The Texas Census Research Data Center (TXCRDC) welcomes applications for “Seed Grants” to support researcher initiatives to develop proposals for RDC-based projects using restricted data. The awards support activities and resources that will enhance the quality, scope, and timeliness of RDC project proposals. Examples of supported items include: travel to consult with researchers who have experience using restricted data and conducting projects in RDCs, travel to meet with funding agency program officers, team-building, software training, attending workshops on datasets available in RDCs, attending workshops on methods training for project-specific analysis using software available in RDCs, work group meetings for multi-institution projects, stipends for research assistants and student works, project relevant software and data, and other activities and resources that can enhance proposal quality and bring proposals forward in a more timely manner.

Awards are not intended to support research activities per se, regardless of whether using restricted or public data. Approval for using funds for activities not mentioned above should be confirmed by memo or email exchange with the TXCRDC director.

**Overview of TXCRDC Seed Grant Program**

**Frequency:** There will be three “regular cycles” this academic year with calls for proposals going out in August/September, December/January, and April/May. Proposals also may be accepted for review “out-of-cycle”. Please contact TXCRDC Director Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu) to discuss this option.

**Size and Distribution of Awards:** There are two categories of awards: “Regular” and “Program”. “Regular” awards are for projects involving a small team of researchers and standard project scope. Awards typically will be $2,500-$5,000 with a maximum of $8,000. We anticipate being able to fund up to 8-10 regular awards per cycle. “Program” awards are for project ideas involving more ambitious project scope and excellent prospects for securing external funding to support the program of research. Investigator intention and previous track record in securing external funding is a key component of the review. Awards typically will be $5,000 to $10,000 with a maximum limit of $15,000. We anticipate being able to fund 1-2 program awards per cycle.

**Eligibility:** We invite applications from faculty-level researchers affiliated with TXCRDC Consortium Institutions – Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M University System, Baylor University, Rice University, the University of Texas-Austin, and the University of Texas-San Antonio. Doctoral students from TXCRDC Consortium Institutions also are eligible, but please note that applications require letters of support addressing timelines to graduation.

Prior funding support from this program may be considered in the review process. All else equal, priority will be given to researchers who have not previously received support.

Proposals from researchers not affiliated with TXCRDC Consortium institutions will be accepted and considered. Note, however, that proposals originating from non-consortium institutions must outline a viable plan for covering lab fees for the proposed RDC-based project. If lab fees are to be based on external funding, track record on external funding will be a primary consideration in review.

**Indirect Costs and Efficient Transmission/Use of Funds:** TXCRDC seed grants recirculate funding provided by consortium member institutions to support activities associated with developing research proposals to use restricted data. Awards to researchers at TXCRDC consortium institutions should be considered as “internal.” Accordingly, the TXCRDC seed grant program does not cover “indirect costs”, “administration costs”, “overhead costs”, or other activities other than proposal development construed narrowly. If an institution diverts seed grant funds from...
supporting research proposal development, the TXCRDC reserves the right to request return of the funds in full and may revoke the eligibility of researchers at the institution from applying for future seed grant funds. Relatedly, to the extent allowed by the institution, TXCRDC wishes to allocate seed grant funds to awardees in the most direct and efficient way possible to serve the goal of bringing research proposals forward quickly and with minimal paperwork burden on researchers.

Application Deadline: Review of applications for this cycle will begin Monday May 18th and continue until funds are committed. Note that the seed grant program will be discussed at the TXCRDC proposal development workshop scheduled for Friday May 8th from 11:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. [WORKSHOP INFORMATION AND RSVP LINK ON EVENTS PAGE].

Submission Process: Please submit the proposal document and associated attachments (per guidelines outlined below) by email to TXCRDC Director, Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu).

Budget Guidelines: Proposals can request funding support that will enhance the quality, scope, and timeliness of RDC project proposals submitted to Census or NCHS. Examples of relevant activities and resources include: travel for consultation and team-building, data acquisition, software acquisition and training, attending workshops on RDC datasets, research methods workshops, stipends for research assistants, obtaining project-related data, and materials relevant for project proposal needs, etc.

Funds cannot be requested for investigator salaries.

Review Criteria: Review of proposals will consider the potential impact of TXCRDC funding support for (a) enhancing the quality and scope of RDC-based projects and (b) facilitating the timely development of full proposals for RDC-based projects. Considerations also will be given to the prospects for the proposal effort to lead to larger-scale proposals to be submitted to external funding agencies or larger scale, longer-term projects with good potential for high impact and visibility in the research team’s discipline.

Review of “Program” proposals will give particular attention to PI track record in overseeing successful large-scale projects and securing external funding to support research.

Expectations for Progress: Development grant proposals should outline plans for preparing and submitting full proposals for RDC-based projects. The following time-line is expected.

(1) Development activities should begin within 2-4 weeks of receiving an award and should include at least one consultation meeting with the TXCRDC Director and RDC Administrator. (2) A preliminary draft outlining the key components of a full RDC proposal should be provided for TXCRDC review and feedback at three months. (3) A full RDC proposal should be submitted through TXCRDC to Census or NCHS at four months.

Proposal Guidelines, Review Process, and Timeline

Applications should follow the format described below and include materials as noted below. To ensure prompt review, proposals should be submitted using the form noted below. (Proposals submitted by other means will be reviewed at a later date.)

Page 1. Cover Page

Include a project title, list of investigators, and 200-word non-technical abstract suitable for communicating project goals and merit to an interdisciplinary audience.

Pages 2-3. Project Summary

A 2-page project summary geared to an interdisciplinary review panel. Bear in mind that proposals will likely be reviewed by researchers outside of your own field so please avoid jargon that will not be familiar outside of your field.
Text specifications are: single spaced, one-inch margins, 11-point font or larger. No appendices, web links, or other supporting materials are allowed.

The project summary should include the following section headings.

- **Project Overview**: Give a very brief overview of the research question using language suitable for an interdisciplinary review team.
- **Data Set(s) and Justification**: Note which restricted data set(s) the project will use and briefly note why restricted versions of the data sets are needed.
- **Census Benefits**: Include a sentence acknowledging that projects using restricted census data must provide a “benefit” to the Census Bureau. This is not required for NCHS projects. For information about census benefits, attend our proposal development workshops or consult with TXCRDC Administrator Bethany DeSalvo
- **Timeline**: Provide a month-by-month timeline for the development project leading to the month in which a proposal is submitted to Census or NCHS.
- **Budget**: Provide a brief budget narrative outlining how seed grant funds will be used. Researchers at non-consortium institutions must note how project lab fees (typically $15,000 per year for 2-3 years) will be covered.

Attachment(s) A. Investigator CV(s)

Designate one person as PI. Identify personnel as Co-PIs, consultants, postdocs, research assistants, or other title as appropriate.

Provide a CV for the PI and Co-PIs involved in the project.

Attachment B. Supervisor Support Letter (required for doctoral students only)

Include a letter of support from the dissertation supervisor with the following:

- A brief statement to indicate the supervisor’s commitment to mentor the student over the course of the project and to obtain Special Sworn Status (to be able to assist the student at critical junctures of the project)
- The expected PhD completion for the student and statement affirming that the supervisor and student have discussed the potential impact of using confidential data on the timeline for completing the PhD
- A brief statement affirming that the supervisor and student have discussed the proposal review process and the disclosure avoidance process and their potential implications for presenting research results outside of the secure lab (i.e., for meetings presentations and job talks)

**Proposal Review and Funding Decisions**: Proposal reviews and funding decisions will be made by the TXCRDC Director and members of the TXCRDC Steering Committee. All decisions are final.

**Due Date & Review Timeline**: Review of applications begins Monday May 18th. Please submit the proposal document and attachments (per guidelines outlined below) by email to TXCRDC Director Mark Fossett (m-fossett@tamu.edu). Award notification should occur within 2-3 weeks of application deadline. Award funds will be made available as soon as feasible and appropriate per proposal time line.