



The Texas Federal Statistical Research Data Center (TXRDC) invites applications for “Seed Grants” to support researcher efforts to develop proposals for RDC-based projects using restricted access data. These awards support activities and resources that will enhance the quality, scope, and timeliness of RDC project proposals. Examples of supported items include: travel to consult with researchers who have prior experience working with relevant restricted data, travel to meet with funding agency program officers, travel to support on-site team-building, software training, attending workshops on relevant restricted datasets, attending workshops on methods training for project-specific analysis using software available in RDCs, supporting team meetings for multi-institution projects, stipends for research assistants and student workers, project-relevant software and data, and other activities and resources that can enhance the quality and timeliness of proposals.

Please note: *These awards do not directly support research projects.* Approval for using funds for activities not noted above should be confirmed by memo or email from the TXRDC director.

Overview of TXRDC Seed Grant Program

Frequency: *Seed grant proposals can be submitted for review throughout the year.* But there are three “official” cycles that are coordinated with our regular proposal development workshops. Calls for seed grant proposals circulate in September (fall cycle), December/January (spring/winter cycle), and April/May (summer cycle). Proposals for the spring submissions cycle are due **Friday March 2nd 2018**. Contact TXRDC Director Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu) for additional information or to submit a proposal “out of cycle”.

Size and Distribution of Awards: There are two categories of awards: “Regular” and “Program”. “Regular” awards are for projects involving a small team of researchers and standard project scope. Awards typically will be \$3,000-\$5,000 (maximum of \$8,000). “Program” awards are for project ideas involving more ambitious project scope and must have excellent prospects for securing external funding to support the proposed research. Investigator potential for success in securing external funding is a key component of the review. Awards typically will be \$5,000 to \$10,000 (maximum of \$15,000).

Eligibility: We invite applications from faculty-level researchers affiliated with TXRDC Consortium Institutions – Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M University System, Baylor University, the University of Houston, Rice University, the University of Texas-Austin, and the University of Texas-San Antonio. Doctoral students also are eligible to apply, but award terms are subject to significant restrictions; in particular, the awards will not cover the student’s salary/stipend or tuition.

Prior seed grant funding is considered in the review process. All else equal, *priority will be given to researchers who have not previously received seed grant support.*

Proposals from researchers not affiliated with TXRDC Consortium institutions will be accepted and considered. Note, however, that proposals originating from non-consortium institutions must outline a viable plan for covering lab fees for the proposed RDC-based project.

Indirect Costs and Efficient Transmission of Funds: Seed grants are made possible in part by funds consortium member institutions provide to support TXRDC activities. Accordingly, awards to researchers at TXRDC consortium institutions should be viewed by their home universities as “internal awards” and funds should be made available to awardees in the most direct and efficient

manner possible to facilitate bringing research proposals forward quickly and with minimal bureaucratic burden on researchers.

TXRDC seed grant funds do not cover “indirect costs” or any expenses not directly related to proposal development. If an institution charges overhead or diverts funds to activities other direct support of proposal development, TXRDC may revoke the award and request return of funds.

Application Deadline: Review of applications for this cycle will begin **Monday March 5th 2018** and continue until available funds are committed. Note that the seed grant program will be reviewed at the TXRDC proposal development workshop scheduled for Friday February 2nd from 11:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. [[PROPOSAL WORKSHOP INFORMATION AND RSVP LINK](#)].

Submission Process: Please submit the proposal document and associated attachments (per guidelines outlined below) by email to TXRDC Director, Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu).

Budget Guidelines: Proposals can request funding support that will enhance the quality, scope, and timeliness of RDC project proposals submitted to Census, NCHS, or other relevant federal statistical agencies. Examples of relevant activities and resources include: travel for consultation and team-building, data acquisition, software acquisition and training, attending workshops on RDC datasets, research methods workshops, stipends for research assistants, and obtaining data/materials needed for proposed projects.

Seed grant funds cannot be used for investigator salaries.

Review Criteria: Review of “Regular” proposal is based on the potential impact of funding support for (a) enhancing the quality, scope, and timely development of proposals for RDC projects. Consideration also is given to the potential for the effort to lead to parallel proposals to external funding agencies. Review of “Program” proposals give particular weight to PI track record in overseeing successful large-scale projects and securing external funding to support research.

Expectations for Progress: Development grant proposals should outline plans for preparing and submitting full proposals for RDC-based projects. The following time-line is expected. (1) Development activities should begin within one month of receiving an award and should include at least one consultation meeting with the TXRDC Director and RDC Administrator. (2) A preliminary draft outlining the key components of a full RDC proposal should be provided for TXRDC review and feedback at three months. (3) A full RDC proposal should be submitted through TXRDC to Census or NCHS within 4-6 months.

Proposal Guidelines, Review Process, and Timeline

Applications should follow the format described below and include materials as noted below. To ensure prompt review, proposals should be submitted using the form noted below. (Proposals submitted by other means will be reviewed at a later date.)

Page 1. Cover Page

Include a project title, list of investigators, and 200-word non-technical abstract suitable for communicating project goals and merit to an interdisciplinary audience.

Pages 2-3. Project Summary

A 2-page project summary geared to an interdisciplinary review panel. Proposals will likely be reviewed by researchers outside of your own field so please avoid jargon not used outside of your field.

Text specifications are: single spaced, one-inch margins, 11-point font or larger. Please, no appendices, web links, or other supporting materials are allowed.

The project summary should include the following section headings.

- **Project Overview**: Give a very brief overview of the research question using language suitable for an interdisciplinary review team.
- **Data Set(s) and Justification**: Note which restricted data set(s) the project will use and briefly note why restricted versions of the data sets are needed.
- **Benefits**: For projects using census data, include a sentence acknowledging that projects using restricted census data must provide a “benefit” to the Census Bureau. This is *not required* for NCHS projects. For information about census benefits, attend our proposal development workshops and/or consult with TXRDC Administrator Bethany DeSalvo.
- **Timeline**: Provide a timeline for the development project leading to the month in which a proposal is submitted to Census or NCHS.
- **Budget**: Provide a short budget narrative outlining how seed grant funds will be used. Researchers at non-consortium institutions must note how project lab fees (typically \$15,000-\$20,000 per year for 2-3 years) will be covered.

Attachment(s) A. Investigator CV(s)

Designate one person as PI. Identify other personnel as Co-PIs, consultants, postdocs, research assistants, or other title as appropriate.

Provide a CV for the PI and Co-PIs involved in the project.

Attachment B. Supervisor Support Letter (Doctoral Students Only)

Include a letter of support from the dissertation supervisor with the following:

- A brief statement to indicate the supervisor’s commitment to mentor the student over the course of the project and to obtain Special Sworn Status (to be able to assist the student at critical junctures of the project)
- The expected PhD completion for the student and statement affirming that the supervisor and student have discussed the potential impact of using confidential data on the timeline for completing the PhD
- A brief statement affirming that the supervisor and student have discussed the proposal review process and the disclosure avoidance process and their potential implications for presenting research results outside of the secure lab (i.e., for meetings presentations and job talks)

Proposal Review and Funding Decisions: Proposal reviews and award decisions are made by the TXRDC Director and members of the TXRDC Steering Committee. All decisions are final.

Due Date & Review Timeline: Review of applications begins **Monday March 5th, 2018**. Please submit the proposal document and attachments (per guidelines outlined below) by email to TXRDC Director Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu). Award notification should occur within one month of application deadline. Award funds will be made available as soon as feasible and appropriate based on the proposal time line.