

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



Call for Proposals: Creating Research Projects across Disciplinary and Ideological Lines  
February 4, 2019

The National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) is pleased to announce its intent to oversee, fund, and promote five projects in which pairs or teams of scholars with different political views or areas of academic specialization conduct research together on some of the core concepts or institutions in American political or civic life. We are open as to the precise subjects of these projects, but we do propose that many such political and civic concepts – for instance, civility, community, freedom, and tolerance – are subjects of inquiry in many different fields. Moreover, many Americans across the political spectrum share a concern that the health of American institutions – not only governmental institutions such as congress or political parties, but social ones such as the media, organized religious groups, or even the established business community – is in question at the moment, although the way in which this subject is discussed varies across academic and political communities. The funding for these projects would be sufficient to enable the researchers to play a role in helping to develop joint projects. That is, we are interested in ensuring that constructive criticism across political and disciplinary lines is raised before the research is undertaken, and that the criticisms are raised by people who have a stake in the work itself. If we are to take seriously the occasional criticisms about the insularity of academic work, it is vital to provide models of how this work might be done differently.

Our intent here, however, is not just to fund research but to encourage *reflection* on this research. The research teams will be asked to write a paper or set of papers that outline the process of their collaboration. What steps were taken? What did the participants learn that they could not have learned from working with someone closer to their field of specialization? How would the collaboration of, for instance, a historian and a sociologist concerned with defining what moderation is, or a political scientist and an expert in classical and religious philosophy working to understand what the corruption of political institutions is, proceed? In short, how would participants in this study offer their work as a model for others, not only in terms of the quality of the research but as a tool for building tolerance and civility within the academy?

NICD will provide \$25,000 for each project. All grants are to cover research conducted during the 15½ month period from June 1, 2019 to September 15, 2020. Eligible expenses include course buyouts, research travel, or any other research-related expenses. At the end of this period, grantees will submit drafts or final versions of their work, along with a reflective essay on the work process, and will make themselves available for events designed to explore the merits of the project. NICD public relations staff will work with the grantees to ensure that the collaborative nature of this project is presented as a model that others might follow in working to promote civility and tolerance and to overcome divisions within the academy.

1-2 page proposals, with a description of the project and the nature of the collaboration, biographies of the collaborators, and a budget, should be submitted to NICD Research Director Robert Boatright ([rboatright@clarku.edu](mailto:rboatright@clarku.edu)) no later than April 1, 2019. Inquiries about potential projects are also welcome. Grant recipients will be notified by May 1, 2019.

This grant is made possible through the support of the Charles Koch Foundation, as part of their [Courageous Collaborations](#) initiative. NICD is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization affiliated with the University of Arizona. It was established in 2011 with the goal of encouraging and studying civility in American political and social discourse. For further information on NICD, consult the organization's website at <https://nicd.arizona.edu/>.

### ***Proposed Timeline for Projects***

February 4, 2019:	Call for proposals for research projects issued
April 1, 2019:	Deadline for proposals
May 1, 2019:	Select and notify grant recipients
June 1, 2019:	Research period for grantees begins
September 2019:	Researchers invited to participate in 3 <sup>rd</sup> NICD Research convening, Tucson, AZ
January 15, 2020:	Informal midterm report from grantees due to NICD
September 15, 2020:	Close of research period for grantees; research summary and reflective essay due to NICD
Fall 2020/Winter 2021:	NICD public events and/or academic conference presentations on results Publication of reflective essays