DSI Data & Democracy | Request for Proposals (RFP)
RFP Kickoff & Collaboration Event: Friday, November 5th, 2021 at 2:30 - 3:20 PM CT
Application Deadline: Monday, November 29, 2021 by 11:59 PM CT **Notification:** Mid - December
Earliest project start date: January 3, 2022
Project Funding: *Exploratory:* up to $15,000; *Signature:* up to $65,000
Apply Online: UChicago Funding Portal
Project Period: Up to 12 months
Summary: Funding for the development of new data-driven research that can lead to effective interventions to mitigate misinformation and censorship online and barriers to political participation in the digital age.

The Data Science Institute (DSI) in collaboration with the Center Effective Government (CEG) is pleased to announce a call for research proposals focused on the intersection of democracy, public policy, technology, and data science.

The goal of this program is to 1) encourage new collaborations between departments and units across the University of Chicago campus, 2) provide unique educational experiences for students, and 3) position our institution to be a world-renowned center of research on political participation and freedom of expression in the digital age. Projects supported by this call will be part of an ambitious three-year research initiative focused on freedom of expression and political participation in the digital age.

Collaboration Event:
Potential applications are highly encouraged to attend a collaboration roundtable event on November 5th from 2-3pm to meet new collaborators and share their research ideas. This is a low stakes event and an opportunity to hear more about what projects we are likely to fund and meet potential collaborators. Researchers are encouraged to attend this event even if you do not have a fully formed idea for a research project. Register for this event here.

Projects may focus on broad and cross-cutting topics such as, but not limited to:

- **Online freedom of expression**: How does the consolidation of online platforms impact free speech? What are the implications of online disinformation, censorship and information control strategies on offline actions like polarization, voting, and distrust in government and institutions?

- **Political participation & technology:** Democracy and political participation has historically included some groups and marginalized others. What are data-driven strategies to better understand how democratic processes encourage or discourage political participation. Proposals with a particular focus on mitigating barriers for marginalized groups to participate in political processes are particularly encouraged.
- **Democratizing data:** How do larger groups of people (civil rights groups, etc.) interact with government data, particularly without "deep data expertise." How do we make data more accessible?

Funding

Research funding is available for exploratory awards (up to $15K), early-stage projects, or signature projects (up to $65K) which provide resources for more mature projects.

Eligibility

- Principal Investigator must have PI status at UChicago. Please find more information about UChicago PI eligibility and policies here.
- Each application must have at least one PI from the University of Chicago and at least one co-PI from a different unit *within* the University of Chicago (e.g., departments, divisions, schools).
- Applicants may submit more than one application, with the same or different collaborative teams, provided that each application is scientifically distinct.

Application Requirements:

- PI CV or biosketch
- Abstract (250 words max): What is the problem you seek to address, what is your approach to address this topic and what specific outcomes will your project deliver?
- Research Plan (2 pages max, excluding references): Please describe your research idea and why it is important, why this work requires collaboration, how this proposed work will be done and anticipated outcomes, research timeline & milestones, and the specific follow on funding opportunities you will target should the project generate expected data, analysis or results.
- Budget and Budget Narrative (a budget template is available for download).
- Optional Supplementary Materials: Applicants may upload supplementary materials, such as references, diagrams, images. The supplementary materials should not be used to circumvent the page limitations.

Review Criteria
Proposals will be reviewed by a faculty committee using the following scoring rubric:

0-3 points	**Intellectual Merit:** Advances research innovation in the field of data science and the social sciences ("domain field"). Projects should include a collaboration between computational researchers and social scientists;

	projects should avoid providing a service to either domain.
0-3 points	**Impact:** Data Science research and solutions driven by a specific and compelling societal problem; approach delivers impact with both breadth and depth.
0-3 points	**Interdisciplinarity:** Includes collaboration between two or more disciplines as appropriate to solve the problem area.
0-3 points	**Scalability:** A clear plan to leverage seed grant support to attract additional funding sources to support the project's long-term efforts beyond the 12-month project period.
0-3 points	**Feasibility & Deliverables:** Rapid ability to produce research, data, tools, software or other results within the project period.

For any questions about this opportunity, please contact data-science@uchicago.edu. We look forward to your application.

Terms & Conditions

Funding Usage: Award funding cannot be used for faculty salary support, course reduction, academic leave, or summer salary, external (non-UChicago) collaborators; the purchase of equipment at institutions other than UChicago, or indirect costs.

Reporting: The PI is required to submit a 6 month progress report ("Progress Report") and 12 month final report ("Final Report"). Final Report templates will be provided for your project on the Funding Opportunities portal (http://fundingopportunities.uchicago.edu/) and can be completed at any point before the deadline.

Acknowledgement: All publications and presentations resulting from the work supported by this award should carry the acknowledgement: "Supported with funding by the University of Chicago Data Science Institute."

Initiative Participation: One of the goals of the research initiative is to build an active community and grantees will be requested to participate in community activities. Activities may include evidence workshops, presentations, conferences, and other relevant activities.