Yankelovich Faculty Research Pilot Grants

The Yankelovich Center seeks applications from UC San Diego Social Science faculty interested in developing major research programs aimed at addressing pressing social problems in the United States. The Center will not only provide substantial financial support, but will also offer assistance to help awardees develop research-practice partnerships, seek extramural funding, and disseminate their work to a broader public audience.

To help faculty develop impactful research programs and test solutions to society's pressing problems, the Center will allocate up to $180,000 for up to three Pilot Grants of $50,000-$75,000 each in 2026.

Pilot Grant Application

Who can apply?

Grants will be open to all social science faculty at UCSD. Projects may also include researchers in other divisions at UCSD or at other universities or research institutions.

Criteria on which proposals will be judged

1. Focus on impactful solutions. Projects should aim to make a significant impact on pressing social problems in the United States. Projects will be evaluated both on their ability to discover or verify one or more feasible solutions as well as on their plans to actively engage with policy makers or to partner with practitioners on the ground. According the Center's bylaws, "The project should aim to discover or verify one or more practical and feasible solutions that promise to make a significant and timely impact on an urgent and important national problem. This criterion is of overriding importance."

2. Quality of the proposed research, including the appropriateness of the design and methods to be used as well as the feasibility of the proposed reform plans. Research designs should be rigorous and clearly explained.

3. Proposals that indicate a partner, or written expression of interest in the study, from government institutions (local, state, and/or federal), schools, nonprofits, and/or business organizations will receive special consideration.

4. Our grants are intended to fund the initial stages of potentially larger projects with significant prospects for raising extramural funding, including formulating promising hypotheses and gathering preliminary evidence on their potential for making a major impact. Possible funding sources and research capabilities for next steps should be clearly specified in the proposal.

Funding amount. $50,000-$75,000

Requirements

Recipients must spend funds in a timely manner, according to the timeline submitted with the application. Carry-forward requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Funds not spent in a timely manner shall be returned to the Center.

Recipients of grants will agree to write a 1-3 page write-up of results and lessons for policymakers, even if preliminary, for posting on the Yankelovich Center website, due Jan 29, 2027. Where appropriate, recipients may be asked to participate in a briefing regarding the research with relevant audiences in the policymaking or media sectors. Grantees will acknowledge the Yankelovich Center's support in events and communications that flow from the grant.

Proposal content
A. Cover page. Please include the following information:
Grant Type: "Yankelovich Faculty Research Pilot Grants"
Name(s)
Email address(es)
Department(s)
Title of Project
Amount Requested

B. Project description [maximum 3 pages, single-spaced]
1. Description of project and activities that will be supported.
2. Explanation of how this project fits into the faculty member's broader research agenda
3. Description of the project's significance for the field
4. Timeline
5. Subsequent external funding proposals that this project will lead to, specifying viable funding opportunities.

B. Budget and Budget Narrative [maximum 2 pages, single-spaced]
1. Other funding the researcher(s) has/have been awarded for this and other current projects
2. Evidence of financial need (for instance, lack of startup or existing grant resources).
3. Budget narrative
4. Budget
5. Budget timeline

C. A brief description (maximum 100 words) for a general audience of the proposed activity and its impact, to be used in public communication about divisional activities.

Submission deadline. January 15, 2026

How to submit. Email your submission as a pdf document to the Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research at yankelovich-grants@ucsd.edu.

Evaluation Process. Yankelovich Center Selection Committee