Minerva Research Initiative & Army Research Office Funding in the Social & Behavioral Sciences

2015 GRC Funding Competitiveness Conference

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Minerva: Harnessing Science to Prevent Future Conflict

Initiated in 2008 by then-Secretary Robert Gates

http://minerva.dtic.mil

• Goal: Improve understanding of the fundamental social, cultural, and political forces that shape the world

• Basic research in social science: Uses rigorous methodology to investigate why and how, versus who or what, of phenomena such as influence, violence escalation, and resilience.

• Supports basic research worldwide (grants to non-US institutions)
  • All research entirely unclassified
  • Includes data-sharing resources
I. Minerva Research Initiative

• Coordination between S&T programs
  • Air Force, Army, and Navy execute and manage Minerva research
  • Regular coordination with independent sociocultural research efforts at military research orgs, DARPA, DHS, DOJ, IARPA, NSF, UK Research Councils

• Connecting Minerva and DoD Policy & Operational Communities
  • OSD Policy (ASD-Research & Engineering)
  • COCOMs: Joint workshops planned by Minerva researchers and AFRICOM, SOCOM, PACOM
  • Minerva researchers serve as subject matter experts for studies supporting Joint Staff (e.g., Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment)
    • Research briefings US Government – e.g., DoD, IC, State, USAID
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• Annual BAA Cycle (approximate)
  • **March-April**: Solicit DoD/USG for topic ideas and future security needs
  • **August**: Final Broad Agency Announcement (BAA (hosted by one of the Services) posted
  • **October**: 4-page white paper submissions due
  • **Nov/Dec**: Tri-Service & OSD PM Reviews; OSD determines invitations
  • **February**: Full-length research proposals due (~20 pp.)
  • **April**: PMs recommendations due to OSD; award decisions are made
  • **May-July**: Proposals processed, human subjects approvals finalized
  • **September**: Funds in place and research begins

• Review Panels
  • Defense S&T program managers
  • Defense policy and operations experts
  • DoD-external academics
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• Submission Process
  • White papers (4-pp., w/ budget sketch) submitted
    • Subset most likely to be funded invited to submit a full proposal.
  • Full proposals (25-pp, full budget, institution reviews)
    • Subset of proposals most highly recommended by Minerva review panels are selected (usu. 2-3 year awards)

• Review Process
  • Reviewers: Defense S&T Program Managers
    • Panels: Academics, Defense Policy & Operations experts
  • Final Decisions: OSD Leadership (Panel input, balance)
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• Review Criteria
  • Technical Merit
    • Scientific Approach
    • Methodology
  • Relevance
    • Minerva Topic Areas
    • Regional Foci
• Impact
• Researcher Qualifications
• Cost:Value
  • Average proposal ~$1.2M, 3-years, 3-5 PI/Co-PIs
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FY 15 Topics

Identity, Influence, and Mobilization
- Culture, identity, and security
- Belief formation and influence
- Mobilization for change

Contributors to Societal Resilience and Change
- Governance and rule of law
- Resources, economics, and globalization
- Population and Demographics
- Migration and Urbanization
- Power projection and diffusion
- Beyond conventional deterrence

Power and Deterrence

Emerging Topics
- Analytical Methods and Metrics
- Additional Topics

Example Applications

- Terrorism, Revolutions
- Stability Ops, Arab Spring 2.0
- Emerging Threat

Topics updated each year to identify knowledge gaps and emerging social science research opportunities
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Minerva is a Global Effort to Generate Scientific Understanding of Within- and Cross-Cultural Dynamics
Measuring Success…

• **Knowledge generation**
  - Peer-Reviewed Publications
  - Policy Publications, Books, and Op/Eds
  - Briefings and consultation to senior civilian & military leadership

• **Building communities**
  - New contributors to DoD research
  - Student research participation
  - Workshops and training seminars held
  - Scientists entering government

• **Decision support**
  - Leaders, operators, analysts informing decisions with Minerva insights
Some Statistics…

- **FY2014**: 261 white papers submitted from **36 states** and **five countries**
  - 63 proposals were received across twelve topics from **19 states** and **three countries**
  - 28 from **researchers new to DoD funding**
  - 23 with PI/Co-PI from an international institution
  - 12 proposals selected for funding
- **FY2015**: 300+ white papers submitted
  - 45 proposals invited
  - Anticipate 10 proposals to be funded
II. Army Research Office
Social & Behavioral Sciences Program

• Army Research Office

  “… to serve as the Army's premier extramural basic research agency in the engineering, physical, information, and life sciences…”

  A long-range vision (i.e., multiple decades) of sustained support for high-risk, innovative science

• Unclassified

• Emphasis: Single-investigator grants supporting academic scientists
  • Also partner with commercial entities (SBIR, STTR)
  • Programs to facilitate STEM education and minority-serving institutions
  • Early career scientists
  • Workshop/Conference support
II. Army Research Office
Social & Behavioral Sciences Program

• ARO: Social & Behavioral Sciences Program
  
  http://www.aro.army.mil/

  • Situated in Life Sciences Division, Physical Sciences Directorate
  • All facets of social & behavioral sciences, with particular emphasis on:
    • Socio-Cultural Behavior, Institutions & Organizations
    • Interface between Human/Social Systems & Natural Systems
      • Ecological & environmental correlates of behavior
      • Biophysiologica correlates of behavior (e.g., neuroscience, genetics)
    • Interface between Human/Social Systems & Physical Systems
      • “Built” Systems (e.g., networks, utilities, transportation, housing)
II. Army Research Office Social & Behavioral Sciences Program

- **Submission Process – Rolling Basis**
  - Discussion with program manager about topic
  - White papers (5-7 pp., w/ budget sketch) submitted – e-mail
  - Full proposals (15-20 pp., full budget, institution reviews) – grants.gov

- **Review Process**
  - Reviewers
    - Academic scientists (3-5)
    - DoD scientists (1-3)
    - Life Sciences Division Chief and Director of Physical Sciences
II. Army Research Office
Social & Behavioral Sciences Program

- **Average Funding**
  - $100K-$120K/Year, 3-Years (All-In with F&A)
  - 1 PI, 2-3 Co-PIs
    - If multiple institutions → primary institution negotiates/manages sub-awards

- **Considerations**
  - Institutional Review Boards
    - Institutional (all institutions, incl. foreign)
    - US Army Human Research Protections Office
  - Country Permissions
    - Research Visa
      - Sometimes requires in-country/university partner
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Measuring Success…

• **Knowledge generation**
  - Peer-Reviewed Publications
  - Scientific Community Acknowledgement

• **Building communities**
  - Student research participation
  - Workshops, conferences, seminars organized
  - Curriculum development

• **Technology Transfer**
  - Commercialization
  - Government use
II. Army Research Office

Some Statistics…

• FY2014: Over 400 inquiries
  • 38 white papers invited; 32 received
  • 15 proposals invited; 13 received
  • 11 from researchers new to Army Research Office funding
  • 6 proposals (new starts) recommended for funding

• FY2015: Over 200 inquiries so far
  • 7 white papers invited to date
  • 3 full proposals invited to date
  • Anticipate 8 new starts
How ARO Can Help You

• Welcome Inquiries From:
  • Research Administrators
  • Faculty/Staff/Student Researchers

  **TALK TO US!!**

• Assist in Access to:
  • Communities of Researchers
  • Facilities/Equipment (e.g., ARL Open Campus)
  • Data
  • Communities of Funders

  **TALK TO US!!**
THANK YOU!!!

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