**Level 1 Proposal Requirements**

The SSRI provides financial support to increase the quantity and quality of interdisciplinary research by Penn State faculty members. Our proposal review process is evaluative (we provide consultation for developing proposals that meet NIH standards) and developmental (we are invested in supporting faculty members to initiate research programs that can attract external funding). Our faculty’s success at winning external funding provides the resource foundation for a sustainable pilot grant program. Toward this end we offer consultation as you develop your proposal, prior to its submission. We strongly encourage you to access this opportunity if you are new to SSRI's seed funding programs or have not been funded by SSRI in recent years. You can do so by sending an email to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu).

The Level 1 funding mechanism is primarily designed to assist PSU social science faculty at Penn State to form interdisciplinary research teams to conduct research activities such as scientific meetings to develop research questions, conduct preliminary research to establish scientific premise (e.g., literature searches), and identify leaders, conduct pilot studies to pursue external funding, develop research partnerships with community organizations, conduct community engagement research activities, develop policy briefs, etc. External collaborators may be included; however, our focus is on developing ongoing PSU teams. For this reason, team leaders should be tenure track or research faculty with continuing appointments. Awarded PI's will be asked to register as an Affiliated Faculty member of SSRI if they are not already designated as one.

SSRI prioritizes topics that align with the Institute’s [Strategic Foci](https://ssri.psu.edu/about#ssri-strategic-foci) including causes and consequences of inequality, human development and behavior, social and environmental determinants of health, innovative and data intensive research methods, and individual and community impact. We especially encourage submissions with a focus on health and the environment.

We also encourage research projects that facilitate engagement with our Interdisciplinary Research Institutes and research resources that can be utilized for your project.  These services include, for example, access to confidential census data ([Federal Statistical Research Data Center](https://psurdc.psu.edu/)), statistical methodology and analytics ([Quantitative Developmental Systems Methodology](https://quantdev.ssri.psu.edu/)), instrumentation e.g., fMRI and EEG ([Social, Life, and Engineering Sciences Imaging Center (SLEIC)](https://www.imaging.psu.edu/)), data collection and survey management ([Survey Research Center](https://survey.psu.edu/)), data acquisition, compliance, and selective storage solutions ([Data Resources Hub](https://socialdatahub.ssri.psu.edu/)), and increasing the impact, use, dissemination of research, and facilitated use of sensitive human health data ([Evidence to Impact Collaborative](https://evidence2impact.psu.edu/)) If you plan to use any of these units, please include their use in your activity plan, timeline and budget.  We also strongly encourage that you do a pre-consultation with the SSRI Unit prior to your submission**.**

Level 1 proposals will be funded up to $5,000 contingent on funding availability and can be submitted at any time during the year.

* Level 1 proposals should be short (2 pages) and may be submitted at any time during the year.
* The PI should self-identify the targeted outcome to include the metric that will be used as well as the timeline including milestones.
* The SSRI Director, Associate Director, and relevant college Associate Deans will review these proposals and typically provide feedback within 4-6 weeks from the date of submission (please note that proposals receiving a revise and resubmit may take longer for a final decision on funding).
* Funds are allocated by fiscal year for the approved period of performance.

Level 1 funds are intended to provide support for:

* Development of new, innovative research projects to include scientific meetings, pilot studies, community engagement, policy development etc.
* Creation of interdisciplinary networking groups
* Support for meetings (including travel)
* Graduate assistant time
* Paying outside consultants
* Small pilot studies

Level 1 funds are NOT intended to support:

* Regular appointment, summer, or supplemental salary
* Expenditures generally made by departments and colleges (e.g., travel to professional conferences, seed money for an individual project)
* Delivery of outreach programs or services
* Requests for funds for meals and snacks should be kept to a minimum
* Student projects (masters, dissertation research)
* Publication costs

Criteria for Review

* Priority is placed on new ideas that involve cross-department and/or cross-college (interdisciplinary) collaboration and/or cross institute collaboration
* A well-articulated plan of activities to include appropriate literature review, clear objectives and detailed methodology
* Teams comprised of investigators who range in rank and experience
* Proposals must provide convincing evidence for access to the population of interest, if relevant
* Proposals must make a clear contribution to social science

Structure and Submission of Level 1 Proposal

Proposals must be submitted as one document via email to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu). To complete your proposal submission, you must download, complete, and email the forms below:

[Proposal Submission Form](https://ssri.psu.edu/sites/ssri/files/2021-06/Revised%20Level%201%20Proposal%20Form%20Jun2021.doc) (doc)

On those occasions where proposed research will involve either primary data collection or the use of secondary data, investigators are expected to prepare and submit the appropriate requests for IRB approval of research involving human or animal participants (whichever is appropriate to the project). An example of a successful SSRI Level 1 proposal can be found on our website. [Sample Level 1 Proposal](https://ssri.psu.edu/sites/ssri/files/funding-files/Level%201%20Example%20Proposal.pdf)

Project Reports

Investigators are expected to provide an annual project status update and a brief (one page) final report upon completing the project. These efforts allow us to track and report outcomes as well as monitor the successfulness of our seed grant program.

If you need to make changes to the project team, description, design, or budget during the course of your projects, please send a request to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu) with the details of these changes.