HELPS Lab Mini-Grants

Call for Proposals: The Human Ecology Learning and Problem Solving (HELPS) Lab is excited to announce the availability of funds for the purpose of utilizing HELPS Lab services and equipment for data collection. The funding covers the collection of social and behavioral data (either quantitative or qualitative) in pilot projects likely to enhance researcher success in applying for larger funding sources. The funding cannot cover salary, benefits, or stipends. Information about HELPS Lab services is available at: http://www.montana.edu/politicalscience/helpslab/. Researchers may supplement an awarded HELPS Lab Mini-Grant with other funds to pay for HELPS Lab services. These funds are available courtesy of Montana INBRE and the MSU Office of Research and Economic Development. The proposal development process should be an interactive one with HELPS Lab core personnel, who will also hold an informational session on Wednesday, December 2, 2015, at 1:00pm in Wilson Hall 2-111.

Contact Information: Dr. Robin Clausen (Project Manager); Dr. Eric Raile (Director)
helpslab@montana.edu
(406) 994-4107

Submission Address: helpslab@montana.edu

Proposal Submission Deadline: January 8, 2016

Eligibility: Eligibility is limited to researchers at Montana State University – Bozeman and their collaborators

Proposal Word Maximum: 1,500 words

Anticipated Notification of Award Recipients: January 14, 2016

Anticipated Average Award Size: $3,000-5,000

Total Funding Available: Approximately $20,000

Anticipated Total Number of Awards: 3-6

Funding Must Be Completely Spent By: April 30, 2016

Selection Procedures: A committee of faculty and staff affiliated with the HELPS Lab, including certain HELPS Lab advisory board members, will have primary responsibility for making funding decisions. The committee will seek assistance from subject matter experts as necessary. The committee will comply with conflict-of-interest measures deemed appropriate by the Office of Research Compliance in making decisions. Researchers submitting proposals must identify themselves so that the HELPS Lab can follow up with questions as necessary.

Selection Criteria: Awards will be granted based on the following criteria: (1) intellectual merit, (2) the extent of proposal development, (3) the specific proposed uses of the HELPS Lab, and (4) the identification of specific call(s) for proposals toward which the pilot project could be directed. Proposed activities and expenditures must comply with National Institutes of Health rules about allowable expenses. Some of the following criteria language is adapted from National Science Foundation standards.
(1) **Intellectual merit:** In addition to the strength of the ideas, this includes the potential of the project to advance knowledge and make a substantial contribution to the field or across fields. Innovativeness and significance of the work are important considerations, including broader impacts of the research.

(2) **Extent of proposal development:** This is the strength of the research design and advanced nature of the project’s development. The proposal should provide a strong sense of the overall research design; the proposed population of study and sample characteristics; the data collection methods to be employed; the measures or indicators to be used or tested and their known characteristics (e.g., validity).

(3) **HELPs Lab usage:** Given that data collection for all projects must take place during the January-April 2016 timeframe, the distribution of tasks is an important consideration. The HELPs Lab must ensure that the mix of services across selected projects is feasible and that the combination of projects makes good use of a range of HELPs Lab services. Researchers can help by being as specific as possible about the types of data collection services requested.

(4) **Specific call(s):** This is identification of the call(s) for proposals toward which the pilot project could be directed. The project should fit well with the call(s), and the pilot data collection should improve the likelihood of securing additional funding.

**What to Include in Your Submission:**

You should submit a document (maximum 1,500 words) to helpslab@montana.edu that addresses the following:

(1) Names and contact information for each of the investigators;

(2) A brief description of the research question(s), purpose, and design and how they fit into the broader literature;

(3) The research methods to be employed (i.e., computer-based experiment; interview; focus group; web, mail, or personal surveys; mixed-mode or mixed method);

(4) A description of the population, any requests related to sampling procedures or sample characteristics, and the approximate desired final sample size;

(5) Information about who will provide the sampling frame or research participants (e.g., the researchers or the HELPs Lab);

(6) Planned dates of data collection (between mid-January and early April of 2016);

(7) Any data security and confidentiality requirements;

(8) Desired end products from the HELPs Lab (e.g., raw or cleaned data, codebook, frequencies and marginal percentages, etc.);

(9) Information about one or more specific calls for proposals toward which the pilot project could be directed; and

(10) Declaration of any potential conflict of interest in the application process, as appropriate.

**Notes:** You do not need to submit a budget with your application. You should work with Dr. Clausen to ensure that your proposed work fits within the proposed budget parameters (approximately $3,000-5,000).