**Department of Defense Funding Opportunities for Social Scientists**

**A. FY2013 and FY2014 DOD Research Funding ($M) Obligations at Universities/Colleges**

**2013** **2014**

Basic Applied Basic Applied

Psychological 15 1 17 9

Social Sciences 23 9 30 8

**B. DOD Funding Agencies that Fund Social Science Research**

**1.** [**The Minerva Research Initiative**](http://minerva.defense.gov/)

The Minerva Research Initiative supports social science research aimed at improving our basic understanding of security, broadly defined. Supported projects include university-based research with the intention that all work be shared widely to support the thriving of stable and safe communities. The Minerva Research Initiative primarily funds social science basic research by university-led research teams that can range from single investigators to large multi-university consortia. All awarded projects are expected to be funded for at least three years. [Minerva general interest and special interest topics include](http://minerva.defense.gov/Research/Research-Priorities/):

* Sociality, Security, and Interconnectivity: focuses on the myriad factors contributing to social stability and conflict.
* Understanding the Social Impact of Autonomy: explores the relationship between autonomy and sociality, looking at how one impacts the other.
* Societal Resilience and Sociopolitical (In)stability: focuses on the relationship between events and stability.
* Power and Deterrence for Shaping Operations: focuses on the relationship between power projection and deterrence strategies.
* Military Cyber Defense: explores the increasing role cyber plays in understanding security.

The Initiative has funded projects led by faculty from Public Affairs, Political Science, Communications, African Studies, Social Sciences, and Security and Crime Science, to name a few. [View a partial listing of funded projects.](http://minerva.defense.gov/Research/Funded-Projects/)

**2.** [**Army Research Inst for Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI)**](https://sslweb.hqda.pentagon.mil/ari/research.aspx)

ARI’s Science and Technology (S&T) research mission is to create and provide innovative behavioral and social science solutions that enable the Army to provide ready forces and force capabilities. ARI supports research projects that are designed to expand fundamental knowledge and discover general principles in the behavioral and social sciences, but generally focused on individual and unit performance and readiness. In addition to programmatic efforts to develop and evaluate psychological and behavioral theory, researchers are encouraged to propose novel, state-of-the-art, and multidisciplinary approaches that address difficult problems.

* Develop innovative measures and methods to improve/enhance the Soldier lifecycle and human capital management.
* Conduct scientific assessments and provide behavioral and social science advice to human resource authorities, and to inform human resource policies.
* Develop fundamental theories, investigate new domains in behavioral and social sciences with high potential impact on Army issues.

**3.** [**The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)**](https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso)

DARPA is the agency of the DOD responsible for the development of emerging technologies for use by the US military with the mission of making pivotal investments in breakthrough technologies for national security. DARPA has six technical offices, including the Defense Sciences Office (DSO), which has a focus on Social Systems.

***a***[***. Defense Sciences Office***](https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso)

DSO makes foundational investments across the physical and social sciences to change what’s possible. DSO identifies and pursues high-risk, high-payoff research initiatives across a broad spectrum of science and engineering disciplines and transforms them into important, new game-changing technologies for U.S. national security. Current DSO themes include accelerating scientific discovery, exploring fundamental limits, and creating strategic surprise. DSO includes research on Social Systems.

[*Social Systems Research*](https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/what-are-we-exploring-now) *(Program Manager* [*Adam Russell*](https://contact.darpa.mil/contact?people=/staff/dr-adam-russell)*)*

* Scalable methods for identifying and understanding cultural models, biases, and beliefs of different social groups.
* Semi-automated capabilities to quantify and validate the generalizability, reproducibility, and reliability of particular social and behavioral science research results and theories.
* New experimental platforms and tools for understanding causal mechanisms of emergent human social complexity.
* New approaches to assessing and leveraging human individual and social variability to enable novel capabilities.

***b.*** [***Young Faculty Award (YFA***](https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/for-universities/young-faculty-award)***)***

The YFA program provides funding, mentoring, and industry and DOD contacts to awardees early in their careers so they develop their research ideas in the context of DOD needs. The program focuses on untenured faculty, emphasizing those without prior DARPA funding.

**C. Branch Funding Opportunity Examples for Social Science Research**

**1.** [**Army Research Office (ARO)**](http://www.arl.army.mil/www/pages/8/W911NF-17-S-0002.pdf)

AROs mission is to serve as the Army's principal extramural basic research agency funding research at universities. ARO’s research portfolio is executed through ten scientific divisions broken up into three interests for US institutions and seven for international research interests. Of these, Physical Sciences (Life Sciences, which has a research focus area on Social and Behavioral Science) and Information Sciences (including Computing Sciences and Mathematical Sciences); and Human Dimensions and Network Science and Intelligent Systems have components that include social science research.

**2.** [**The Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) - Trust and Influence Program**](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=298498)

The basic research interests under this program are motivated by recent technological advances in the area of unmanned and autonomous systems, and the strategic environment that the U.S. Air Force is expected to face in the future. The Trust and Influence program can be defined broadly by three areas:

* Trust in Autonomous Systems, which includes laboratory and field studies to examine the impact of socially-designed cues or physical features such as appearance, voice, personality, and other social elements on human trust and system performance,
* Cross-Cultural Trust, with interests in developing theories of interpersonal and organization trust that account for various cultural constructs and characteristics; revealing the antecedents of trust in cross-cultural interactions; and cultural differences in complex human-machine interaction.
* Socio-Digital Influence, including a need for laboratory and field studies to reveal sources of influence and persuasion in social media and across different cultural groups; and social, cognitive, and neural mechanisms of influence and persuasion

**3.** [**Defense Health Program - DoD Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Peer Support Program Translational Research**](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=298532)

The medical mission of DOD is to enhance security by providing health support for the full range of military operations and sustaining the health of service members. The *Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program* is seeking to examine the efficacy and effectiveness of peer-to-peer support tools to translate and integrate content into the everyday routines of service members to enhance psychological health readiness and mitigate negative behavioral health issues including suicide behaviors. The expectation of this research is to demonstrate the utility of these peer-to-peer support psychological health readiness tools to benefit service members and the public at large.

**D. Working with the DOD**

**1. Competitive Solicitation Procedure** **Guide**: **the** **Broad Agency Announcement**

The DOD uses the term Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) to describe a competitive solicitation procedure used to develop proposals for basic and applied research. This term is synonymous with Request for Proposal (RFP), Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), Request for Applications (RFA), and Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA).

**2. DOD Program Managers**

Unlike most Program Managers or Program Officers at other federal funding agencies, DOD Program Managers are responsible for defining the research initiatives solicitated and make the final decision concerning what proposals are awarded. Talking to these individuals when you are planning your proposal is highly recommended.

**3. How to Communicate with Program Managers**

When communicating your ideas, ensure your communication includes responses to these questions: What are you trying to do? How does this get done? What is new about your approach? If you succeed, what difference will it make? How long will it take? Can your work transition? How much will it cost?