impact will be evaluated based on the project's potential to benefit society more broadly. Both criteria will be considered in the context of their originality and potentially transformative qualities, the organization and pragmatism of the research plan, and value of substantive and methodological diversity in research. APSA staff review the expert panel's recommendations

and total available funding to make the final grantee selection. More information on the NSF framework for understanding broader impact and intellectual merit is available [here](#).

**Q: Does the APSA DDRIG application require a letter of recommendation?**

A: No. The APSA DDRIG application does not require a letter of recommendation. The application does require that the applicant's adviser complete and submit the Adviser Support Form. This is done through the application submission system. The applicant will be asked to enter their adviser's name and email address. The adviser will then receive an email prompting them to upload the completed form.

**Q: My project has multiple grant activities that involve human subjects, do I need to provide proof of IRB approval/exemption for all of them?**

A: Yes. Proof of exemption/approval OR proof that you have applied for approval/exemption must be provided for each grant-funded research activity that involves human subjects. If you are selected for funding, you will need to provide proof of approval prior to receiving the grant funds.

### **Timing**

**Q: When will I hear back about my application?**

A: For 2024, award notifications and announcements will be released in late summer.

**Q: When will the funds be disbursed?**

A: For 2024, the funds will be disbursed to grantees in September 2024, subject to the receipt of the appropriate paperwork and materials.

### **Grantees**

**Q: How many grants are awarded and how much money is awarded per grant?**

A: APSA will award approximately 20 to 25 grants, each between \$10,000 to \$15,000 depending on the needs and scope of the proposed research project.

**Q: What are my responsibilities as a grantee?**

A: Individuals awarded grants will have several requirements before and throughout the grant period.

- Grantees will be required to submit necessary financial paperwork before receiving grant funds.
- Grantees will be required to submit a one-page public facing summary describing their work at the beginning of the grant.
- Grantees will be required to attend professional development programming provided by APSA.
- Grantees will be required to document all spending.
- Grantees will be required to submit the required reports (a final report in the fall, at the conclusion of the grant and, for two-year grants, an interim report in the fall at the conclusion of the first year).

**Q: Does the full dissertation need to be completed within the grant period?**

A: No. The full dissertation does not need to be completed in the grant period. However, the activities for which grant funds are used should be limited to the time when the grant is active.

**Q: Can the grant period be extended?**

A: APSA recognizes that there may be unexpected delays or changes in research plans, and grantees may on occasion find it difficult to maintain the planned expenditure timeline. In this case, grantees may apply for a no-cost extension to justify using the grant funds over the course of an additional year. Applications for no-cost extensions must be submitted at the conclusion of the grant year, in lieu of the final report. APSA will

review and approve applications for no-cost extensions. An application for a no-cost extension will require all the elements of an interim report along with a one-page explanation for why the extension is necessary.

**Q: Can I apply for a two-year grant period?**

A: While the typical grant period is one year, applicants may apply for a two-year grant period. Applications must clearly explain why a two-year period is necessary for the project, particularly in the research plan, budget, and budget justification.

**Q: How are the grant funds disbursed?**

A: Grant funds are disbursed to the grantee's university. The university is responsible for receiving the grant funds and making them available to the grantee. The grantee will need to abide by their university's rules or procedures governing the use of grant funds. The application requires that each applicant's university agrees to this arrangement prior to submission of the application by signing the Institutional Support Form.

**Q: Is there any support for conference travel?**

A: Yes. In addition to the budget request, grantees are provided with \$1000 in travel grant funds to present their DDRIG-funded research at the APSA annual meeting or at other conferences during their grant year. These funds are provided directly to the grantee on a reimbursement basis after the conference following APSA's travel grant policy.

**Q: Who can I contact with further questions?**

A: For more information and questions, please explore the APSA website or contact [dissertations@apsanet.org](mailto:dissertations@apsanet.org).