RESEARCH PILLAR: GRANTS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Colors of COVID Initiative: Research Methods in the Age of COVID-19

Special Focus Grants

Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Equity (CRE[2]) Requests for Proposals for Colors of COVID Initiative Special Focus Grants

While the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity (CRE[2]) had already designed one of its core areas of inquiry around the intersections of race, ethnicity, public health, and medicine, we are launching a deeper focus into the set of issues raised by the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).[1] The COVID-19 pandemic has made more urgent the need for robust cross-disciplinary and collaborative research on these links, also foregrounding issues of class, workforce, and community networks.

CRE[2] invites proposals for transdisciplinary projects that will generate new research frameworks and methodologies that capture the challenges and insights revealed by the racially and ethnically disparate impacts of COVID-19. These Special Focus Grants will accompany our regular grants program focused on transdisciplinary projects that enrich scholarly engagement related to the Center's mission that will launch later in the 2020-2021 Academic Year. The Special Focus Grants will require the production of specific deliverables, outlined below. We anticipate these will span the medical and public health fields as well as the social sciences; humanistic social sciences; humanities; engineering sciences; and arts, architecture, and design. This solicitation provides information about this two-year Special Focus Grant program.

Eligibility
Eligibility for application requires that all principal investigators be CRE[2] Faculty Affiliates.[2] The principal investigator(s) must have applied for Affiliate status prior to submitting a Colors of COVID proposal. Eligibility is limited to one CRE[2] grant program per year as PI, with the exception of the Small Grants.

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[1] Our planned themes are: 1) *Innovations in Understanding & Improving Health Equity;* 2) *Race and the Future of Democracy;* 3) *Global Migratory Representations, Histories, and Crises;* 4) *Visualizing Race and Ethnicity: Algorithms, Discourses, and Design;* and 5) *Legal, Spatial, and Political Justice.*

[2] Faculty Affiliates include all full-time faculty on any Washington University campus who are interested in the study of race/ethnicity. Faculty Affiliates should be interested in interacting with a community of scholars across disciplines engaging in research, learning, and community practices that seek to expand the understanding of race/ethnicity locally, nationally and globally. Any faculty member can apply for affiliate status via a short application process on the CRE[2] website. Additional information regarding Faculty Affiliates is available upon request.

Colors of COVID Initiative Special Focus Grants
The principal aim of this program is to assist in the generation of both new scholarly frameworks and on-the-ground policies and practices related to the broad set of issues related to race, ethnicity, and equity that have been raised by COVID-19. Awards will be made up **to $30,000.**

Projects should fall under one of two thematic areas:

1. *Postmortems: Interrogating Racial/Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death*
   COVID-19 has laid bare the complexities of why racial/ethnic minorities in the U.S. and across the world are experiencing disproportionate death as the pandemic continues. Among public health, medical and social scientists, debates loom regarding the actual, verifiable causes of increased infection and mortality risk. Many point to underrepresented communities' higher levels of pollution and other environmental hazards at home and at work, crowded and multigenerational housing, representation in essential worker jobs, reliance on under-resourced public transportation, housing instability and food scarcity. Each of these structural inequities rests on legacies of racial segregation, racial bias in the healthcare systems, and lack of access to quality health care systems, and/or increased surveillance and institutionalization by the criminal justice system and immigrant/refugee enforcement practices. Architects, urban designers, and other design experts similarly debate the most effective ways to understand and disrupt these entrenched inequities. Similarly, humanists and the arts are grappling with notions of the human condition, including the disposability and precarity of black, brown, and Indigenous bodies, the racial politics and postmortem history of medical experimentation, the trope of migrants as vectors of death, the performance of morbidity and the postmortem in popular culture, and the creative exploration of suffering and resilience, among others. **We seek to fund postmortem studies of COVID-19 racial/ethnic disparities in morbidity and death that will generate crucial new knowledge and research that can transform understandings and generate new scholarly frameworks and on-the-ground policies and practices.**

2. *The Geographies of COVID-19: Mapping the Colors of Pandemics*
   Perhaps more so than any other single factor, space has dominated emerging health protocols, policy debates, and discourse of COVID-19. Long entrenched understandings of space—social space, personal space, infectious/contagion space, domestic and public space, and, of course, virtual space—are proving inadequate, unstable, deeply contested, and in need of radical re-imagining. We aim to destabilize these entrenched understandings. Prefatory to what will become a new field of knowledge and industry, CRE[2] seeks to support rigorous analyses of the race/ethnicity and the geographies highlighted by COVID-19, mapping inequalities in the distributions of hazards, threats, resources, and opportunities across place and time. These include racial/ethnic segregation; emerging and evolving asylum and containment facilities; and boundary-crossing and immobility across geographies marked as distinct; and the policies that manage all of the above. These projects will generate innovative analytic methods,

frameworks, and vocabularies that capture how safety, risk, precarity, disposability, and trust in institutions each are shaped by myriad geographic precursors. Crucial to this research is understanding how geography shapes not only outcomes but worldview, culture, behavior, resilience, and understanding of the human condition. **The new research we will support will bring existing historical insights about disease, marginalization, diaspora, and vulnerability, as well as generate new frameworks for analysis and equitable design.**

Projects that fall outside of these themes but focus on COVID-19 and race/ethnicity will also be considered.

Deliverables:
We envision several innovative outcomes that include, but are not limited to:

- Producing collaborative scholarly products for distribution in premier journals and monographs;
- Digital mapping of COVID-19's local, domestic, and global impacts on communities of color as well as comparative perspectives on pandemics across history;
- Machine learning/big data applications to quantify risk and resilience;
- Innovations in healthcare delivery and public health interventions;
- Development of best practices and normative disruptions;
- Creating digital repositories that include, for example, accounts of lives transformed, and discussions with the project members;
- Creating special exhibitions and/or archives; and
- Innovations in media podcasts outlining the significance of understanding the historical, contemporary, and racialized geographies of disease and death.

All proposals must provide a delineation of deliverables that will be produced by the end of the focus grant period. At least one deliverable should include a rapid dissemination outcome that can be produced within the first year of the grant (e.g., podcast). In addition, the project team must present their work and deliverables at a symposium in Spring 2022. Project members may be asked to present in a CRE[2] sponsored COVID-19 panel during the first year of the funding period.

To achieve their goals, project groups will receive financial support for 2 years from the date of the grant award.

Project Group Requirements:
- Include a Faculty Lead (PI) or Co-Leads (PI);
- Include up to 8 faculty/postdoctoral/student collaborators;
- Have at least two areas of fundamental knowledge represented among working group members (i.e., humanities, social sciences, public health and medical sciences, natural sciences, engineering/computational sciences, law, architecture, design, and arts); and

- Specify short and long-term deliverables (see above).

Priority will be given to research projects that:
- Facilitate multidisciplinary research linkages and establish collaborative research partnerships across campuses and academic/research units, or with local, national, and international organizations and agencies;
- Include early career faculty or "new" investigators (those who have not previously obtained external funding) as principal or co-principal investigators;
- Support undergraduate or graduate assistance in the completion of research activities; and
- Focus on areas of critical interest to CRE^2, the campus, and St. Louis community.

Proposal Format
Proposal narratives should be no more than three (3) single-spaced pages in length, exclusive of title page, abstract, timeline, references, budget pages, current CVs for all investigators, description of any human subjects (if applicable), and appendices. Proposals are to be written in Arial 11-point font with 0.5-inch margins all around. Proposals must include an Abstract and sections Overview/Aims (.5 pages), Significance and Innovation (.5 pages), and Project Description (2 pages). The Project Description section should, 1) describe how the work supported by the Special Focus Grant relates to the aims of the Colors of COVID Initiative, and delineate project deliverables; and, 2) include subsections on Foundational Perspectives, Research Questions/Inspiration, Methods, Data/Materials, Timeline, and a Budget Rationale. All grant research proposals that are approved for funding and involve the use of human subjects must obtain appropriate human subjects approval through the University's Institutional Review Board before funds are disbursed.

Grant Submission, Notification, and Award Period
Proposal submissions are due by November 2nd, 2020 at 5:00 pm CDT via the CRE^2 web-portal or email at cre2@wustl.edu. Awards will be announced November 16, 2020. Project award periods are for 24 months, with an extension of up to 6 months available upon grantee request and approval from CRE^2 leadership.

Budget Guidelines
Project budgets may request up to $30,000 in direct costs to support any activity that directly relates to the successful conduct of the project.[3] There are no indirect costs paid on CRE^2 Grants. Budget items may include support for data entry, interviews, data acquisition, access to restricted-use data, travel costs related to data collection or meetings with collaborators, space rental, salary compensation or contribution to research accounts[4], artist stipends, creative materials, curatorial support, and graduate and undergraduate research assistance. The Center will not pay for computer equipment when that computing can reasonably be accomplished with the existing equipment on campus. Unspent funding at the end of the two-year project period will revert to the CRE^2 Grant pool unless a request for a time extension is submitted and the CRE^2

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[3] Additional funds may be made available on case by case basis in consultation with CRE2 leadership.
[4] As a rule of thumb, salary and compensation should be kept to less than 20% of the award amount.

Director approves the request. Budget Rationales should include outside resources (if any) that will be used to achieve the aims of the project.

Review and Selection

The CRE^2 Leadership Team will screen all submitted proposals to determine whether the proposals meet the program's goals. Proposals will be reviewed by a Grant Selection Committee composed of the CRE^2 Leadership Team and at least two Faculty Affiliates. In addition to the preferences mentioned above, the following criteria will be used in evaluating the proposals:

1. The overall quality and significance of the proposed research;
2. The potential of the proposed research to generate new research frameworks and methodologies that capture the challenges and insights revealed by the racially and ethnically disparate impacts of COVID-19; and
3. The feasibility of the work plan, with proposed deliverables, during the grant period.

We strongly encourage project teams to consult with CRE^2 leadership prior to the submission of their grant and are welcome to submit a pre-proposal to cre2@wustl.edu.

Monitoring and Grantee Obligations

The Center's Assistant Director and an assigned Associate Director on the project team will monitor progress on special focus grant projects and will provide an expense report to each project principal investigator upon request.

Grantees will be invited to collaborate in the development of CRE^2's Colors of COVID Lab, and will be expected to contribute basic content (e.g. project descriptions; rapid dissemination outcomes) and periodic updates we can highlight. The Colors of COVID Lab is being created to support and promote projects funded through this Special Focus Grant, facilitating exchange between independent research teams and the broader visibility, use, and impact of this vital research.

Grantees will submit a final progress report including any grant proposals, publications, exhibitions, data sets, archives, or other scholarly products/deliverables submitted or in preparation within one month after the end date of their grant period and will notify CRE^2 of any of the above scholarly products subsequently submitted or awarded/accepted. Grantees' papers and publications must acknowledge the CRE^2 Colors of COVID-19 Grant program using the statement, "This work has been funded by the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity at Washington University in St. Louis Colors of COVID Grant) but the views remain those of the authors."