



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 24-020

Dear Colleague Letter: Opportunities in the Research Infrastructure in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Program (RISBS)

November 20, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) supports the creation of large-scale research infrastructure. This includes the creation of large-scale tools that enable and facilitate the conception and execution of research projects. In the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate (SBE), such research infrastructure frequently takes the form of collection or assembly of large datasets, software for accessing and processing large datasets, and other software and hardware tools that enable and assist in the collection and manipulation of SBE data.

The work made possible by SBE research infrastructure empowers our nation to address great challenges and seize transformative scientific opportunities. The advances achieved in the creation of SBE research infrastructure, the scientific discoveries made through subsequent use of that infrastructure, and the application of these discoveries, spurs innovation, creates jobs, strengthens security and preparedness, and improves quality of life for people across the country and around the world. This DCL points to the new [Research Infrastructure in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Program \(RISBS\)](#) as a focal point for the support of such infrastructure.

Many of the programs in the SBE directorate have supported research infrastructure in the form of large-scale data collection efforts, the assembly and harmonization of SBE datasets, software tools for processing and accessing SBE data, platforms for conducting SBE research, and equipment for conducting SBE research. Support for new research infrastructure through the RISBS program is not intended to supersede or replace such support from other NSF programs but rather to augment it and, by offering additional opportunities, to catalyze new thinking and bold, innovative proposals. The RISBS program may also provide co-funding for cross-directorate research infrastructure programs that

require SBE co-funding. Principal investigators (PIs) may want to consider programs such as [Cyberinfrastructure for Sustained Scientific Innovation \(CSSI\)](#) in the CISE directorate with this in mind. The RISBS program also may support projects to design or develop large-scale projects that subsequently would be appropriate for support by foundation-wide programs such as [Major Research Instrumentation \(MRI\)](#), [Mid-scale Research Infrastructure-1](#) or [Mid-scale Research Infrastructure-2](#).

In addition, this DCL also announces a special interest in RISBS innovation proposals to develop leading-edge methodologies and technologies that will inform existing or future research infrastructure activities. RISBS innovation proposals could be similar to those supported by the UK Household Longitudinal Study's [Innovation Panel](#), but RISBS Innovation Proposals can be for any data infrastructure innovations that are pertinent to RISBS.

Prospective PIs are strongly encouraged to contact the RISBS program officers and/or program officers from other SBE programs that may be applicable to the proposal before submitting to RISBS. Please also refer to the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) policies on duplicate or substantially similar proposals. Prospective PIs may also be interested in the [Human Networks and Data Science Program - Infrastructure \(HNDS-I\)](#), which supports proposals addressing the development of data resources and relevant analytic techniques that support research in the social, behavioral and economic sciences.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Questions about this funding opportunity should be directed to the program directors:

- Lee D. Walker, email: lwalker@nsf.gov, telephone: (703) 292-7174
- Joseph M. Whitmeyer, email: jwhitmey@nsf.gov, telephone: (703) 292-7808

Sincerely,

Sylvia Butterfield
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