

Respondent: Korin Davis, Washington Center for Equitable Growth

What is your role at your institution?

Director of Academic Programs

What types of projects does your organization fund? (Including broad topic areas, though I know specific priorities might change over time. Academic research, books, conferences, policy engagement?)

The Washington Center for Equitable Growth seeks to deepen our understanding of how inequality affects economic growth and stability. To do so, we support research investigating the various channels through which economic inequality, in all its forms, may or may not impact economic growth and stability.

Equitable Growth supports research inquiry using many different types of evidence, relying on a variety of methodological approaches and cutting across academic disciplines. Our request for proposals is organized around four channels of growth: Macroeconomics and Inequality, Human Capital & Well-being, Market Structure, and The Labor Market.

Preference is given to projects creating new data that can be made publicly available, to studies that center race, and to interdisciplinary studies.

Equitable Growth promotes efforts to increase diversity in the economics profession and across the social sciences. We recognize the importance of diverse perspectives in broadening and deepening research on the topics in our annual request for proposals.

Academic grants are open to researchers affiliated with a U.S. university. The affiliated university must administer the grant. Grants are typically in the \$25,000 to \$100,000 range over 1 to 3 years.

Equitable Growth is willing to fund a wide range of activities, including researcher salary and benefits, research assistance, data purchase, and costs associated with conducting experiments or participating in professional conferences. Our grants cannot cover indirect overhead.

Does your organization offer smaller grants for early-stage projects?

Equitable Growth has two funding streams: Academic grants and Doctoral/Postdoctoral grants.

Doctoral/Postdoctoral grants are \$15,000 over one year and are open to graduate students currently enrolled in a doctoral program at a U.S. university and to recent Ph.D. graduates currently in a postdoctoral position at a U.S. university. If you are currently a graduate student or in a postdoctoral position, you may choose to apply for either an academic or doctoral/postdoctoral grant, depending on the pool in which you'd like to compete.

While we do not have a specific funding stream for early-stage projects, we do consider applications for such work, including pilot projects, exploratory studies, and new data creation.

How do you find/identify projects of interest? (Calls for proposals? Invitation?)

Equitable Growth releases an annual Request for Proposals in November of each year. Letters of Inquiry are due in early February. Full proposals are by invitation only.

If some/all proposals are by invitation, how do you learn about projects and scholars you might want to fund?

Full proposal invitations are based on submission of a letter of inquiry in response to our annual Request for Proposals. Faculty at U.S. colleges and universities are eligible to apply.

Look for Equitable Growth at academic conferences, including regional economic conferences, the annual AEA conference, and interdisciplinary conferences such as APPAM and LERA. We organize paper sessions and panels, participate in professional development workshops, and host receptions. Conferences are a key way we learn about scholars doing work at the intersection of inequality and growth.

Equitable Growth is a research and grantmaking organization. We frequently learn about projects and scholars through our in-house research. Check out recent reports we've released [here](#).

We work hard to publicize our RFP via email campaigns, on social media, and by word of mouth by asking former and current grantees to share the RFP with colleagues and students. You can sign up to receive updates [here](#).

Do you send proposals out for review? If so, how do you choose reviewers?

Yes, both letters of inquiry and full proposals are sent out for external peer review.

External review committees consist of subject-matter and methodological experts ranging from early-career to established researchers. Committees are created with a commitment to diversity of race and ethnicity, gender, discipline, research background, area of study, and university affiliation.

All proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Proposed research questions are appropriately framed within the existing literature
- Proposed research has the potential to advance the literature
- Methodological soundness of the research design
- Relevance to Equitable Growth's mission
- Relevance to policy and the potential to make a contribution to evidence-backed policy solutions

Who decides whether to fund a particular proposal?

Decisions are based on the assessments from internal and external reviewers according to the above criteria. All Equitable Growth grants are reviewed and approved by our [Steering Committee](#).

If someone does not receive funding based on an initial proposal, what feedback do they receive, if any? Can they submit a revised proposal?

We send detailed reviewer feedback to applicants who submit a full proposal but do not receive funding. Unfortunately we do not have capacity to provide feedback on letters of inquiry that are not invited to submit a full proposal.

Due to limited capacity (of both funding and staffing) we do not currently have a revise and resubmit process.

Can scholars reach out to you to discuss ideas before submitting a proposal? Is this something you recommend/encourage?

Yes, absolutely. We are happy to provide feedback on whether a project is a good fit and/or to provide guidance on the application process. Please email grants@equitablegrowth.org with such requests.

What are the most common mistakes you see scholars making in their proposals?

The most common mistake at the letter of inquiry stage is dedicating too much space to motivating the research question and providing too few details about how the research will actually be conducted. Sufficient detail must be included about the research design and the data to convince the funder that the project is well conceived and is likely to be successful. Including preliminary findings or responding to potential concerns are both good tactics.

At the full proposal stage, a common problem frequently goes back to the choice to apply in the first place: the project needs to be far enough along to convince reviewers that it will be successful and make a contribution, but not so far along that the need for funds is not justified.

If you could give potential applicants one piece of advice that might not be obvious on your website, what would it be?

If you have questions about whether your project is a good fit, about the application process, the best way to describe your project, or anything else, reach out. Funders understand that many applicants don't have experience seeking funding and that it's not something they teach you in graduate school. No one is going to count it against you if you have questions, even questions that it seems like you should know the answer to. It's in our interest to receive strong applications.

In economics, organization like CSWEP have been working to reduce harassment and discrimination in the profession. Does your organization have any safeguards in place to avoid funding individuals who engage in misconduct? How do you handle such cases? (e.g. Do you require applicants to disclose ongoing or past investigations by their employer or a professional organization like the AEA? What happens if a victim reports harassment by a grantee?)

Equitable Growth believes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to the study of inequality and growth and the communities we engage in this work. We seek to collect demographic data on race, ethnicity, and gender identity from those we engage with to further our mission of advancing evidence-backed ideas and policies that promote strong, stable, and broad-based economic growth. Equitable Growth is committed to using self-reported data, but does not share individually identifiable information or discriminate based on race, ethnicity, or gender identity. We do analyze aggregated data

and share it with stakeholders to gain actionable insights into how our programming can become more inclusive.

Equitable Growth does not tolerate any type of discrimination, harassment, or offensive behavior, i.e., misconduct. All allegations will be quickly and discretely investigated. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of victims and that of any witnesses will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. All proven violations of Equitable Growth's policies against discrimination, harassment, and offensive behavior, i.e., misconduct, will result in early termination of the award and the withholding of funds.