

Our Grants column provides valuable information on the CIRCLE grant application process.

CIRCLE ANNOUNCES NEW RESEARCH GRANT COMPETITION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: CIVIC EDUCATION AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Thanks to generous funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York, CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement) will make grants to support research on civic education at the high school level.

GOALS

CIRCLE funds rigorous research, not advocacy, education, or other forms of practice. However, all CIRCLE-funded research should be relevant to and have implications for public policy and/or practice.

In this Request for Proposals (RFP), CIRCLE is seeking research that will help educators and policymakers to improve civic outcomes for US students of high-school age (roughly 14-18). "Civic outcomes" include, but are not limited to:

- knowledge of politics, democracy and civil society;
- knowledge of social issues;
- values such as tolerance, trust, patriotism, concern for others' rights and well-being, and efficacy (the belief that one can make a difference);
- skills and habits of deliberating about public issues and participating in politics and community affairs;
- volunteering and membership in voluntary and/or nonprofit groups; and
- intentions to vote and to consider careers in public service (in the government or nonprofit sectors).

CIRCLE is interested in research on interventions and reforms that may enhance civic outcomes. These interventions and reforms include, but are not limited to:

- programs of civic education and classes on history, democracy, or law;
- approaches to the teaching of other disciplines that may have civic benefits;
- co-curricular activities, including student government and student media;
- service-learning;
- games and simulations that involve political or civic issues;
- student voice or participation in the governance of their schools;
- the basic structure of high schools (including their size, focus,

requirements, climate, admissions criteria, or composition);

- professional development for teachers, so long as the effects on students can be assessed; and
- after-school or community-based programs, insofar as these have the potential to reach large numbers of adolescents or to change mainstream education.

In most CIRCLE-funded research projects, the outcomes will be civic knowledge, values, skills, or behaviors. However, we are also interested in research that explores whether being civically engaged helps academic outcomes or positive adolescent development.

PARAMETERS FOR RESEARCH

CIRCLE welcomes all rigorous methodologies, including qualitative, normative, and quantitative studies. We have funded, and expect to fund in the future, genuine field experiments, quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal studies, cross-sectional surveys, re-analysis of existing datasets, historical studies, qualitative designs such as ethnographies, interviews, and case studies, and normative arguments.

CIRCLE welcomes proposals from academics, students (especially PhD candidates at the dissertation stage), independent scholars, practitioners, and research nonprofits and firms.

CIRCLE also welcomes proposals from youth of high school age, perhaps working in partnership with adults. Such youth-led research proposals will be evaluated separately and not compared directly to proposals from adults.

CIRCLE generally prefers independent studies over projects in which participants describe and evaluate their own work. CIRCLE will fund program evaluations only to the extent that they generate significant findings for other groups. In other words, we will fund research that uses programs as opportunities to test general hypotheses; *we will not support program evaluations for the purpose of measuring or improving the performance of particular organizations or programs.*

For information on Procedures and Deadlines, including requirements for Letters of Inquiry, please go to the CIRCLE web site at: www.civicyouth.org/whats_new/RFP.htm.