

A Review of Micro-Grants for Research Data Acquisitions in University Libraries

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Introduction

For libraries and the employees who inhabit them, it can sometimes feel as though the only constant reality is a lack of funding (see Exhibit A). As Lisa Hinchliffe (2022) noted, “[Within the University] scholarly output continues to grow while library budgets shrink.” A real “counterweight” to this pre- and post-COVID, reimagined services are helping some libraries weather budget uncertainties and related financial constraints (Cox, 2023). One of those services—purchasing research data through the lens of scholarly research and creativity—is an example of how some libraries are navigating uncertainty. As noted by Foster et al. (2019), “If the maxim of “doing more with less” [is the new normal], librarians may have to choose between traditional activities and emerging services.” When buying research data facilitates partnering with campus stakeholders, piloting micro-funding opportunities via library research grants may be a risk worth taking.

Listed here is a compilation of research data grant programs offered at university libraries in the United States. These awards are unique in that they reflect the importance of data for research and creative endeavors. While most libraries have been licensing databases and electronic resources since the birth of the internet, few libraries have developed a “data purchase program” at scale.

This list could be helpful for any data management librarian, collections strategist, or library director scoping micro-grant services in research libraries.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign Library – Data Purchase Program

Purpose: To purchase numeric, spatial, or textual data for research by soliciting applications from campus faculty and students for “small” commercial datasets (Sheehan & Hogenboom, 2017). Cost-sharing with other campus units is permitted.

Amount: Up to \$23,000 available; No more than \$5,000 per researcher per year

Florida State University – Robert B. Bradley Library Research Grants [Active]

Purpose: To support the research and creative work of faculty with new library acquisitions accessible for the whole FSU community. Prioritization is given to applications that enhance specific research programs and the creative activities of faculty members (Florida State University, n.d.).

Amount: Up to \$100,000 available to fund mini-grants; Generally \$500-10,000 per proposal

Past recipients: Markit Securities Lending Data; Thomson Reuters’ Lipper Hedge Fund Database

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University of Michigan Library – Data Grant Program [Active]

Purpose: To provide data grants to Michigan-affiliated researchers through one-time purchases. Only data that can be licensed campus-wide is considered (University of Michigan Library, n.d.).

Past Recipients: Eora Global Supply Chain Database; Gallup Analytics; CoreLogic Parcel Level Data

University of Arizona Libraries – Data Grant Program [Active]

Purpose: -Tw 13.391 0 (a5 (l r(m)3.9 (A)2.6)-4.3.6 (t)- r)-5.9 (ough oneehas)-9 (i))EMC c 0 Tw (o)-5.9 (ias)-5e

Academic BRASS

Purpose: To ensure that the Libraries continue to support current teaching and research at DU. Faculty may submit University Library Association (ULA) grant proposals, as may graduate and

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Exhibit A.

Institution

Academic BRASS

Kim, J. (2023, January 31). *3 questions on academic library budgets for an assessment and planning librarian*. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/learning-innovation/3-questions-academic-library-budgets-assessment-and-planning-librarian>

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [Data tool]. Retrieved April 23, 2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionByName.aspx>

Old Dominion University. (2021, October 28). *Faculty research grant program offers mini-grants*. <https://www.odu.edu/library/article/faculty-research-grant-program-offers>,
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