



September 21, 2026

Joint Statement on the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program

The American Political Science Association (APSA) and the undersigned organizations are writing to express disappointment in the National Science Foundation's (NSF) removal of STEM education and several major social science disciplines from eligibility for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP). On August 26, 2026, NSF released the [solicitation](#) for the 2026 round of the GRFP. However, compared to the [previous year](#), the [eligibility requirements](#) listed significantly fewer eligible fields within the Social Sciences major field, removing eight subfields: Communications; Cultural Anthropology; International Relations, Law and Social Science; Political Science; Public Policy; Science Policy; and Social Science Education. The solicitation also completely removed the STEM Education and Learning Research major field from eligibility for the GRFP. These changes were not justified anywhere in the solicitation and will ultimately result in significant decline in social science research, STEM education, and the U.S. research enterprise at large.

Since the program's founding in 1951, the GRFP has been a critically important and prestigious program for early career scholars from all academic fields and disciplines. It has developed emerging scientific talent within the U.S. and has supported rigorous scholarly research that has led to tangible discoveries and real-world impact. Furthermore, disciplines in the social sciences have been eligible for the program since 1956, only four years after the program was founded. Removing Social Science disciplines from eligibility will only damage the U.S. competitiveness and innovation in these fields, and beyond, and will have negative economic consequences on the scholars that pursue these fields. We call on NSF to reinstate these excluded majors and to continue to make broad disciplinary access to the GRFP a priority. We also call on NSF to reaffirm that support for early career researchers in all the social sciences is a key part of NSF's greater goal of supporting the U.S. enterprise of fundamental research.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations

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Founded in 1903, the American Political Science Association is the leading professional organization for the study of political science and serves more than 11,000 members in more than 80 countries. With a range of programs and services for individuals, departments, and institutions, APSA brings together political scientists from all fields of inquiry, regions, and occupational endeavors within and outside academe to deepen our understanding of politics, democracy, and citizenship throughout the world.



Alliance for Learning Innovation
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Educational Research Association
American Political Science Association
Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política – ALACIP
Association of Population Centers
Association for Education Finance and Policy
Association for Israel Studies
Central European Political Science Association
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation
codeSpark
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Graduate Schools
Earth Force
EDGE Partners
French Association of Political Science
Institute for Advancing Computing Education
German Political Science Association
Mexican Political Science Association
Midwest Political Science Association
NARST: A global organization for improving science education through research
National Council on Measurement in Education
reDesignED
Society for Research in Child Development
Southern Political Science Association
The Study Group
Telos Learning
Western Political Science Association

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