Civil Society Scholar Awards 2021

OPEN SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS
Deadline for Applications: July 22, 2020

When will the results of the competition be announced?

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

My research will be conducted in a local community, rural area or outside of an institution or educational establishment. From whom should I request a letter of invitation?

If you intend to conduct community-based fieldwork or research which is not based at an institution, you do not have to submit a letter of invitation as long as these activities are taking place outside of the United States. However, if you plan to travel to the United States for your research, your application will only be eligible for CSSA funding if it is supported by an official invitation from a host institution confirming that this host institution is on the list of Designated Sponsor Organizations for J1 visa. Regretfully we will not be able to offer funding to any applicants who do not have a confirmed host organization willing to help them with their J1 visa application. Kindly note that B1/B2 visas are not suitable for CSSA- funded research projects.

I am unsure of the exact location(s) of my research at this point. May I change the location(s) after I submit my application?

CSSA grants are awarded by an independent selection committee based on the information you provide. A key part of that assessment is your clear justification for the suitability of the location. Please be as accurate as possible with the location and timing of the grant activities when applying.

At this point, I am unable to provide a budget, detailed work timeline, and clear explanation of when and how I plan to use the requested funds. Will my application still be competitive?

No. All successful applications will have a detailed budget, work timeline, and explanation of how and when the requested funds will be used. In view of the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand that research projects are in flux and that timelines change, but we may not be able to fund an

application that does not contain a very clear overview of the project and a realistic (although of course, projected) timeline for its completion.

Do I have to provide English language translations of official documents such as degree certificates or transcripts?

Please ensure that any documents you submit that are not in English are accompanied by a notarized English language translation. If you cannot provide a notarized translation by the submission date, please provide the original documents and a cover note explaining your situation. Should your application be successful, you will then be obliged to submit translations at a later date as a condition of your award.

I am required to submit an official letter from my institution confirming my enrolment status, department, and expected completion date. My enrolment has not yet taken place.

We can only accept applications from doctoral students if they are supported by an official enrolment letter from the host university.

The application form mentions a current official school transcript. As a PhD student I am not enrolled in any assessed/graded courses and as such do not have a transcript.

Please provide a transcript of your most recently completed degree, such as a Master's degree.

I am unable to submit the application online via the Open Society Foundations application portal. What should I do?

Online applications are strongly encouraged, but if for any reason you are unable to submit your application online you can download a paper application and submit it, along with all supporting documents, via email (cssa@infoscholar.org). Applications sent via post cannot be accepted at this time. Applications submitted via email after July 22, 2020 will not be accepted. Please see the Guidelines for further instructions.

I would like to submit my application online, but one of my supporting documents is not yet available. What should I do?

You are expected to submit a full set of documents with your online application before the deadline. In exceptional cases we may allow a late submission of a document if it can be received before our selection process begins. In order to request permission for a late submission of a document please email cssa@infoscholar.org no later than July 9, 2020 explaining the reasons for the delay in submitting a required document and giving an estimated date when it will become available. If your request gets approved, you will need to attach the relevant email from the Open Society Foundations to your application instead of the missing document before you submit it.

One of my referees would prefer to send the recommendation letter to CSSA program staff directly. Is there a way to do that?

Please ask your referee to send the recommendation letter to cssa@infoscholar.org before July 22, 2020. Your surname must be mentioned in the subject line of the email, and the recommendation letter must include full name, email address and contact number of the person giving the reference.

Can my proposed budget include an honorarium for myself or expenses for hiring a third-party/sub-contractor?

CSSA will not cover honorarium payments to the applicant. Honorarium payments to third parties can be allowed in some cases, provided that the need for such payments is clearly justified in the proposal and the total amount to be paid to third parties does not exceed 15% of the award.

Can my proposed budget include expenses for conference participation?

Requests for conference attendance are permissible if the conference is clearly part of a coherent series of research activities. Conference participation alone will not be considered.

Please ensure you describe how the conference relates to your research project.

How flexible can I be with the time period of my grant activity? Is it possible to alter it if I am awarded the grant?

The dates of the activity should stay as close to the original dates and time period as possible. Successful grantees will however have the opportunity to reconfirm their project dates in October 2020 when award offers will be sent. All proposed research projects must take place between March 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, and be between 3-10 months long. If your project does not fall within these dates, it will not be eligible. (Please note: Projects with work taking place in the United States require applicants to have a confirmed sponsoring institution for a J-1 visa. Open Society cannot assist with obtaining visas for CSSA finalists, and B1/B2 visas will not be acceptable.)

I am a current CSSA grant holder or have had a CSSA or other Open Society grant in the past. May I still apply, and, if so, how many times?

Current or former grantees who have been awarded a CSSA grant once may apply for a new grant 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. The CSSA grant can only be awarded twice, and repeat funding is not guaranteed.

Applicants who currently have, or have had, other non-CSSA scholarships from Open Society are eligible to apply if they meet the CSSA eligibility requirements, but only if a) their current grant will be fully completed prior to the beginning of their proposed project, or b) their previous grant was completed successfully and they are in good standing with Open Society.

Can I be guaranteed to receive the full amount I request if I am successful?

The selection committee will make a decision on the amount awarded to successful candidates based on a variety of factors, including the availability of funds and the justification of the budget items requested. In this respect, the full amount of the grant may not always be awarded.

If I am successful in my application, when will I receive my award funds?

For projects taking place outside the United States, we will aim to transfer the funds to your account before the start date of your project. In these cases we are usually able to give you a clearer indication of when to expect the payment once your grant letter is ready for signature.

For projects that have activity in the United States, funds will be transferred after you have obtained your US visa and physically arrived in the US.

If you need a confirmation of funding in order to apply for a visa a few months before the beginning of your project, CSSA staff can provide you with an official letter noting the amount of the award as well as the timing of the payment.

I am a PhD student at my home university, but I also teach courses there. Should I apply as a doctoral student or as a full-time faculty member?

PhD students, including those teaching at their home or other universities, must apply as doctoral students. Applicants applying as full-time faculty members must have a minimum of a Master's degree, be teaching at their home institutions, and cannot be enrolled in a doctoral program.

Can I submit an application to travel for fieldwork if my research is yet to receive IRB/ethics committee approval?

You can submit an application based on your plans for fieldwork before you have the necessary approvals. Please have your supervisor note when you expect to receive approvals in the letter of reference they will be submitting for you. We advise you to choose grant dates which are realistic to accommodate for the expected date of approval.

Do CSSA staff provide any support for obtaining a visa for travel to the country of activity?

If necessary, we can provide a support letter to help you obtain a visa prior to your grant letter being issued. We cannot offer any further assistance for obtaining a visa. Grantees are expected to make the necessary arrangements themselves.