

Qualitative Research Interest Group

The Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity
and the Maryland Population Research Center

Fall 2005 Colloquia Series Qualitative Research and Funding: Oil and Water?

Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Funding for Qualitative Research

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This document is a summary of the suggestions/tips provided during the conversation with Dr. Carter on 12/9/05.

Before You Set Pen to Paper

- Know the literature and the theoretical frameworks you are responding to in your own work. This essentially requires knowledge of the composition of the review board that will make decisions as to what projects will receive funding. Look at their bios and their own research. For further example, if a board is composed primarily of psychologists, it will be useful for you to know some of the pertinent theories from that field that could inform your research. You're not expected to be an expert, but you should be aware.
- Make initial contact. Send a letter of intent or cold call. Ultimately, the goal is to get your name out there and to build a rapport with those that will review your proposals.
- Your credibility is paramount. The foundations/organizations you solicit for funding may request letters of recommendation from others in your field or at your host institution.

The Proposal Writing Process

- Get a copy of successful proposals from foundations, organizations, and other pertinent funding sources to provide you with a template for your own proposals and submissions.
- The beauty of qualitative research is unpacking the black box and getting at the "why?" To that end...
 - Tell why the study matters!
 - "So what?!" Link your research to a major social problem or issues. Use others' work, but show how your research is

different and novel. The aforesaid must be addressed immediately in your proposal and you should keep linking your research goals throughout the proposal.

- What's your hook? Do not have more than one or two in your proposal.
- The design of your project must address the questions you ask.
- Know some of the expectations of what you may find. As difficult as it may be as a qualitative researcher, try to think like a positivist. Write as though you know what you might find.
- Have a clear idea of what you want to do (i.e. the number of interviews you would like to conduct) and exactly how you will spend your time.
- Be pragmatic and practical. For instance, be open to a mixed method approach:
 - Surveys and other quantitative methods pertinent to the overall project (avoid superficial methodological add-ons)
 - In-depth interviewing along with ethnography
 - Group interviews and individuals to help foster triangulation and to illuminate the ways in which responses might shift
- Be persistent! Most people do not submit a successful grant on their first attempt. Keep trying and solicit advice from those that have received funding **early**.

Funding Institutions for Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Research

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Additionally, direct links to funding sources/information have been provided for convenience.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/>

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/>

National Science Foundation (NSF)

<http://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education.jsp?fund_type=2 (Specialized Info for Grad Students)

The Spencer Foundation

<http://www.spencer.org/programs/index.htm>

Woodrow Wilson Foundation

http://www.woodrow.org/students_graduate.html (Graduate Students)

http://www.woodrow.org/students_postdocs.html (Post Docs)

Social Science Research Council (SSRC)

<http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/>

Other Useful Resources

Grants for Individuals: Graduate Scholarships, Fellowships, and Loans

<http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3gradinf.htm>

Office of Research Administration and Advancement, University of Maryland

<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/ORAA/>

Office of Research Support, Duke University

<http://www.ors.duke.edu/find/student/pdoc/pdoctips.html> (Postdoctoral Funding Tips)

<http://www.ors.duke.edu/ask/proposal/writing.html> (Proposal Writing Guides and Resources: Text-based and Online)