



## THE HARVARD MELLON URBAN INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES 27 GRANTS TO ADVANCE STUDENT RESEARCH IN URBAN STUDIES

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Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative is pleased to announce the award of 27 grants for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and visiting scholars at Harvard to pursue urban-focused research projects. They explore urban conditions and transformations through multiple disciplinary lenses. The student grants support research in archives and online data sets, as well as more experimental projects connected to the creation of exhibitions, digital resources, and site-based interventions. The faculty awards create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to work closely with mentors on research projects as well as on the development of teaching materials. The awards provide funding up to \$2,500 per project. The research can be conducted in the Spring semester and/or Summer of 2022.

The grantees are based in various departments or programs in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, including African and African American Studies, Architecture, Landscape & Urban Planning, Anthropology, Economics, Government, History, History of Art & Architecture, History of Science, Middle Eastern Studies, Music, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology, as well as in the Graduate School of Design, the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Law School, and the Graduate School of Education. The projects collectively reflect the breadth and diversity of urban-focused research and teaching at Harvard. They focus on cities and sites across cultures and geographies.

Many of the grantees engage in disseminating research to a wider public. They include a network map visualizing relationships between religion, belonging, and civic activism among multiethnic Muslims in Metro Detroit; a project that makes available georeferenced data of land property transactions in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lima, in order to shed light on how legal norms have shaped everyday life and urban development; maps of connections between major fires and social transformations in Ottoman Istanbul; and an undergraduate-led collaboration to create a directory of business turnover and oral histories of New York City storefronts.

Grants will also help to enrich dissertations and publications with dynamic visual and online components. Audio-visual projects will focus on a range of topics like energy transition in Ravenna, life stories and cultures of truckers in Punjab, and smart cities in Kenya. Some will create accessible digital resources like maps of the urban distribution of Coptic communities and institutions during the period of Egypt's consolidation as a nation state, and cartographic explorations of women-led bicomunal initiatives across Turkish-Greek divides in Nicosia, Cyprus. We expect that such visualization projects will become teaching tools, and aim to contribute to Urban Studies curricula in other forms. One grant, for example, supports a student-faculty collaboration at the Law

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School and the Graduate School of Design to develop simulation and negotiation scenarios tied to urban challenges, which classrooms could adopt.

Many of projects we support straddle the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Several grantees are pursuing innovative, mixed-methods research, often combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Many aim to advance research with implications for urban policy. These include investigations of what type of data is actually being compiled in platforms tracking energy use and carbon emissions within cities; histories of urban food production in Boston, including racial disparities in food access; questions about how the impact of rent control in Berlin differs based on socio-economic variation across neighborhoods; explorations of causes of fiscal stress in minority communities, and how programs of revenue-sharing across municipalities can help to address them; surveys of street vendors and panhandlers in New Delhi, with focus on child labor.

The grant program is part of the larger mission of the Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative to foster cross-disciplinary study of urban environments, societies, and cultures. The Initiative's goals include developing projects that incorporate visual and digital methods, contributing to the Harvard curriculum, producing publications and exhibitions, and generating a wide variety of Urban Studies programming and community-building. The Initiative intends to pave the way to an interdisciplinary secondary field in Urban Studies for Harvard students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Projects funded this grant cycle will be featured on the website starting late Fall 2022.

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