Civil Society Scholar Awards 2021

OPEN SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Deadline for Applications: July 22, 2020

Program Description

The Civil Society Scholar Awards (CSSA) support doctoral students and university faculty to undertake academic projects that will enrich socially-engaged research and critical scholarship in their home country or region.

In view of the global uncertainty created by the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, this year we invite applications from PhD students and full-time faculty to undertake specific research clearly related to their primary field of study, or to focus on work which would allow the completion or publication of a dissertation or academic articles, books, or other academic products.

CSSA will prioritize research applications addressing issues related to **defense against rising authoritarianism; sustainable development, climate action, and mitigating the effects of climate change; economic justice and worker rights; information democracy; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an applicant's home country or region.** Please note that CSSA supports applications from scholars within the social sciences and humanities only.

Civil Society Scholars are selected on the basis of their outstanding academic record as well as their active engagement with local communities, their potential to champion open society values in their home regions, and their ability strengthen critical scholarship and academic networks within their fields. **Proposals may include international travel, but this is no longer required**.

What is an "Open Society?"

An Open Society is a society based on the recognition that nobody has a monopoly on the truth, that different people have different views and interests, and that there is a need for institutions to protect the rights of all people to allow them to live together in peace. The term "open society" was popularized by the philosopher Karl Popper in his 1945 book Open Society and Its Enemies. Broadly speaking, an open society is characterized by a reliance on the rule of law, the existence of a democratically elected government, a diverse and vigorous civil society, and a respect for minorities and minority opinions.

At the Open Society Foundations we believe in taking on controversial issues and supporting bold, innovative solutions that address root causes and advance systemic change. We also believe in encouraging critical debate and respecting diverse opinions.

Who Can Apply?

The Awards are open to the following academic populations:

- PhD students of the social sciences and humanities studying at universities inside or outside of their home country; or

- Full-time faculty members in the social sciences and humanities (minimum of a Master's degree) teaching at universities in their home country.

- In order to be eligible for the award you must be a citizen of one of the following countries:

  Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, Kosovo, Laos, Libya, North Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, Serbia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Applicants with permanent resident status in or dual citizenship with Australia, Canada, countries of the European Union, New Zealand, Nordic countries, the United Kingdom, and the USA are not eligible to apply.

PhD students, including those currently teaching, must apply as doctoral students. Applicants applying as full-time faculty members must have a minimum of a Master's degree, be teaching in a recognized institution in their home country, and cannot be enrolled in a doctoral program. Students or faculty currently enrolled in Master's degree programs are NOT eligible to apply.

Faculty members applying for funding for activities taking place within their home countries or abroad must have permission for a leave of absence from their position outlined in their support letter from their home institution.

Current or former grantees who have been awarded a CSSA grant once may apply for a new grant in 2020 if their proposals meet the CSSA 2021 eligibility criteria.

Current grantees applying for the award for the second time must also confirm that they are on schedule with their current grant's work timeline. **CSSA may only be awarded twice.**

The program does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity or marriage and/or civil partnership.

For more eligibility criteria, please consult the **Frequently Asked Questions** document, available here.

Eligible Subject Areas

We look to support academic research **conducted within any field of the social sciences and humanities**, but will prioritize research which specifically addresses pressing societal issues in the following broad themes:

- Defense against rising authoritarianism;

- Sustainable development, climate action, and mitigating the effects of climate change;

- Economic justice and worker rights;
- Information democracy;
- Addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an applicant's home country or region.

Ineligible fields include:

business administration, management training, computer science, finance/banking, marketing, engineering, hard sciences (physics, biology, chemistry, etc.), mathematics, medical sciences or teaching English as a foreign language/language instruction.

Supported Grant Activities

The Awards support short-term academic projects and dissertation completion taking place within your home country or abroad. Examples of eligible activities include:

- fieldwork (data collection);
- extended research visits to libraries, archives or universities within your home country or abroad;
- course/curriculum development which can be completed at an international location or online from your home country in collaboration with academic faculty based abroad;
- research leading to a peer-reviewed publication;
- dissertation completion for final year students only who are or will be writing their dissertations in their home country or abroad.

We can only accept one application with one research project per person each year. Please note that we no longer consider requests for tuition fee support.

- **Project Duration**: Between 3 - 10 months. Please note that the minimum project length is 3 months.
- **Project Location**: research activities can take place within an applicant's home country or abroad. Applicants are responsible for arranging all travel, accommodation, and related travel permissions (visas).
- For legal reasons, we are currently unable to fund projects taking place in **Russia** or **Azerbaijan**. Proposals that have Russia or Azerbaijan indicated as one of the research locations will be rejected as ineligible.
- Proposals that have the **United States** indicated as one of the research locations must meet the following criteria:
  - If you are not currently in the United States, an official invitation from the host institution should be included, along with a confirmation that the host institution is on the list of Designated Sponsor Organizations for J1 visas. If the document

cannot be provided at the time of application, please consult the **Frequently Asked Questions** document, available here, for the steps to follow.

- A J1 visa will need to be obtained by all finalists travelling to the United States for their CSSA-funded research projects. B1/B2 visas cannot be used for this purpose.

- **Eligible Dates: March 1, 2021–December 31, 2021**

  If the proposed project does not start and end within this period it is ineligible

- **Maximum Funding Request: $15,000**

  Applicants may NOT request grant assistance for the support of:

  - federal and/or state taxes;

  - computer hardware, software or other computer-related equipment;

  - tuition fees;

  - conference attendance which is not part of the applicant's research project;

  - applications from more than one individual;

  - honorarium payments to the applicant; or

  - honoraria or other payments made to third parties, such as hired researchers. In exceptional cases a small percentage of the award, not exceeding 15%, may be considered for this purpose

Applicants are strongly encouraged to enquire with host institutions to investigate the minimum levels of funding required for visa issuance before applying to the program.

Competition for CSSA awards is merit-based, and funding for this award is limited.

Selection will be made on the basis of proven academic excellence and the relevance of the project to the development of open society in the applicant's home country. Priority will be given to applications addressing issues within one of the five broad focus areas described above.

Selected grantees may be invited to attend a participant conference during the grant period. Travel costs and accommodation for this event will be covered by CSSA.

Supporting Documentation

The following documents are required from all applicants. Please note that requirements for faculty applicants and doctoral student applicants differ.

All Applicants:

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1. Completed Application Form;

2. Up to date CV;

3. Copy of the identification pages of your passport(s);

4. Scan of current official graduate school transcript (doctoral applicants) or the final transcript of highest degree obtained (for faculty applicants and PhD student applicants in their first year of study); and

5. **A letter of invitation** from a faculty member or a senior administrator at the institution where your research will take place, if applicable to your project (*scanned and attached to application*).

Doctoral student applicants should also provide:

1. **An official letter from your academic institution** confirming your enrollment status, department, and expected completion date (scanned and attached to application);

2. **A personal reference letter from an academic or professional in your field in your home country** who can speak to your accomplishments, future aspirations, and ties to your home country (scanned and attached to application);

3. **An academic reference letter** from your academic supervisor supporting the research for which you seek funding. Supervisors should also confirm if the activity will need IRB/ethics committee approval prior to the activity taking place (scanned and attached to application).

Faculty applicants should also provide:

1. **An official letter from your institution of employment** confirming your status as a faculty member and endorsing the proposed time away from your position (scanned and attached to application);

2. **An academic reference letter** from a senior colleague in your field with direct knowledge of your work and your proposed research topic (*scanned and attached to application*).

Note: Omission of one or more of the documents may render your application incomplete and may result in disqualification. For more information, please refer to the **Frequently Asked Questions**, available here.

All reference letters MUST include full name, email address, and contact number of the person giving the reference.

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How to Apply

Deadline for Applications: July 22, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Interested applicants must complete and submit a CSSA application. **Online applications are strongly encouraged.**

Online Application

All applicants are strongly encouraged to apply online. To apply online, please go to this link to register, and then follow instructions.

Paper Application

Printable version of the application form may be accessed via this link or by contacting one of the local administrative offices (see below).

Please submit one application either online OR by email by **July 22, 2020**.

Applications sent via post cannot be accepted at this time.

If two or more applications for the award are submitted by the same individual, only the first one to be received by OSF will be reviewed by the selection committee.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email by the end of October 2020.

New York and London Offices

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