



Russell Sage Foundation

Grant Writing for RSF: Best Practices for Crafting a Successful Application

russellsage.org

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RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

Agenda

I. About RSF

II. Overall Funding Priorities

- a. RSF Programs & Special Initiatives
- b. Funding Mechanisms

III. RSF Core Research Grants

- a. Application Deadlines
- b. Review Process
- c. Application Materials

IV. Early Career & Fellowship

- a. Program Overview/Eligibility
- b. Review Process
- c. Application Materials

V. Questions



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

Who We Are

“For the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States”

From the Letter of the Gift by Margaret Olivia Sage establishing the Russell Sage Foundation, April 19, 1907

Then (1907-1944)

A source of institutional support, and information for private social agencies on topics like poverty reduction, social work, city planning, labor reform, housing, public health, education, consumer credit, and industrial relations.

Now (1945-Present)

RSF funds basic social science research; strengthening the methods, data, and theoretical core of the social sciences as a means of better documenting and understanding the nation's most pressing social, political and economic problems.



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RSF Funding Priorities

Core Program Areas

**Behavioral Science
and Decision Making
in Context**

**Social, Political, and
Economic Inequality**

Future of Work

**Race, Ethnicity, and
Immigration**

RSF does not fund:

- Studies focused on health outcomes
- Studies on educational processes, teacher outcomes, or curricular development, etc.
 - RSF considers funding some educational studies on student outcomes
- Studies on subjects outside of the United States of America
- Operational support, program evals, animal studies, etc.



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION RSF Funding Priorities

Special Initiatives

Immigration and Immigrant Integration
(co-funded with Carnegie Corp. of NY)

**Promoting Educational Attainment and
Economic Mobility among Racially,
Ethnically, and Economically Diverse
Groups after the 2023 Supreme Court
Decision to Ban Race-Conscious College
Admission Policies**
*(co-funded with Hewlett Foundation, Spencer
Foundation, and William T. Grant Foundation)*



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Funding Mechanisms

Core Research Grants

Trustee Grants

- \$75k - \$200k
- 15% indirect costs
- Approved by RSF Board of Trustees

- PhD required, no restrictions on nationality or institution
- Up to 2 Year Grant
- 2-stage application: LOI, Proposal

Next Deadlines:

Oct 29 2025; 2 PM ET – REI, BSDMC, SCD23
Mar 11, 2026; 2 PM ET – SPEI & FOW

Presidential Grants

- Up to \$75k*
- No indirect costs
- Approved by president of RSF

Sheldon Danziger Pipeline Grants Competition

- 1 Year Grant
- \$50k for individuals, \$65k for teams
- Eligibility: non-tenured profs
- Co-funding from the Gates Foundation, The Policy Academies, JPAL

Next Deadline:

Oct 22, 2025; 2 PM ET

Early Career Grants

Causal Research on the Criminal Justice System

- 1 Year Grant
- \$100k max
- Eligibility: tenure-track asst professors at US institutions
- Co-funding from Arnold Ventures

Next Deadline:

Apr 1, 2026; 2 PM ET

Dissertation Research Grants

- 1 Year Grant
- \$15k max
- Eligibility: ABD PhD students at US institutions
- Co-funding from the W.E.Upjohn Institute and The Policy Academies

Next Deadline:

Feb 3, 2026; 2 PM ET

*Presidential Grants are capped at \$50,000, but PIs may request up to \$75,000 when the proposed research project is a qualitative study, requests access to restricted-use data, or includes salary support for multiple assistant professor PIs.



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Fellowships and Journal

Visiting Scholars

- Funded residential fellowship (NYC) for applicants 3+ years past PhD during a sabbatical
- Interdisciplinary cohort to strengthen your work before publication
- Deadline in June for residence the academic year that starts 15 months later

Visiting Researchers

- Shorter term stays (up to 1 semester)
- Unfunded but get office, staff support, lunch, etc.
- Deadline in May for residence the following academic year

RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences

- Open access, peer reviewed, and interdisciplinary: www.rsfjournal.org
- Topic based issues – The Socioeconomic Impacts of Covid-19, Growing up in Rural America, Low-Income Families in the 21st Century, Black Reparations, etc.



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Core Research Grants

LOI Deadline: Oct 29, 2025; 2:00 PM ET

The Research Grant program provides one- or two-year grants of up to \$200,000 for research related to RSF's core program areas and special initiatives.

LOIs are accepted under each program area on a rotating basis across our Spring, Summer, and Fall cycles.

Approval Summer 2026

- Behavioral Science and Decision Making in Context
- Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration
- Immigration and Immigrant Integration
- 2023 Supreme Court Decision to Ban Race-Conscious Admissions

LOI Deadline: Oct 29, 2025

Approval Fall 2026

LOI Deadline:
Mar 11, 2026

Approval Spring 2027

LOI Deadline:
July 2026



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION Application Materials

**Required LOI Materials at
Oct 29; 2:00 PM ET**

**Research Grant
Application
form via Fluxx***

**LOI:
4 pages,
singled-spaced**

**Abbreviated
CV:
5 pages max**

The LOI should outline your research's motivation, theory, and contribution. A majority of the space should be dedicated to the research design. References do not count towards the page limit. A 1-page appendix for charts or tables is allowable. Formal budgets **are not** needed at the time of application.

*Register to the RSF Fluxx grants management platform in advance of the deadline: rsf.fluxx.io



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Research Grant Application and Review

Letter of Inquiry

**LOI Deadline:
Oct 29; 2 PM ET**

Internal Staff Review

**External Peer
Review**

Invitation to Submit Proposal (Mid-Jan 2026)

**Submit Full
Proposal:
Feb 18; 12 PM ET**

**External Peer
Review**

**Response to
Reviewer
Comments**

**Review by RSF
Advisory
Committee**

Board or Presidential Approval

Funding decisions for LOIs submitted at the October LOI deadline will be made at the June 2026 Board of Trustees meeting, with an earliest grant start date of September 2026



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION Proposal Materials

**If invited to submit a proposal in mid-Jan
2026, applicants then submit:**

20-page Proposal

**Budget (using
RSF Budget
Template)**

**Budget Narrative
& Project
Timeline**

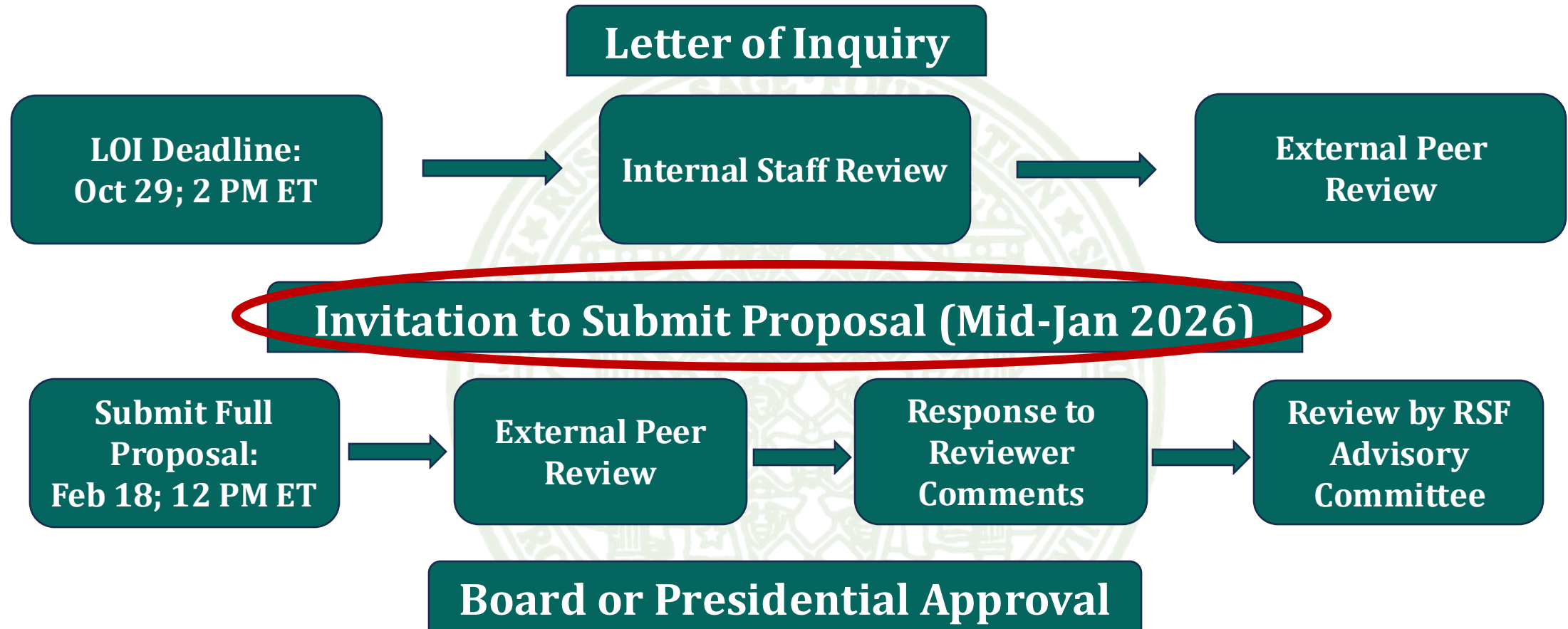
**LOI Reviewer
Response Memo**

**CoPI CV(s), if
applicable**



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

Research Grant Application and Review



Funding decisions for LOIs submitted at the October LOI deadline will be made at the June 2026 Board of Trustees meeting, with an earliest grant start date of September 2026.



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Sheldon Danziger Pipeline Grants Competition

Proposal Deadline: Oct 22, 2025; 2:00 PM ET

The Sheldon Danziger Pipeline Grants Competition provides one-year grants of \$50,000 for early career individual researchers and \$65,000 for research teams related to RSF's core program areas and special initiatives.

Co-funded with The Gates Foundation, The Policy Academies, and JPAL.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be early career scholars (asst prof, lecturers, asst adjunct prof) w/ PhD post Jan 2014
- Not PI/CoPI on past Core RGs
- Associate & full professors may be CoPIs, but are ineligible for funding

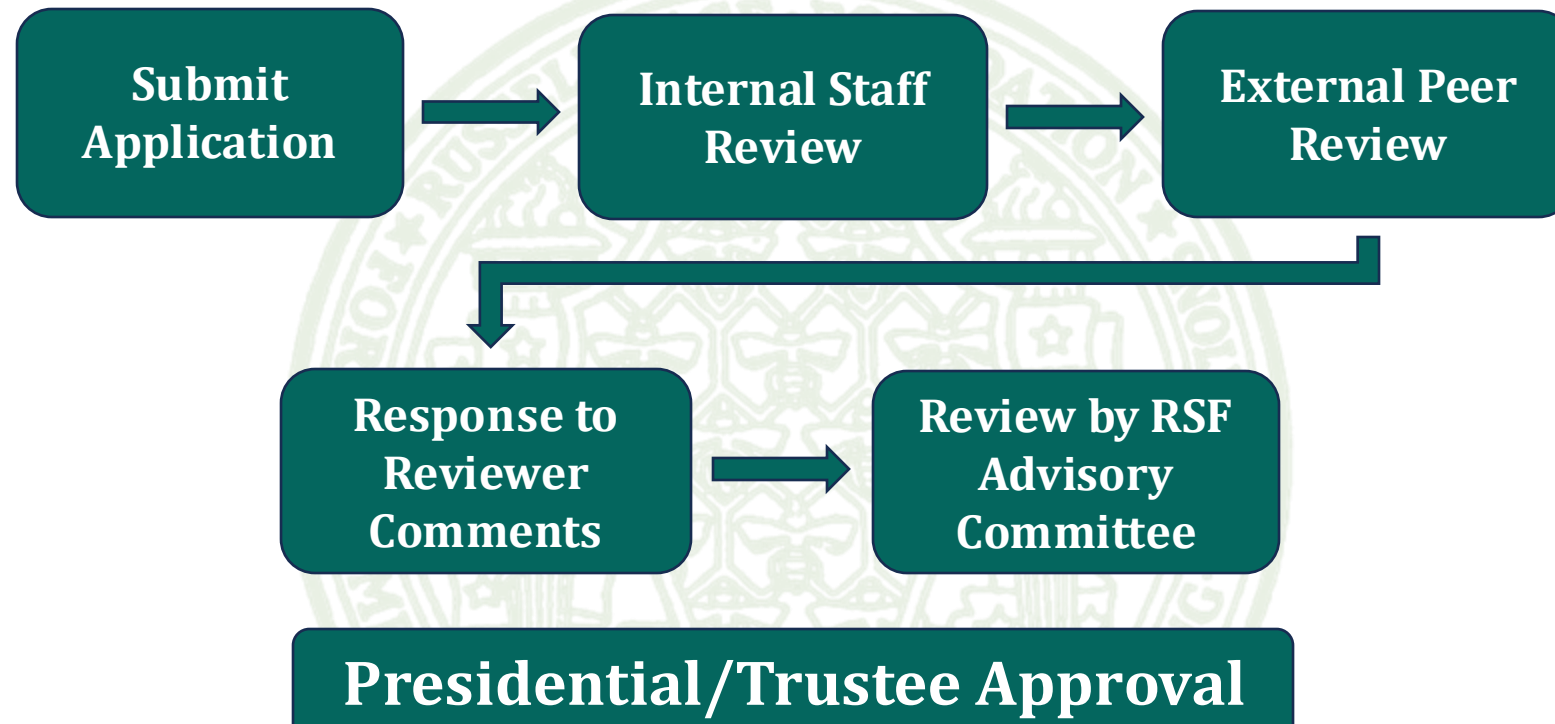
Use of Funds/Program Benefits

- No Indirect Costs
- Allowed expenses include: summer salary, data, research assistance, course buyouts, conference travel, etc.
- Senior scholar mentorship
- Workshop conference hosted by RSF



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Early Career and Fellowships Process





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Early Career and Fellowship Materials

At Submission

Sheldon Danziger Pipeline Grants Competition

- 7-page, single-spaced proposal
- CV(s) of PI(s), 5-page max

Causal Research on the Criminal Justice System

- 10-page, single-spaced proposal
- CV(s) of PI(s), 5-page max

Dissertation Research Grants

- 5-page, single-spaced proposal
- CV of PI, 5-page max

Visiting Scholar & Researcher

- 5-page, single-spaced proposal
- CV of PI

Post-Review

Early Career Programs

- Reviewer Response Memo

Fellowships

None required

Post-Approval

Early Career Programs

- Budget (template will be emailed to PI)
- Budget Narrative
- Due diligence materials (IRB approval, confirmation of data access, etc)

Fellowships

- Letter of intent from home institution

Note that references, charts, figures, and survey/interview guides are not counted towards the final page count. A 1-page appendix for charts or tables is allowable.



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Thank You!

WEBSITE:

www.russellsage.org

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