



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

SSN Election Protection & Enhancement Program **Strengthening Local Elections through the SSN Network**

To meet the challenge of bolstering the decentralized U.S. election system, the Scholars Strategy Network is excited to announce the launch of a competitive subgrant program that will allow our federated network to take on a variety of locally-responsive activities.

In the coming months, a limited number of **SSN Building Trust in Elections Grants** will be awarded to chapters or groups of members willing to organize local groups of academics to improve, increase participation in, and build trust in elections. Participating researchers will familiarize themselves with current and changing rules for running elections, build collaborative relationships with election administrators and university and community-based groups working on these issues, and help advocate for improvements to and greater trust in election systems.

Grant Timeline

Activities and projects funded by the **SSN Building Trust in Elections Grant** must take place between **May 2022 - May 2023**, with final reporting on activities and lessons learned due in June 2023.

Application Process

All proposals must be emailed to Britah Odondi (britah@scholars.org) and received by **April 15, 2022**. Proposals should be no longer than three (3) pages, and must include the following elements:

Project Leaders

Proposals must name between one to three scholars as project leaders. Project leaders can be existing SSN chapter leaders or members who wish to take this on as an additional chapter project, or in-process members who have completed the SSN scholar profile form by the proposal due-date of April 15 and whose team contains at least one full member or chapter leader. Groups of scholars in locations where there is no current SSN chapter are also welcome and encouraged to apply. We highly recommend that at least one of the project leaders be a scholar with demonstrated expertise in voting and/or election research.

Project Budget

Proposals must include project budgets. Budgets can include project leader honoraria, stipends for part-time project fellows, and other project costs up to \$20,000, which should be broken down as much as possible.

Budget Template: Please download a copy of the SSN Building Trust in Elections Grant [Budget Template linked here](#), to fill out and submit alongside your proposal. This template includes a sample budget on the second tab, for your reference.

Budget Guidelines: Please review SSN's existing [chapter budget guidelines](#) for an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable budget expenditures. While some expenditures for this initiative may differ from general chapter expenditures, these guidelines provide useful insights into the types of expenditures that will be considered. We also recommend you review SSN's existing [chapter fellow guidelines](#) for advice on how to budget for and best leverage fellow stipends.

A few notes on project leader honoraria:

- Project budgets should outline how honoraria is to be divided amongst project leaders.
- In the event that a project leader also happens to be an existing SSN chapter leader, they may receive up to \$5,000 total (including their chapter leader honoraria) for their work on this project.
- Honoraria for project leaders will be awarded at the completion of the grant period and are dependent on demonstrable good-faith efforts to achieve the outcomes described in the proposed scope of work.

Project Description

Proposals must include detailed descriptions of the activities to be performed during the grant period. We welcome proposals with a wide variety of locally-responsive efforts to mobilize academics under the broad theme of improving, increasing participation, and building trust in local elections. We encourage you to frame project goals and activities in ways that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

We are particularly interested in proposals that build on existing relationships with non-academic partners, demonstrate existing interest from a non-academic partner, or that outline goals for building relationships with specific non-academic stakeholders.

We again recommend that you review SSN's [chapter budget guidelines](#) for activities that are not acceptable. Notably, SSN does not fund grants for research. That said, for the purposes of this program, projects that can fairly be described as performing applied analysis, where one or a small group of scholars perform basic research at the request of, or in partnership with a local practitioner, are allowed and encouraged.

Outcomes/Deliverables

Proposals must include specific deliverables and/or outcomes that are reasonably expected to occur as a result of the activities proposed. As above, we encourage you to frame outcomes in ways that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

Below are examples of how some of these outcomes might be framed. This is by no means meant to be an exhaustive list.

- XX partnerships between scholars and election administrators to bolster efforts to run secure, effective, and trustworthy elections (e.g., by enlisting and training XX students to serve as local poll workers, or establishing a research-practice collaboration to address and provide solutions to existing local voting and elections challenges).
- XX research-based, jargon-free OpEds strategically placed in local outlets to explain the nuances of, and build trust in local election systems.
- XX number of briefings (in 1:1 format or otherwise) with journalists, policymakers, or practitioners to share research-based insights on improving election access and administration.

Other Program Components

SSN Building Trust in Elections Seminar Series

Through SSN's partnership with the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota (CSPG), project leaders will participate in a seminar series on the public involvement in and the administration of elections (to take place in May), and receive critical feedback from election administration experts, and fellow participants, on their individual projects.

Cohort Meetings

An introductory cohort meeting will be held at the start of the program to lay out expectations (date TBD). Throughout the grant period, participating chapters and groups will get the opportunity to meet regularly with each other to share best practices from their various efforts, workshop challenges, and make useful connections. Cohort participants will also receive support from SSN that may include identifying civic stakeholders, feedback on written materials, help with communication and media, and general dissemination planning.