

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy

CFDA Number: 84.305H

Milestone	Date	Website
<i>Letter of Intent Due</i>	June 5, 2014	https://iesreview.ed.gov/
<i>Application Package Available</i>	June 5, 2014	http://www.grants.gov/
<i>Application Due</i>	By 4:30:00 pm Washington DC time on August 7, 2014	http://www.grants.gov/
<i>Applicants Notified</i>	By July 1, 2015	https://iesreview.ed.gov/
<i>Possible Start Dates</i>	July 1, 2015 to September 1, 2015	

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PART I: OVERVIEW AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

In this announcement, the Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) requests applications to its Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy grants program (Research Collaborations Program). The research supported by the Research Collaborations Program is to be done in close collaboration with practitioners and policymakers¹ made possible by the partnering of research institutions with U.S. state and local education agencies. Through this program, the Institute seeks to improve the quality of education for all students prekindergarten through postsecondary and adult education by advancing the understanding of and practices for teaching, learning, and organizing education systems. By identifying what works, what does not, and why, the goal of this research grant program is to improve education outcomes for all students, particularly those at risk of failure.

For the FY 2015 competition, the Institute will consider only applications that are [responsive](#) and [compliant](#) to the requirements described in this Request for Applications (RFA) *and* submitted electronically via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) on time. Separate funding announcements are available on the Institute's web site that pertain to the other research and research training grant programs funded through the Institute's National Center for Education Research (<http://ncer.ed.gov>) and to the discretionary grant competitions funded through the Institute's National Center for Special Education Research (<http://ncser.ed.gov>). An overview of the Institute's research grant programs is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/overview.asp>.

The work of the Institute is grounded in the principle that effective education research must address the interests and needs of education practitioners and policymakers, as well as students, parents, and community members (see <http://ies.ed.gov/director/board/priorities.asp> for the Institute's priorities). Under the Research Collaborations Program, the Institute encourages the development of partnerships between researchers and education agencies to advance the relevance of education research and the accessibility and usability of the findings for the day-to-day work of education practitioners and policymakers. These partnerships are intended to increase the responsiveness of the research through the required inclusion of education agencies as partners from the start of the work with the identification of the research questions, design of the project, carrying out of the research, and adoption and dissemination of the results.

The Research Collaborations Program uses a topic structure to divide the research process into stages (applicants must submit to one of the three topics). Research taking place under the first topic is expected to lead to further research, possibly supported by the other topics under the Research Collaborations Program, the Institute's Education Research Grants program (84.305A), or other funding sources. Research taking place under the second and third topics may lead to further joint research possibly supported by the Institute.

This Request for Applications (RFA) is organized in the following fashion. Part I sets out the general requirements for your grant application. Part II provides further detail on the three topics. Part III provides general information on submission (including applicant requirements) and review. Part IV describes how to prepare your application. Part V describes how to submit your application electronically using Grants.gov. You will also find a Glossary of important terms located at the end of this RFA. The first use of each term is hyperlinked to the Glossary within each Part of this RFA, and within each topic section within Part II.

¹ The Institute uses the term *policymaker* primarily to mean state and local education agency personnel who decide upon the programs and policies to be implemented across their agencies and within their schools.

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

The Institute encourages you to contact the Institute's Program Officers as you develop your application. Program officers can provide guidance on choosing the appropriate grant program and topic for your application, offer advice on substantive aspects of your application, and answer other questions prior to your submitting an application. Program Officer contact information is listed by topic in Part II and in a list at the end of this document (Part V.H.).

The Institute asks potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent 60 days prior to the application submission deadline. Letters of Intent are optional but strongly encouraged by the Institute. If you submit a Letter of Intent, a Program Officer will contact you regarding your proposed research. Institute staff also uses the information in the letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer-review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

In addition, the Institute encourages you to sign up for the Institute's Funding Opportunities Webinars for advice on choosing the correct research competition, grant writing, or submitting your application. For more information regarding webinar topics, dates, and the registration process, see <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>.

B. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Student Education Outcomes

All research supported under the Research Collaborations Program must address [student education outcomes](#). The Institute is most interested in student [academic outcomes](#) and student [social and behavioral competencies](#) that support success in school and afterwards. These education outcomes may be for students without disabilities, for students with or at risk for disabilities,² or for combinations of both from prekindergarten through postsecondary and adult education.

The Institute supports research on a diverse set of student academic outcomes that fall under two categories. The first category includes **academic outcomes that reflect learning and achievement in the core academic content areas** (e.g., measures of understanding and achievement in reading, writing, math, and science). The second category includes academic outcomes that reflect **students' successful progression through the education system** (e.g., course and grade completion and retention in grades K through 12; high school graduation and dropout; postsecondary and adult education enrollment, progress, and completion). **Social and behavioral competencies** encompass a range of student social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that may be important to students' academic and post-academic success. Social and behavioral competencies may be the primary focus of your research so long as your application makes clear how they relate to academic outcomes.

The Institute also sets out the student academic outcomes of interest by education level as follows:

- For **prekindergarten** (3- to 5-year-olds), school readiness is the primary student academic outcome (i.e., pre-reading, language, vocabulary, early science and mathematics knowledge, social and behavioral competencies which are seen as a key component of school readiness).

²If you propose to study children at risk for developing disabilities, you must present research-based evidence of an association between risk factors in the proposed sample and the potential identification of specific disabilities. The determination of at risk for disabilities status must be made on an individual child basis, and the method used to identify at-risk status must be described in your application and applied to your sample during the sample selection process (general population characteristics such as low-income or English Learner are not acceptable indicators of at-risk status).

- For **kindergarten through Grade 12**, the primary student academic outcomes include learning, achievement, and higher-order thinking in the core academic content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science measured by specific [assessments](#) (e.g., researcher-developed assessments, standardized tests, grades, end-of-course exams, exit exams) and student progression through education (e.g., course and grade completion, retention, high school graduation, and dropout).
- For **postsecondary education** (Grades 13-16), the primary student academic outcomes are access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education which includes programs for students in developmental and bridge programs as well as programs that lead to occupational certificates, associate's or bachelor's degrees. For students in developmental programs, additional outcomes include achievement in reading, writing, English language proficiency, and mathematics. The Institute has also targeted student achievement in postsecondary gateway courses for mathematics and science degrees and introductory English composition courses.
- For **adult education** (i.e., for students at least 16 years old and outside of the K-12 system who are engaged in Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, adult English literacy programs, and GED preparation), the primary outcomes are student achievement in reading, writing, English language proficiency, and mathematics, as well as access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of adult education courses and programs.

2. Authentic Education Settings

Proposed research must be relevant to education in the United States and must address factors under the control of the U.S. education system (be it at the national, state, and/or local level). To help ensure such relevance, the Institute requires research to address [authentic education settings](#), which include both in-school settings and formal programs (e.g., after-school programs, distance learning programs, on-line programs) used by schools or state and local education agencies. These settings are defined as the following settings in which students receive their education:

- **Authentic Pre-K Education Settings** are defined as the following:
 - Center-based prekindergarten programs.
- **Authentic K-12 Education Settings** are defined as the following:
 - Schools and alternative school settings (e.g., alternative schools or juvenile justice settings).
 - School systems (e.g., local education agencies or state education agencies).
 - Settings that deliver supplemental education services (as defined in Section 1116(e) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>).
- **Authentic Postsecondary Education Settings** are defined as the following:
 - 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities that have education programs leading to occupational certificates or associate's or bachelor's degrees.
- **Authentic Adult Education Settings** include colleges, universities, K-12 institutions that serve adults, job training centers, or alternative settings (e.g., libraries, community centers, correctional institutions) where the following are provided:
 - Adult English language programs.
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE).
 - Adult Secondary Education (ASE).
 - GED preparation.

- Programs that assist students who lack secondary education credentials (e.g., diploma or GED) or basic skills that lead to course credit or certificates.

3. Topics

Your application must be directed to one of three research topics (see [Part II Topic Requirements](#)). The topic identifies the type and purpose of the work you will be doing.

- The Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research (Research Partnerships) topic supports new or established partnerships between research institutions and state or local education agencies to carry out initial research (and plan future research) on an education issue of high priority for the education agency that has important implications for improving student education outcomes.
- The Continuous Improvement Research in Education (Continuous Improvement) topic supports well-established partnerships between research institutions and state or local education agencies to adapt and revise a specific approach, using a continuous improvement strategy, to address a specific education issue or problem of high importance to the education agency that has important implications for improving student education outcomes.
- The Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies (State/Local Evaluation) topic supports partnerships between research institutions and state and local education agencies to carry out rigorous evaluations of education programs or policies (programs/policies) that are implemented by state or local education agencies and have important implications for improving student education outcomes.

4. Partnerships

The Research Collaborations program differs from the Institute's other grant programs in its requirement for a partnership between research institutions and education agencies. The Institute does not endorse a specific model of research partnerships (for example, see Coburn, Penuel, and Geil, 2013 for a discussion of different models). However, the Institute views research partnerships as going beyond two common forms of collaboration between research institutions and education agencies: 1) the researcher is hired by an education agency to perform a specific research service and to report the results to the agency or 2) the researcher has an initial research interest and obtains permission from the agency to carry out that research within the agency's schools.

The Institute envisions that work supported by the Research Collaborations Program will be collaborative from start to finish. Together, the partners are expected to develop the research questions, agree on the research design and its implementation, establish a mechanism to discuss the results as they are obtained and direct further research, consider the practice and policy implications of the results, disseminate the results to multiple audiences, and plan for future research. On the practitioner side, relevant decision-makers from across the agency are expected to take part in this process but so too are other relevant stakeholders. For example, if the research addresses instruction, teachers should be represented so that they can provide comment and feedback on the direction of the work. Similarly, studies of student decision-making should include opportunities for student (and perhaps parent) involvement.

Research Collaborations projects are also intended to build the capacity of the education agency to understand the process of research, carry out aspects of it, and use the results. The collaborative process described above is to help build such capacity. Additionally, a project may target specific activities that the partners have determined will strengthen the agency's capacity (e.g., training in specific skills, combining data in ways that will allow the agency to answer additional questions, carrying out specific aspects of research).

As a science agency, the Institute considers the proposed research (and the basis it creates for future research) to be of equal importance as the development of the proposed partnership. The balance of effort devoted to each may vary by the individual partnership (e.g., new partnerships may require somewhat greater efforts for developing the partnership) or the type of research done. The research should be of value to both the education agency and to building knowledge in the education sciences. Jointly developing the research questions is to help ensure that the research will be of direct use to the education agency (the results should clearly address a practice or policy question) as well as to the field.

The Institute would consider a Research Collaborations project successful if the partnership was maintained and the proposed work carried out during the grant. A highly successful project would lead to an ongoing partnership after the grant ended that included further joint research activities and the education agency's use of its increased capacity to participate in and use research.

C. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Eligible Applicants

- At a minimum, applications must include a research institution and a U.S. education agency proposing to work together in partnership.
 - For the Continuous Improvement in Education Research topic, partnerships must document at least 1 year of collaboration and should describe the products of their collaboration to be eligible to apply.
- Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply as the research institution partner(s). These include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities, and research firms.
- The U.S. education agency partners may include:
 - State education agencies such as education agencies, departments, boards and commissions that oversee early learning, elementary, secondary, postsecondary/higher, and adult education. The term *state education agencies* includes U.S. Territories' education agencies and tribal education agencies.
 - Local education agencies which are primarily public school districts.³
 - Non-public organizations that oversee or administer schools (e.g., education management organizations) will need to include the public entity that has oversight of the schools as the agency partner.
 - The Institute recognizes that some local education agencies include only one school. Such agencies are eligible to apply, but the Institute notes that reviewers may consider the work less significant than projects that involve multiple schools.
 - Community college districts.

³ As defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a local education agency is a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

- State and city postsecondary systems.
 - If there is a state or city higher education agency that oversees the postsecondary system, they should be included as another agency partner (in addition to the postsecondary system).
 - If there is no state or city education agency that oversees the postsecondary system, the system can apply as the sole agency partner.
 - A postsecondary system that applies as an education agency partner cannot also serve as the research institution partner in the same project.
- The Institute encourages partnerships to include other organizations that can contribute to the successful outcome of the work such as other state or local agencies (e.g., juvenile justice, social services), community organizations, parent organizations, and teacher and staff organizations.
- Partnerships may include more than one state or local education agency. Having more than one education agency partner may increase the significance of the research, but the inclusion of more than one education agency should be justified based on their similarities and shared interests in the proposed work (e.g., contiguous school districts or similar types of districts that seek to address the same issue) and the capacity of the research institution to successfully work with multiple partner agencies within the funding provided by the grant. You should avoid the appearance of creating a convenience partnership, that is, a group of state or district education agencies that have little in common outside of their relationship with the research institution.
 - A partnership may be set up within an existing research network that links one or more research institutions with one or more education agencies. The network itself cannot apply as the partnership, but some or all of the research institutions and education agencies within the network may apply as the partnership and propose to work together within the network.
 - A research network that links one or more research institutions with multiple schools cannot apply as the partnership. The research institution would have to partner with an education agency and could then work with the schools in the network that fall under the education agency partner.
- Partnerships may include more than one research institution. The inclusion of more than one research institution should be justified based on their shared interests in the proposed work, the research complementarities they bring to the partnership, and their ability to maintain a long-term working relationship within the partnership.
- The key research institution(s) and education agency(s) forming the partnership should submit a joint Letter of Agreement (placed in Appendix D of the application) documenting their participation and cooperation in the partnership and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. All other institutions involved in the proposed partnership should submit similar separate Letters of Agreement.

2. The Principal Investigator and Authorized Organization Representative

The Principal Investigator

Applications must include at least one Principal Investigator from a research institution and at least one Principal Investigator from a state or local education agency. All should have expertise in the education issue to be addressed, and at least one of the state or local agency's Principal

Investigators must have decision-making authority for the issue within their education agency.⁴

The partnering institutions are responsible for identifying the Principal Investigator (PI) from their institution on a grant application and may elect to designate more than one person to serve in this role. In so doing, an institution identifies them as sharing the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically, and their individual responsibilities should be delineated. All PIs will be listed on any grant award notification.

The partnership must choose one PI (from either the research institution or education agency) to have overall responsibility for the administration of the award and interactions with the Institute. The PI is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports.⁵ This person should be identified on the application as the Project Director/Principal Investigator. All other Principal Investigators should be listed as Co-Principal Investigators.

The PI and a Co-Principal Investigator (representing the research institution and the education agency) will attend one meeting (for up to 3 days) each year in Washington, DC with other grantees and Institute staff. The project's budget should include this meeting. Should the PI or Co-PI not be able to attend the meeting, he/she can designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

The Institute is launching a new National Research and Development Center on Knowledge Utilization, in which some of the focus may be on Institute-funded partnerships and collaborations. If so, PIs and Co-PIs may be asked to participate in occasional interviews or meetings sponsored by the R&D Center.

The Authorized Organization Representative

The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the applicant institution is the official who has the authority to legally commit the applicant to (1) accept federal funding and (2) execute the proposed project. When your application is submitted through Grants.gov, the AOR automatically signs the cover sheet of the application, and in doing so, assures compliance with U.S. Department of Education policy on public access to scientific publications and data as well as other policies and regulations governing research awards (see [Part III.B. Additional Award Requirements](#)).

3. Common Applicant Questions

- *May I submit an application if I did not submit a Letter of Intent?* Yes, but the Institute strongly encourages you to submit one. If you miss the deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent, contact the appropriate program officer for the topic you are interested in and that seems to best fit your research. Please see Part II.C.1 Submitting a Letter of Intent for more information.
- *Is there a limit on the number of times I may revise and resubmit an application?* No. Currently, there is no limit on resubmissions. Please see [Part III.D.2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions](#) for information about the requirements for resubmissions.

⁴ Personnel with decision-making authority have responsibility for the program/policy and its implementation across the district or state.

⁵ The Institute uses the uniform format for reporting performance progress on Federally-funded research projects, the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rppr/>) for these reports.

- *May I submit the same application to more than one of the Institute's grant programs?* No.
- *May I submit multiple applications?* Yes. You may submit multiple applications if they are substantively different from one another. Multiple applications may be submitted within the same topic, across different topics, or across the Institute's grant programs.
- *May I apply if I work at a for-profit developer or distributor of an intervention or assessment?* Yes. You may apply if you or your collaborators develop, distribute, or otherwise market products or services (for-profit or non-profit) that can be used as interventions, components of interventions, or assessments in the proposed research activities. However, the involvement of the developer or distributor must not jeopardize the objectivity of the research. In cases where the developer or distributor is part of the proposed research team, you should discuss how you will ensure the objectivity of the research in the project narrative.
- *May I apply if I intend to copyright products (e.g., curriculum) developed using grant funds?* Yes. Products derived from Institute-funded grants may be copyrighted and used by the grantee for proprietary purposes, but the U.S. Department of Education reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such products for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so [34 C.F.R. § 74.36(a) (2013) (<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=28ac4dbfeabba7d842fc8544fc835881&ty=HTML&h=L&r=SECTION&n=34y1.1.1.1.21.3.13.16>)].
- *May I apply if I am not located in the United States or if I want to collaborate with researchers located outside of the United States?* The research institution partner may be located outside the territorial United States, but the education agency partner must be a U.S. agency. You may also propose working with sub-awardees who are not located in the territorial United States. Your proposed work must be relevant to education in the United States. Also, institutions not located in the territorial United States (both primary grantees and sub-awardees) cannot charge indirect costs.

D. CHANGES IN THE FY 2015 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

There are a number of changes to the RFA for the Research Collaborations Grants program (CFDA 84.305H) in FY 2015. Please review the requirements listed under each topic (see [Part II Topic Requirements](#)) as well as the instructions for preparing your application ([Part IV Preparing Your Application](#)). Major changes include the following:

- The Institute has modified the formatting of the RFA to clarify the minimal requirements for an application to be sent forward for peer review (in addition to the [Applicant Requirements](#) listed in Part I.C.).
 - In Part II Topic Requirements, each section of the Project Narrative (Significance, Partnership, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources) and the Awards section includes a set of Requirements that must be met for an application to be considered [responsive](#) and sent forward for scientific peer review. Requirements are considered the minimum necessary for an application to be sent forward for peer review. After each set of Requirements presented in the Project Narrative, the Institute offers a set of Recommendations and strongly suggests that these be addressed in order to improve the quality of your application.
- An additional section titled *Partnership* has been added to the Project Narrative. In this section, you are to discuss the current state of your partnership and the partnership activities (such as capacity building and tracking the partnership's success) that will take place during the project.

The peer review panel will score this section separately from the other four sections of the Project Narrative.

- Because the new *Partnership* section includes the partnership aspects of your project, the *Significance* and *Research Plan* sections now focus solely on the research aspects.
- For the Continuous Improvement Research in Education topic, the pilot study has been replaced with an ongoing comparison study.
- For the Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies topic, a Dissemination Plan has been added as a requirement under the Research Plan. Applications that lack a Dissemination Plan will be found nonresponsive and not sent forward for peer review.
- For all topics, the primary partnering institutions (the research institution and the education agency) are to include a joint Letter of Agreement in [Appendix D](#) documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership.
 - Separate similar Letters of Agreement should be submitted from any other members of the partnership.
- The Appendices have been modified as follows:
 - [Appendix A](#) is now limited to three pages and is required if you are resubmitting an application that received peer reviewer feedback in a prior competition year. You must use this appendix to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments.
 - Given this change to Appendix A, the other appendices have been modified as follows:
 - Appendix B is now used for tables, charts, and figures that supplement the 25-page project narrative.
 - Appendix C is now used for examples of materials used in an intervention or assessment that is the focus of your proposed research.
 - Appendix D is now used for letters of agreement from partners (e.g., schools or districts) or data sources (e.g., agencies that hold data to be analyzed).
- Information about how to prepare and submit applications electronically through Grants.gov is now included in the Request for Applications.
- The Institute has added a Glossary of important terms at the end of this document; the first use of each term is hyperlinked to the Glossary within each Part of this RFA, and within each Topic section within Part II.

E. READING THE REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Institute encourages both **Principal Investigators and Authorized Organization Representatives** to read this Request for Applications to learn how to prepare an application that meets all of the following criteria. These criteria are required for an application to be sent forward for peer review.

- **RESPONSIVE**
 - Meets **Applicant requirements** (see Part I.C).
 - Meets **Project Narrative and Award requirements** for the selected *Topic* (see Part II).
- **COMPLIANT** (see Parts III and IV)
 - Follows **formatting and font size requirements**.
 - Follows **page limits**.
 - Includes all **required content**.
 - Includes only **allowable content**.
- **SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA GRANTS.GOV ON TIME – THE INSTITUTE DOES NOT ACCEPT LATE APPLICATIONS** (see Part V)
 - Submitted no later than 4:30:00 pm, Washington, DC time, on August 7, 2014.
 - Completed using the **correct application package** downloaded from Grants.gov.
 - Includes **PDF files** that are **named and formatted appropriately**, and that are attached **to the proper forms** in the application package.

PART II: TOPIC REQUIREMENTS

A. APPLYING TO A TOPIC

For the FY 2015 Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy grants program, you must submit to one of the three research topics described here in Part II.⁶ Each topic has specific requirements that must be met for an application to be found [responsive](#) and sent forward to peer review. The Institute strongly encourages you to contact the relevant program officer listed under each topic if you have questions regarding the appropriateness of a particular project for submission under a specific topic.

The Institute developed the topic structure to help focus the work proposed by researchers. The topics differ by the type of partnership in place, the work to be done to support the partnership, and the joint research to be done (see table below). The research can be focused specifically on students without disabilities, students with or at risk of disabilities, or a combination of both under all three topics.

Comparison of Topics

Topic	Partnership	Partnership Work	Research
Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research	New or Existing	Joint activities to build or strengthen the partnership to carry out the initial research, to maintain a longer-term collaboration, and to increase the agency's capacity to take part in and use research	Explore a specific problem/issue linked to student education outcomes of high importance to an education agency and develop a plan for future joint research
Continuous Improvement Research in Education	Existing	Joint activities to adapt and revise an existing strategy while improving the research and implementation capacity of the education agency	Implement, adapt, and revise an approach to a specific problem/issue linked to student education outcomes of high importance to an education agency
Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies	New or Existing	Joint activities to carry out the proposed evaluation and to increase the agency's capacity to take part in and use research	Causal evaluation of an important agency program or policy that is to improve student education outcomes

These three topics are not intended to cover all work that can be done by partnerships. The Institute's Education Research Grants program (84.305A) also funds research done by partnerships of research institutions and education agencies (e.g., the development and piloting of education [interventions](#) or [assessments](#)) and partnerships between different sets of organizations (e.g., research institutions and individual schools or groups of schools).

For each topic, the following pages describe the requirements and recommendations for your application.

⁶ You must identify your chosen topic area on the SF-424 Form (Item 4b) of the Application Package (see [Part V.E.1.](#)), or the Institute may reject your application as nonresponsive to the requirements of this RFA.

1. Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research

Program Officer: Dr. Allen Ruby (202-219-1591; Allen.Ruby@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research (Research Partnerships) topic supports partnerships composed of research institutions and state or local education agencies that have identified an education issue or problem of high priority for the education agency that has important implications for improving [student education outcomes](#). These partnerships are to carry out initial research on that education issue and develop a plan for future research on it. Through this joint research, the education agency's capacity for taking part in research and using research results is expected to increase. The ultimate goal of the partnerships supported under this topic is to conduct and promote research during and after the grant that has direct implications for improving programs, processes, practices, or policies that will result in improved student education outcomes.

The Research Partnerships topic provides funds to develop new partnerships and to support the expansion of existing partnerships into new areas of research. The Research Partnerships topic differs from the Institute's other research grant programs in that it provides support for a partnership's development of a research plan. The Institute's other research grant programs can support similar partnerships but only after they have developed a research plan.

As part of developing the research plan, partnerships are expected to complete initial research to help understand their education issue and develop future research. To this end, partnerships may analyze secondary data and/or collect primary data and analyze it. However, given the limit on the size of the grant award, the Institute does not expect large-scale data collection (quantitative or qualitative) during a Research Partnerships project. More comprehensive data collection activities can be proposed in the plan for future research.

Projects under the Research Partnerships topic will result in:

- A description of the partnership as developed over the course of the grant.
- A description of the education issue addressed by the partnership.
- Findings from the completed initial research and any conclusions drawn from it.
- A plan for the partnership to carry out further research on the education issue. Future research may be of different types, for example:
 - Further exploration of the issue (e.g., an Exploration project under the Institute's Education Research Grants program - 84.305A).
 - The development of an intervention to address the issue (e.g., a Development and Innovation project under 84.305A).
 - Implementation, adaptation, and revision of an education approach to address the issue (e.g., a Continuous Improvement project under this grant program).
 - The evaluation of an intervention that is to address the issue (e.g., a State/Local Evaluation project under this grant program or an Efficacy and Replication project under 84.305A).
- A description of the agency capacity-building activities carried out.
- Recommendations for how the partnership could be maintained over the longer term.

- Lessons learned from developing the partnership that could be used by others in forming such partnerships.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the Research Partnerships topic **must meet the requirements set out under (1) Project Narrative and (2) Awards** in order to be [responsive](#) and sent forward for scientific peer review. The requirements are the minimum necessary for an application to be sent forward for peer review.

In order to improve the quality of your application, the Institute offers recommendations following each set of Project Narrative requirements.

(1) Project Narrative

The 25-page project narrative for a Research Partnerships project application **must** include five sections – Significance, Partnership, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

- a. Significance** – The purpose of this section is to justify the importance of the partnership’s proposed work, addressing the specific education issue or problem.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Research Partnerships topic **must** include a Significance section that describes the following:

- (i) The education issue or problem to be addressed by the partnership, how it is linked to student education outcomes, and how it is important to future decisions of the education agency.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you address the following in your Significance section.

- As you describe the specific issue or problem the partnership will address and its importance to the education agency:
 - Describe both theoretical and empirical links between the issue and student education outcomes (this may include a simple [theory of change](#)).
 - Discuss how addressing the issue could contribute to the improvement of student education outcomes.
 - Note the issue’s importance to other education agencies, policymakers and stakeholders (this point is of secondary importance for the significance of the proposed project).
 - Describe the education system in which you will examine the issue or problem including the level(s) you will be looking at (e.g., classroom, school, district, multiple districts or state).
 - Describe any current work on the issue or problem being done by the education agency.
- b. Partnership** – The purpose of this section is to describe any previous joint work and the current state of your partnership, and your plans for its development over the course of the project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Research Partnerships topic **must** include a Partnership section that describes the following:

- (i) The research institution and the education agency that together form the basis of the partnership.
- (ii) A plan for the development of the partnership.
- (iii) A partnership tracking strategy that monitors the partnership as it carries out the research and that facilitates a summary of partnership lessons at the conclusion of the project.

Recommendations: The Institute recommends that, in order to address the above requirements, you include the following in your Partnership section to demonstrate the initial strength of your partnership along with your plans to develop the partnership, build the capacity of both the partnership and the education agency for taking part in and using the results of research, and maintain the partnership in the long term.

Description of the Partnership:

- Describe all organizations that will form the partnership.
- Describe the stage of the partnership be it an early partnership or a mature one, and how the partnership's stage will affect the type of work proposed, the roles of the partners, and the expectations for the results of the partnership including both the research produced, and the future research to be carried out by the partnership.
 - Describe the process through which the involved organizations decided to propose a Research Partnerships project.
 - Discuss any past or ongoing collaborations between members of the partnership and the results of those joint efforts.
- Describe the partners' common interest in the proposed work and how all partners will contribute to and benefit from the project.
- Identify the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the project on track and ensure the quality of its work. This is especially important for partnerships involving multiple institutions carrying out different tasks that must be coordinated and/or integrated.
- Describe any other research partnerships the education agency already has in place and the research topics they address. If such collaborations exist, you should discuss how the partnership proposed in this application and the work it will do differs from the existing collaborations and how it would provide non-overlapping research support to the education agency.

Partnership Development Plan:

- Identify the expectations for the partnership by the end of the project and how it will be reached given the current stage of the partnership.
- Describe the activities and processes the partnership will use to establish and develop the partnership. These activities should contribute to the proposed research, education agency capacity building, and the longer-term collaboration.
- Discuss the partnership's decision-making process, e.g., how it will determine research direction, capacity building activities, release of research results, future research plans.
- Discuss how the proposed project will improve the education agency's capacity to participate in and/or use research. Expectations for capacity building will depend upon the initial capacity of the education agency.

Partnership Tracking Strategy:

- Describe how you will monitor the overall success of the partnership. Consider both the Institute's intent that
 - Partnerships will continue after the grant ends and
 - Partnerships will increase the education agency's capacity to participate in and use research.
- Basic measures of success include maintaining the partnership during the life of the project and completing the initial research and future research plan. The Institute encourages you to include other indicators that you would value as signs of the project's success and could be used by others carrying out similar collaborative work.

- c. Research Plan** – The purpose of this section is to describe the plan for carrying out the initial research and preparing for the future research that is to take place after the grant ends.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Research Partnerships topic **must** include a Research Plan section that clearly describes the following:

- (i) A plan for the research to be done on the specified education issue or problem that includes a research design, sample, measures, data collection, and analysis.
- (ii) A plan for developing the future research to be done after the grant ends.

Recommendations: The Institute expects the research to be exploratory and descriptive. It may include primary data collection and analysis, secondary data analysis, or a combination of both. Purely quantitative analyses are acceptable, as are purely qualitative analyses if careful attention is given to the representativeness of the sample and analysis of the data. The Institute expects that mixed methods may yield the most useful findings. Below are recommendations to strengthen your research plan:

In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Research Plan section.

Research Plan:

- Describe the main research objectives of the partnership's work, including research questions. The Institute expects that research conducted under the Researcher-Practitioner topic will be exploratory in nature, seeking to better understand the links between the education system's characteristics (e.g., student, teacher, or school factors; education agency policies, programs, or practices) and student education outcomes, without establishing causal linkages.
- Provide a detailed description of the sample to be studied, the research design, the measures you will use, how you will collect the data, and the analyses you will do. If necessary, a significant amount of work may involve merging and coding data sources.
- Discuss how the research will contribute to the education agency's work on the issue or problem.
- Discuss how the research activities will increase the education agency's capacity to participate in and/or use research.

- Discuss whether the initial research is being done to prepare for a specific type of future research, e.g.,
 - In-depth exploratory analysis on the issue or problem (e.g., an Exploration project under 84.305A).
 - Development of an intervention to address the issue (e.g., a Development and Innovation project under 84.305A).
 - Implementation, adaptation, and revision of an education approach to address the issue (e.g., a Continuous Improvement project under this grant program).
 - Evaluation of an intervention already in place to address the issue (e.g., a State/Local Evaluation project under this grant program or an Efficacy and Replication project under 84.305A).
 - A research or evaluation project supported by other funding sources.

Plan for Future Research:

- Describe how the partnership will develop a plan for research that continues beyond the end of the grant.
- Describe how the future research will be of value to the education agency.

d. Personnel – The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, the responsibilities of each team member, and each team member’s time commitments.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Research Partnership topic **must** include a Personnel section that describes the following:

- (i) The PI or Co-PI from the research institution.
- (ii) The PI or Co-PI from the education agency who has decision-making authority for the issue being examined.
- (iii) The rest of the key personnel at both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions. The Institute will not accept applications that propose to hire experts in specific methodological or policy issues after the grant is received.

Recommendations: The Institute recommends that, in order to address the above requirements, you include the following in your Personnel section to demonstrate that your team possesses the appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research (i.e., maintaining the partnership; completing the initial research and the plan for future research; and building the capacity of both the partnership and the education agency for taking part in and using the results of research).

- Identify and briefly describe the following for all key personnel (i.e., Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators) on the project team:
 - Qualifications to carry out the proposed work, roles and responsibilities within the project, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project, and past success at working in similar partnerships and producing products of value to an education agency.

- Do not propose to hire experts in specific methodological or policy issues after the grant is received.
 - Describe the Principal Investigator’s qualifications and experience for managing a grant of this size.
 - Make sure at least one key person has a large enough time commitment to help maintain the progress of the work throughout the project.
 - If any key personnel intend to donate time to the project, his or her donated time must be listed in the budget and budget narrative and described as cost sharing. The Institute does not require or request such cost sharing nor consider it in award decisions but does require that it be documented. Personnel proposing to donate time must demonstrate that they have such time available.
- e. Resources** – The purpose of this section is to describe how the partnership has both the institutional capacity to complete a project of this size and complexity and access to the resources needed to successfully complete this project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Research Partnerships topic **must** include a Resources section that describes the following:

- (i) Access to and/or a plan to acquire the resources you will need to successfully complete this project at the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Resources section to demonstrate that your team has a plan for acquiring or accessing the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed work and the commitments of each partner for the implementation and success of the project.

- Describe your institutional capacity and experience to manage a grant of this size.
- Describe your access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).
- Include a joint Letter of Agreement in [Appendix D](#) from the primary partnering institutions (the research institution and the education agency) documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. Include separate similar Letters of Agreement from the other members of the partnership.
- Describe your plan for acquiring any major resources that are not currently accessible and that are necessary for the successful completion of the project (e.g., equipment, test materials, curriculum or training materials).
- Describe your access to the schools (or other [authentic education settings](#)) in which the research will take place. Include Letters of Agreement in Appendix D documenting the participation and cooperation of the schools. Convincing letters will convey that the organizations understand what their participation in the study will involve (e.g., ongoing student and teacher surveys, student [assessments](#), classroom observations).
- Include information about student, teacher and school incentives, if applicable.

- Describe your access to any data sets that you will require. Include letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing Memorandum of Understanding in Appendix D to document that you will be able to access the data for your proposed use.
- If teachers or other school staff are expected to play an important role in the research (e.g., through teacher observations, surveys, logs), you should discuss how their cooperation will be obtained and how much they already know about and support the work. It would also be helpful to provide evidence from past work of high teacher or staff involvement in a study.

(2) Awards

A Research Partnerships project **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:

- **The maximum duration of a Research Partnerships project is 2 years.** An application of this type proposing a project length of greater than 2 years will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Cost Maximums:

- **The maximum award for a Research Partnerships project is \$400,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).** An application of this type proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

2. Continuous Improvement Research in Education

Program Officer: Dr. James Benson (202-219-2129; James.Benson@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The Continuous Improvement Research in Education (Continuous Improvement) topic supports well-established partnerships between research institutions and state or local education agencies to address a specific education issue or problem that is of high importance to the education agency and has important implications for [student education outcomes](#). The partnerships are to have worked together for at least one year. They are to implement, adapt, and revise an **approach** to addressing an education issue or solving an education problem.

The Institute recognizes that agencies must tailor their approaches to fit specific contexts. Continuous Improvement projects afford education agencies the opportunity to employ systematic strategies for revising and adapting approaches to address issues and problems of high importance so that they function optimally within local education systems to meet student needs. By collaborating with researchers, the Institute hopes that the education agency will increase its capacity to carry out research, development, and implementation.

In addition to helping state and local education agencies address self-identified education issues within their specific environments, the Institute seeks to learn broader lessons about how policies, programs, interventions or practices can be adapted to address both local conditions and the difficulties that are faced during wide implementation. While these difficulties may differ by approach or student outcome (see, for example, Yeager and Walton, 2011 regarding barriers to the adoption of social-psychological interventions), the Institute expects that projects under the Continuous Improvement topic will contribute to both general and problem-specific knowledge regarding successful implementation.

In Continuous Improvement projects, partnerships propose to use an existing approach (or approaches) that has a compelling theoretical and/or empirical rationale for improving student outcomes. The partnership will adapt and revise the approach by applying a continuous improvement strategy in order to improve implementation, intermediate outcomes, and student education outcomes. As part of the improvement process, the partnership will identify and implement systemic changes that need to be made in support of the success of the approach.

The approach your partnership proposes to implement can fall along a continuum that runs from a single intervention to a set of related policies, programs, interventions, and practices designed to address a problem or issue. The key requirement is that you propose an approach that has a compelling logic or underlying theory and that has evidence of improving student education outcomes.⁷ The Institute expects that the proposed approach may change substantially over the project as you adapt it to local conditions, but you should have something concrete that can be implemented early in the first year of the project.

The Institute recognizes that different methods are used for conducting continuous improvement research and does not require or endorse any specific method. However, the Institute recognizes that there are major themes running through the improvement literature and recommends that you address these when describing your method:

- *Implementation in the local context.* The [feasibility](#) and effectiveness of implementation may vary

⁷ If you are interested in developing a new approach, you should apply under the Development and Innovation goal of the Education Research Grants program (84.305A).

An **approach** is defined as a policy, program, intervention, practice or combination thereof that addresses a problem/issue of high importance to an education agency, and that has a strong theoretical and/or empirical rationale for improving student education outcomes.

across target populations and organizational settings. Design-based research focuses on the systems involved in education as they have evolved in local contexts (Berwick, 2008; Brown, 1992, Design-Based Research Collaborative, 2003; Bryk 2009; Penuel, et. al. 2011). The place-based focus of the work ensures that the research is conceptualized and implemented where it is to be used (in its natural setting) in order to address the complexity of the education system involved, which is often not yet well-understood by researchers and whose complexity may be partly local in nature.

- *Relatively rapid changes in implementation.* Compared to evaluation research, improvement science emphasizes an ongoing short-cycle strategy for designing and developing tools, products, or procedures. These short cycle methods are often drawn from management methods used in business for the ongoing improvement of processes and products. Examples of these include PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act which is also known as Plan, Do, Study, Act or the Deming Cycle), Six Sigma (DMIAC-Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control and DMADV-Define, Measure, Analyze, Design, Verify), and methods fostering multiple tests of small improvements (Deming, 1986; Imai, 1986; Morris and Hiebert, 2011; Pyzdek and Keller, 2009). These methods envision the use of multiple cycles of implementation, testing, and revision with each cycle leading to further improvements in the product or process. Applied to educational processes, short-cycle strategies target the implementation of educational approaches for improvements at a rapid rate – typically within weeks or months, as opposed to years.
- *Addressing organizational structures and processes and their relation to innovation.* Bureaucratic organizations characterized by hierarchical structure can inhibit the kind of collaborative processes proposed by improvement science (Shortell et al. 1995). Organizational culture, the beliefs and capabilities of members (e.g. teachers), as well as policies and management practices can facilitate (or inhibit) instructional innovation—including adoption, initial implementation, and whether the innovation is sustained and developed and over time (Blumenfeld et al.2000). Improvement science seeks to change organizational routines and processes so that they facilitate innovation and improvement of organizational functions (Penuel et al. 2011).
- *Reforming the system in which the approach is being implemented.* Systemic processes and structures may prevent or inhibit the type of collaboration necessary for improvement to occur. Improvement science seeks to change systems so that they facilitate improvement of organizational functions. Work under this topic should not overlay a specific approach on an existing system but adapt/revise the approach so that it is integrated within the system, and revise the existing system as necessary to implement and incorporate the approach.

Projects under the Continuous Improvement topic will result in the following:

- A description of the partnership as it developed over the course of the grant.
- A description of the approach in use by the end of the project.
- A description of the process of continuous improvement used to adapt/revise the approach and the measures used in that process.
- Results from an ongoing comparison of student outcomes (along with school, classroom, and teacher outcomes as appropriate) in sites (e.g., schools/classrooms) where the approach is being adapted and revised, compared to sites that are not trying to implement the approach.
- Recommendations for how the partnership could be maintained over the longer term.
- Specific and general lessons from the revisions to the approach and changes made in the education system that improved the approach and its implementation.
- Lessons learned from the joint development work performed by the partnership that could benefit other partnerships.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must meet the requirements set out under (1) Project Narrative and (2) Awards** in order to be [responsive](#) and sent forward for scientific peer review. The requirements are the minimum necessary for an application to be sent forward for peer review.

In order to improve the quality of your application and its peer review, the Institute offers recommendations following each set of Project Narrative requirements.

(1) Project Narrative

The 25-page project narrative for a Continuous Improvement project application **must** include five sections – Significance, Partnership, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

- a. Significance** – The purpose of this section is to justify the importance of the partnership’s research aims (i.e., adapting and revising the education approach for the education agency partner).

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must** include a Significance section that clearly describes the following:

- (i) Describe the education issue or problem to be addressed by the partnership, how it is linked to student education outcomes, and how it is important to the education agency’s decision-making.
- (ii) Describe the approach to be taken to address the education issue/problem.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends the following:

- As you describe the specific issue or problem the partnership will address and its importance to the education agency:
 - Discuss how its resolution will contribute to the improvement of student education outcomes.
 - Note its importance to other education agencies, policymakers and stakeholders.
- Describe the proposed approach to addressing the specific education issue/problem.
- Describe the initial theory of change for your proposed approach, along with theoretical justifications and empirical evidence that support it (Figure 1 provides an example of one way that you could conceptualize a simple theory of change). Keep in mind that you may need to revise your theory over the course of the project.
 - Your theory of change should describe the component or components of the approach that are to lead to changes in one or multiple underlying processes, which in turn will foster better student education outcomes directly or through intermediate outcomes (e.g., changed teacher practices). A more complete theory of change could include further details such as the sample representing the target population, level of exposure to the components of the approach, key [moderators](#) (such as setting, context, student and their family characteristics), and the specific measures used for the outcomes.
 - For approaches designed to directly affect the teaching and learning environment and, thereby, indirectly affect student education outcomes, be clear in your

theory of change to identify any intermediate outcomes that the approach is designed to affect (e.g., teacher practices) and how these outcomes impact the student education outcomes of interest.

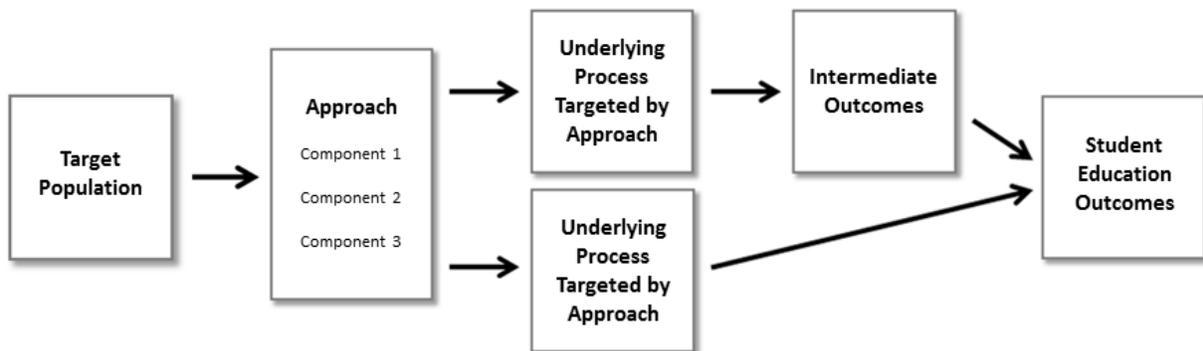


Figure 1. A diagram of a simple theory of change.

- Identify any additional reasons (beyond those offered in the theory of change) why implementing, adapting, and revising the approach will improve education outcomes for the partner education agency’s students. For example,
 - Contrast the approach with the education agency’s current practice and discuss why the approach is likely to produce better student outcomes.
 - Provide any available empirical evidence that the approach (or any of its key components) can be implemented successfully.
 - Provide any available empirical evidence that the approach (or any of its key components) improves student education outcomes.
 - Discuss the expected contribution the approach can make to addressing the education issue or problem.
- Describe the education system in which you will implement, adapt, and revise the approach including its level or levels (e.g., classroom, school, district, multiple districts or state). Discuss why the approach will need to be adapted and revised to work within this system. Identify aspects of the system that you expect may need to be changed so that the approach can succeed.
- Describe the current status of the approach within the education agency.
 - If the agency is already implementing the approach, discuss the current state of implementation and why a Continuous Improvement grant is needed.
 - If the education agency is not yet implementing the approach, describe how the agency has come to the decision to do so and how it will obtain the materials, staffing, and expertise necessary (e.g., through expending or re-allocating the agency’s own funds, provision of an intervention by a developer/distributor, or use of grant funds) and the date by which these resources will be obtained.⁸ The Institute does not intend that the grant funds be used by the agency to purchase an intervention (e.g., products such as texts or software, professional development or other support). Grant funds may be used to support an

⁸ If an intervention is to be purchased by the agency or donated to the agency, Letters of Agreement should be included in Appendix D showing the relevant sources of support for obtaining the intervention.

intervention's implementation, adaptation and revision, and the measurement and feedback activities necessary to support adaptation and revision.

- b. Partnership** – The purpose of this section is to describe the already well-established partnership and your plans for its development over the course of project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must** include a Partnership section that describes the following:

- (i) The research institution and the education agency that together form the basis of the partnership and have worked together for at least one year.
- (ii) A partnership development plan.
- (iii) A partnership tracking strategy that monitors the partnership as it carries out the improvement work, and that facilitates a summary of partnership lessons at the conclusion of the project.

Recommendations: The Institute recommends that, in order to address the above requirements, you include the following in your Partnership section to demonstrate the initial strength of your partnership along with your plans to develop the partnership, build the capacity of both the partnership and the education agency for taking part in and using the results of research.

Description of the Partnership:

- Describe all organizations that will form the partnership.
- Describe the previous work of the partners and the results, including products, from that collaboration. Stronger applications will include personnel from the partnering institutions who have previously collaborated.
- Describe the partners' common interest in the proposed work, how the partnering organizations decided to propose a Continuous Improvement project, and how all partners will contribute to and benefit from the project.
- Identify the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the project on track and ensure the quality of its work. This is especially important for projects involving multiple institutions carrying out different tasks that must be coordinated and/or integrated.

Partnership Development Plan:

- Describe the activities and processes the partnership will use to further develop the partnership. These activities should contribute to the proposed research, education agency capacity building, and, if planned, a longer-term collaboration.
- Discuss the partnership's decision-making process, e.g., how it will determine research direction, capacity building activities, release of research results, and future research plans.
- Discuss how the proposed project will improve the education agency's capacity to carry out research, development, and implementation. Expectations for capacity building depend upon the initial capacity of the education agency. Education agencies are not expected to become capable of implementing a continuous improvement approach on their own though they are expected to become more familiar with the process and with incorporating research results into their decision-making.

Partnership Tracking Strategy:

- Describe how you will monitor the overall success of the partnership. Consider both the Institute's intent that:
 - Partnerships should continue after the grant ends if partners see a benefit in doing so.
 - Partnerships will increase the education agency's familiarity with the use of continuous improvement strategies and incorporating research results into decision-making.
 - Basic measures of success include maintaining the partnership during the life of the project and completing the adaptation, revision, and comparison proposed. The Institute encourages you to include other indicators that you would value as signs of the project's success and could be used by others carrying out similar collaborative work.
- c. Research Plan** – The purpose of this section is to describe how the partnership will adapt and revise the approach, identify any changes needed in the education system to improve implementation, and maintain an ongoing comparison of education outcomes for students (and others such as teachers and schools) under the approach versus those not involved with it. While the Institute does not recommend any specific improvement method, the research plan should be systematic such that it is likely to produce substantive improvements in the approach, as well as findings that generalize to the context of concern to the education agency. The guidelines set forth in this section reflect the concern for a systematic approach to improvement work that recognizes the difference between the use of assessment for improving implementation versus evaluating efficacy.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must** include a Research Plan section that describes the following:

- (i) A measurement strategy and a plan for data collection.
- (ii) A continuous improvement process.
- (iii) A plan for an ongoing comparison study of student education outcomes.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Research Plan section to strengthen the methodological rigor of the proposed Continuous Improvement work.

Measurement Strategy:

- Your measurement strategy and data collection plan should address measuring how well the approach is functioning, how well the desired outcomes are being met, and what attributes of the approach and the education system will need revision to improve the approach's functioning.
- The measurement strategy should reflect the theory of action for the approach, and should include short-term, intermediate and final outcome measures. Rapid implementation revision requires ongoing measurement with the resulting data made available quickly in order to inform the next step of the cycle. Your measures should address:
 - Short-term Outcomes. Intermediate or final outcomes that can be measured during the short cycles should be included (i.e., outcomes that can change relatively quickly). These outcomes should fit within your theory of change.

- For important student education outcomes that will not be measurable during a short cycle (e.g., grades, standardized test scores), you should discuss their links to the outcomes that can be measured during the cycles.
- The outcomes you focus on may shift over the improvement process. For example, you may start with the short-term intermediate outcomes, shift to short-term final outcomes later in the improvement process, and then turn to the longer-term student outcomes at the end of the improvement process and/or throughout the ongoing comparison study.
- If necessary, measures can be proposed to be developed by the partnership.
 - Justify the need for the measures.
 - Describe the development process.
 - Discuss how you will determine the [reliability](#) and [validity](#) of the measures.
- Discuss the procedures for collecting the data the measures will be based on and, if necessary, how they will be converted into the measures.
 - Describe when these measures will be collected during each short cycle.
 - Describe how they will feed into the revisions made during the following cycles.
 - Be sure to describe not only data collection on how well the approach is functioning but also data collection on how the system is constraining or promoting the approach's success.

Improvement Process:

- In describing the continuous improvement process, include:
 - How the approach will be obtained and initially implemented in the education system.
 - How the approach will be adapted and revised within the education system to improve [usability](#), feasibility, and student education outcomes.
 - How the education system will be adjusted to improve the approach's success.
- Include both an analysis process and an implementation process in your description of the continuous improvement process.
 - The analysis process addresses how the partnership will study and interpret data collected through the measurement strategy. A strong application will specify not only the appropriate data analytic techniques, but also the organizational infrastructure, routines and practices within the partnership that will facilitate and expedite decisions regarding subsequent improvements to the approach.
 - The implementation process addresses how the agency will implement the approach in its initial form, and how the partnership will implement iterative revisions of the approach. It may be helpful to include measures of usability and feasibility of the approach.
 - Usability: the extent to which the intended user understands or can learn how to use the approach effectively and efficiently, is physically able to use the approach, and is willing to use the approach. Usability feeds into revisions of the approach.

- Feasibility: the extent to which the approach can be implemented within the requirements and constraints of an [authentic education setting](#). Feasibility feeds into both revisions of the approach and the education system.
- Describe how you will monitor the improvement process.
 - Describe the infrastructure and processes to be used to ensure that the approach's adaptation and revision is on track, that the improvement process continues to function as proposed, and that the data for the ongoing comparison is collected.
 - Discuss how the partnership will identify any changes needed in the education system to improve implementation and outcomes.

Ongoing Comparison Study:

- Detail your plan for an ongoing comparison of student education outcomes (using prospective data) between sites taking part in the adaptation and revision of the approach and comparison sites that are not adapting the approach but are doing what the sites have traditionally done (e.g., a business as usual comparison). In your description, you should address:
 - The comparison sites. Comparison sites should be chosen early in the project. Stronger applications will provide data to show that the comparison sites are appropriate (e.g., that they serve students with similar characteristics and outcomes). If the comparison sites have not been selected, include a plan for their identification, including how to check their comparability.
 - In situations where all sites within a district are adapting the approach (or where the remaining sites are not comparable), you may use sites from another district in cases where both the district and sites can be shown to be comparable.
 - The timing of the ongoing comparisons. The comparisons do not need to be made for every improvement cycle but should take place at least every semester or year (depending on the outcomes being compared) to provide useful benchmarks.
 - The student education outcomes to be compared. The comparison should be done using easily available student outcome data (e.g., administrative data on attendance, grades, test scores).
 - The analysis of the comparison data.
 - Comparison group practice. A regular determination of how the education issue or problem is being addressed in the comparison sites (as compared to the treatment sites) should be done using simple methods (e.g., interviews with a small number of knowledgeable site personnel or reviews of site documents). You are not required to conduct an intensive study of the comparison sites.
- The ongoing comparison is not a pilot study, and reviewers are not expected to evaluate your comparison study with the same rigor as they would for a pilot study plan for a Development and Innovation project or an Efficacy Study under the Education Research Grants Program.

- Applicants are not expected to propose RCTs or strong quasi-experimental designs, and are not expected to be able to make strong causal claims from their results.
 - Instead, the ongoing comparison will provide a form of benchmarking against the business as usual to check if the adaptation and revision of the approach appears to be improving student education outcomes.
- d. Personnel** – The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, the responsibilities of each team member, and each team member’s time commitments.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must** include a Personnel section that describes the following:

- (i) The PI or Co-PI from the research institution.
- (ii) The PI or Co-PI from the education agency who has decision-making authority for the issue being examined.
- (iii) The rest of the key personnel at both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions.

Recommendations: The Institute recommends that, in order to address the above requirements, you include the following in your Personnel section to demonstrate that your team possesses the appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research (i.e., maintaining the partnership; implementing, adapting and revising the approach; carrying out ongoing comparison; and building the capacity of both the partnership and the education agency for future research).

- Identify and briefly describe the following for all key personnel (i.e., Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators) on the project team: qualifications to carry out the proposed work, roles and responsibilities within the project, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project, and past success at working in similar partnerships and producing products of value to an education agency.
 - Do not propose to hire experts in specific methodological or policy issues after the grant is received.
- Describe the Principal Investigator’s qualifications and experience for managing a grant of this size.
- Partnerships should include at least one key person with a large enough time commitment to help maintain the progress of the work throughout the project.
- If any key personnel intend to donate time to the project, his or her donated time must be listed in the budget and budget narrative and described as cost sharing. The Institute does not require or request such cost sharing nor consider it in award decisions but does require its documentation. Personnel proposing to donate time must document that they have such time available.

- e. **Resources** – The purpose of this section is to describe how the partnership has both the institutional capacity to complete a project of this size and complexity and access to the resources needed to successfully complete this project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Continuous Improvement topic **must** include a Resources section that describes the following:

- (i) Access to and/or a plan to acquire the resources needed to successfully complete this project at the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Resources section to demonstrate that your team has a plan for acquiring or accessing the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed work and the commitments of each partner for the implementation and success of the project.

- Describe your institutional capacity and experience to manage a grant of this size.
- Describe your access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).
- Include a joint Letter of Agreement in [Appendix D](#) from the primary partnering institutions (the research institution and the education agency) documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. Include separate, similar Letters of Agreement from the other members of the partnership.
- Describe your plan for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project (e.g., equipment, test materials, curriculum or training materials).
- Describe your access to the schools (or other authentic education settings) in which the improvement process will take place. Include letters of agreement in Appendix D documenting the participation and cooperation of the schools. Convincing letters will convey that the organizations understand what their participation in the study will involve (e.g., ongoing student and teacher surveys, student [assessments](#), classroom observations).
- Include information about student, teacher and school incentives, if applicable.
- Describe your access to any data sets that you will require. Include letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing MOUs in Appendix D to document that you will be able to access the data for your proposed use.
- If teachers or other school staff are expected to play an important role in the research (e.g., through teacher observations, surveys, logs), you should discuss how their cooperation will be obtained and how much they already know about and support the work. It would also be helpful to provide evidence from past work of high teacher or staff involvement in a study.

(2) Awards

A Continuous Improvement project **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:

- **The maximum duration of a Continuous Improvement project is 4 years.** An application proposing a project length of greater than 4 years will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Cost Maximums:

- **The maximum award for a Continuous Improvement project is \$2,500,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).** An application proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.
 - If the approach chosen includes an existing intervention, grant funds are not to be used to purchase that intervention (e.g., products such as texts or software, professional development). The education agency is expected to purchase the intervention and any accompanying training in its use. Grant funds are to be used to support implementation, adaptation and revision of the approach; the measurement and feedback activities necessary to support adaptation and revision; the ongoing comparison; and capacity-building activities for the education agency. Funds can be used to support personnel from any of the partners (including school, district, and state personnel) carrying out these activities.

Maximum number of awards:

- The Institute intends to make no more than 5 awards for FY 2015.

3. Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies

Program Officer: Dr. Allen Ruby (202-219-1591; Allen.Ruby@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies (State/Local Evaluation) topic supports the evaluation of fully-developed programs and policies implemented by state and local education agencies to determine whether they produce a beneficial impact on [student education outcomes](#) relative to a counterfactual when they are implemented under [routine conditions](#) in [authentic education settings](#).⁹ These evaluations are to determine both the overall impact of the programs/policies and the [impact across a variety of conditions](#).

The Institute supports the evaluation of programs and policies that substantially modify or differ from existing practices. The modest changes in programs/policies that States and districts make on an ongoing basis, such as small changes in daily schedules or minor adjustments to teacher certification systems, are not the targets of this research program. Ongoing projects are evaluating State and local programs/policies that include: expansion of preschool, technology-based formative testing, rigorous curriculum requirements, high-stakes testing, professional development programs, and grade retention policies.

Through the State/Local Evaluation topic, the Institute seeks to establish long-term partnerships between research institutions and education agencies that will focus their research efforts on programs/policies of high relevance to policymakers and practitioners. The Institute expects the education agencies to identify research questions of high importance to their work, help shape the evaluation to meet their conditions, and have direct access to the results. These education agencies may lack the funds and/or the research capacity to evaluate such programs/policies, yet such evaluations are necessary to distinguish those programs/policies producing the expected outcomes from those that do not, to identify the particular groups (e.g., types of students, teachers, or schools) for which programs/policies work, and to determine which aspects of programs/policies need to be modified. The results of such evaluations are of value not only to the education agency directly

Fully-developed

A fully-developed program or policy has already been or is ready to be implemented by schools and districts. All materials and products required for its implementation by the intended [end user](#) are readily available for use in authentic education settings.

Routine conditions

Conditions under which a program or policy is implemented that reflect 1) the everyday practice occurring in classrooms, schools, and districts and 2) the heterogeneity of the target population.

Overall Impact

The degree to which a program/policy has on average a net positive impact on the outcomes of interest in relation to the program or practice to which it is being compared.

Impact Across a Variety of Conditions

Determining whether a program or policy improves student education outcomes for certain subgroups (e.g., students or schools) or under certain conditions (e.g., moderating factors).

⁹ Evaluations of programs and policies may also be submitted to the Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.305A) under the Efficacy and Replication goal. The State/Local Evaluation topic offers a longer grant duration and larger grant amount than the Efficacy and Replication goal and requires (a) the program/policy be implemented by a state or local education agency under routine conditions, (b) a partnership between a research institution and a state or local education agency, and (c) that grant funds not be used to support implementation of the program or policy.

involved, but also to other states and districts that may be using or considering the use of similar programs/policies.

Projects under the State/Local Evaluation topic will result in the following:

- Evidence regarding the impact of a fully-developed program/policy, implemented by a state or local education agency, on relevant student academic outcomes relative to a comparison condition using a rigorous research design that meets the Institute's What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards (with or without reservations) (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>). The impacts include both overall impacts and impacts under a variety of conditions.
- Conclusions on and revisions to the [theory of change](#) that guides the program or policy and a discussion of the broader contributions to the theoretical and practical understanding of education processes and procedures.
- Information needed for future research on the program or policy.
 - If a beneficial impact is found, the identification of the organizational supports, tools, and procedures needed for sufficient implementation of the core components of the program or policy.
 - If no beneficial impact is found, a determination of whether and how to revise the program or policy and/or its implementation.
- Information about the financial costs of the program/policy.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must meet the requirements set out under (1) Project Narrative and (2) Awards** in order to be [responsive](#) and sent forward for scientific peer review. The requirements are the minimum necessary for an application to be sent forward for peer review.

In order to improve the quality of your application and its peer review, the Institute offers recommendations following each set of Project Narrative requirements.

(1) Project Narrative

The 25-page project narrative for a State/Local Evaluation project application **must** include five sections – Significance, Partnership Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

- a. Significance** – The purpose of this section is to justify the importance of the partnership's research aims (i.e., evaluating the education agency's program or policy).

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must** include a Significance section that describes the following:

- (i) The specific education program or policy to be evaluated.
- (ii) The state or local agency's implementation of the program or policy.
- (iii) The theory of change underlying the program or policy.
- (iv) A rationale for testing the impact of the program or policy on student education outcomes in the proposed manner.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Significance section to justify the research aims of the partnership.

- Describe the fully-developed program or policy including:
 - The program or policy and its components.
 - Processes and materials (e.g., manuals, websites, training, coaching) that will be used to support its implementation.
 - Evidence that the program or policy is fully developed and ready for implementation in authentic education settings (e.g., it is already being implemented, or if it is to be implemented then all materials and implementation supports required for implementation are in place).
 - How the program or policy substantially modifies or differs from existing practice (either in the same location or in other locations).
- Describe the implementation of the program or policy, including evidence that it has adequate funding and is being managed or overseen by the education agency.¹⁰
 - The date implementation began, will begin, or will be expanded. For the latter two conditions, provide evidence that the program or policy will begin or be expanded (e.g., new laws or regulations, appropriation of funds, training of personnel).
 - The target population and where implementation will take place.
 - Who the end users of the program or policy are and how implementation will be carried out by them.
 - The routine conditions under which the study will take place.
- Clearly describe the initial theory of change for the program or policy (Figure 1 provides an example of one way that you could conceptualize a simple theory of change), along with theoretical justifications and empirical evidence that support it. Programs or policies implemented by state and local education agency may emerge out of a practice context and lack a formal theory of change. However, you should articulate the underlying logic or sequence of events that is to result in student education outcomes.
 - Your theory of change should describe the component or components of the program or policy that are to lead to changes in one or multiple underlying processes, which in turn will foster better student education outcomes directly or through intermediate outcomes (e.g., changed teacher practices). A more complete theory of change could include further details such as the sample representing the target population, level of exposure to the components, key moderators (such as setting, context, student and family characteristics), and the specific measures used for the outcomes.
 - For programs or policies designed to directly affect the teaching and learning environment and, thereby, indirectly affect student education outcomes, identify any intermediate outcomes that are to be affected (e.g., teacher practices) and how these outcomes impact the student education outcomes of interest.

¹⁰ An education agency must have officially adopted the program or policy. For funding to evaluate programs or policies that an education agency is allowing a researcher to pilot but have not been officially adopted by the education agency, you should apply to the Education Research Grants program (84.305A) under the Efficacy and Replication goal.

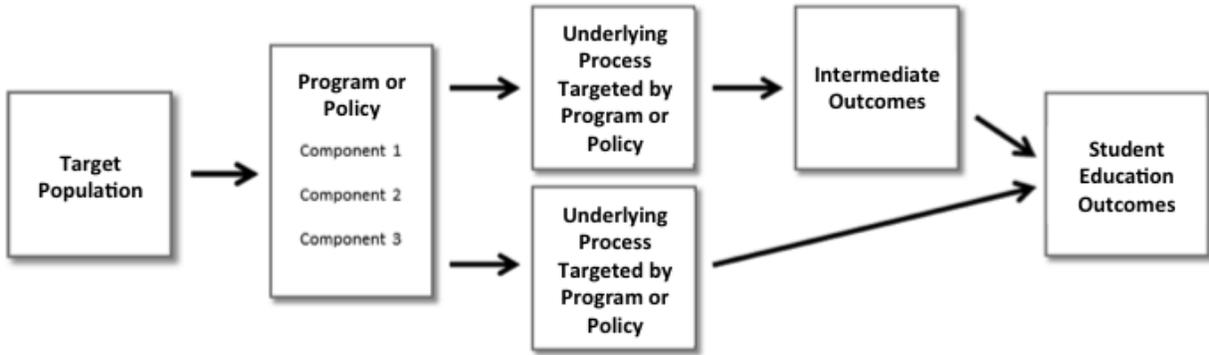


Figure 1. A diagram of a simple theory of change.

- To provide a compelling rationale for testing the impact of the program or policy on student education outcomes in the proposed manner, address why the program or policy is likely to produce better student outcomes relative to current practice (or argue that the program or policy is current practice if widely used).
- Discuss the overall practical importance of the program or policy. Why should education practitioners or policymakers care about the results of the proposed evaluation? Practical importance may include:
 - The program or policy is in widespread use. By widespread use, the Institute means used across multiple states, in multiple districts in a single state, or in the majority of schools in one or more large districts.
 - The program or policy is important because it is the primary approach currently used, is representative of the most commonly used approaches, or offers an alternative approach to the most commonly used approaches.
 - Describe any studies that have attempted to evaluate the program or policy, note their findings, and discuss why your proposed study would be an important improvement on past work.
 - Note any evidence of the [feasibility](#) and affordability of the program or policy. Such evidence could increase the likelihood of the program or policy's adoption by other states and districts if beneficial impacts are found.

b. Partnership – The purpose of this section is to describe the current state of your partnership and your plans for its development over the course of project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must** include a Partnership section that clearly describes the following:

- (i) The research institution and the education agency that together form the basis of the partnership.
- (ii) A plan to improve the capacity of the education agency to understand the process and procedures of education research, use of research in decision-making, and, if the district is willing and capable, to carry out research.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Partnership section to justify the significance of the proposed work.

Description of the Partnership

- Describe all organizations that will form the partnership.
- Describe the stage of the partnership (i.e., an early partnership or a mature one),¹¹ and how the partnership's stage will affect the type of work proposed under the grant, the roles of the partners, and the expectations for the results of the project including both the research produced and the future of the partnership.
 - Describe the process through which the involved organizations decided to propose a State/Local Evaluation project.
 - Discuss any past or ongoing collaborations between the members of the partnership and the results of those joint efforts.
- Describe the partners' common interest in the proposed work and how all partners will contribute to and benefit from the project.
- Identify the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the project on track and ensure the quality of its work. This is especially important for projects involving multiple institutions carrying out different tasks that must be coordinated and/or integrated.

Partnership Development Plan:

- Discuss the partnership's decision-making process, e.g., how it will determine research direction, capacity building activities, release of research results, and future research plans.
- Discuss how the proposed project will improve the education agency's capacity to participate in and use research.
 - Specifically address this point for the proposed research, i.e., address improving the agency's understanding of the research design, the evidence provided, and the validity and generalizability of the evidence.
 - More generally, address the development of the agency's capacity to understand and use research. Identify if the agency is also interested in building its capacity to carry out research and, if so, discuss how this will be done.

- c. Research Plan** – The purpose of this section is to describe your plans for the evaluation of the program or policy and for the dissemination of the results.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must** include a Research Plan section that describes the following:

- (i) A research design for the study of the program or policy's impact on student education outcomes (including the sample, setting, and measures).
- (ii) A power analysis.

¹¹ Partnerships at any stage are acceptable for a State/Local Evaluation project, but it is important to show that the partnership is adequate to carry out the proposed evaluation.

- (iii) The determination of fidelity of implementation and comparison group practice including the measures and analyses to be used.
- (iv) The data analyses.
- (v) A cost analysis.
- (vi) A dissemination plan.

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Research Plan section to strengthen the methodological rigor of the proposed State/Local Evaluation work and optimize the dissemination plan.

Sample and Setting:

- Discuss the population you intend to study and how your sample and sampling procedures will allow you to draw inferences for this population.
- Define your sample and sampling procedures for the proposed study, including justification for exclusion and inclusion criteria.
- Describe strategies to increase the likelihood that participants (e.g., schools, teachers, and/or students) will join the study and remain in the study over the course of the evaluation.
- Describe the setting in which the study will take place (e.g., characteristics of the school and/or the surrounding community), and how this may affect the generalizability of your study.

Research Design:

- Describe how you will be able to make causal inferences based on the results from your design and how potential threats to internal validity will be addressed. Typical designs for State/Local Evaluation projects include the following:
 - Randomized controlled trials (using random assignment to the treatment and comparison conditions). Such trials have the strongest internal validity for causal conclusions and, thus, are preferred whenever feasible. Clearly identify and present a convincing rationale for the unit of randomization (e.g., student, classroom, teacher, or school) and explain the procedures for random assignment, including how the integrity of the assignment process will be ensured. Random assignment can be done through:
 - Assignment of all appropriate units or a subset of units (e.g., volunteers for a program).
 - Lotteries when a program cannot be received by all who wish to receive it. For lotteries, it is important to document oversubscription and how the design will address participants who participate in multiple lotteries or participants who are assigned to the control condition but seek alternative programs (e.g., control students who do not gain entry to a magnet school may go to a private school and be lost to the study).
 - A staggered roll-out of the program or policy under which the control group will receive the program or policy at a later time while the treatment group receives it immediately. For staggered roll-outs, it is important to justify that the time between roll-out for the treatment

group and the control group is long enough time to expect to see an improvement in the treatment students' education outcomes.

- Randomly assigning groups to different variations of the program or policy.
- Regression discontinuity designs – Regression discontinuity designs can also provide unbiased estimates of the effects of education programs or policies. For these designs, it is important to explain the appropriateness of the assignment variable, show that there is a true discontinuity, document that no manipulation of the assignment variable has occurred and that the composition of the treatment and comparison group does not differ in ways that would indicate selection bias, and include sensitivity analyses to assess the influence of key procedural or analytic decisions on the results.
- Quasi-experimental designs (other than a regression discontinuity design) – Quasi-experimental designs can be proposed when randomization is not possible. For these designs, it is important to justify how the proposed design permits drawing causal conclusions about the effect of the program or policy on the intended student education outcomes, explain how selection bias will be minimized or modeled,¹² and discuss those threats to internal validity that are not addressed convincingly by the design and how conclusions from the research will be tempered in light of these threats. Because quasi-experimental designs can meet the WWC's standards for evidence with reservations only, it is also important to detail how you will ensure that the study meets these standards (e.g., by establishing equivalence between treatment and comparison groups and preventing high and/or non-equivalent attrition).
- For all types of research designs, discuss how you will meet WWC evidence standards (with or without reservations).¹³
- For all types of research designs, including those using random assignment, explain how you will document that the treatment and comparison conditions are equivalent at the outset of the study and how you will document the level of bias occurring from overall and differential attrition rates.
- Describe and justify the counterfactual. In evaluations of education programs and policies, individuals in the comparison group typically receive some kind of treatment. It may be a well-defined alternative treatment or a less well-defined standard or frequent practice across the district or region. A clear description of the program or policy and the counterfactual helps reviewers decide whether the program or policy is sufficiently different from what the comparison group receives to produce different student education outcomes.
- Describe strategies or existing conditions that will reduce potential contamination between treatment and comparison groups.

Power Analysis:

- Discuss the statistical power of the research design to detect a reasonably expected and minimally important effect of the program or policy on the student education outcomes

¹² For more information, see Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., and Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

¹³ See the WWC's Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 at: [//ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/documentsum.aspx?sid=19](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/documentsum.aspx?sid=19) (primarily Chapter III and Appendix D).

and consider how the clustering of participants (e.g., students in classrooms and/or schools) will affect statistical power.

- Identify the minimum effect of the program or policy that you will be able to detect, justify why this level of effect would be expected, and explain why this would be a practically important effect.
- Detail the procedure used to calculate either the power for detecting the minimum effect or the minimum detectable effect size. Include the following:
 - The statistical formula you used.
 - The parameters with known values used in the formula (e.g., number of clusters, number of participants within the clusters).
 - The parameters whose values are estimated and how those estimates were made (e.g., intraclass correlations, role of covariates).
 - Other aspects of the design and how they may affect power (e.g., stratified sampling/blocking, repeated observations).
 - Predicted attrition and how it was addressed in the power analysis.
- Provide a similar discussion regarding power for any causal analyses to be done using subgroups of the proposed sample.

Include power analyses for all proposed causal analyses.

Include enough information so that reviewers can duplicate your power analysis.

Outcome Measures:

- Include student education outcome measures that are of practical interest to schools, districts, and states. These may include grades, state or district standardized [assessments](#) of student achievement, state end-of-course exams, exit exams, attendance and tardiness rates, disciplinary actions, drop out and/or graduation rates. The Institute recommends that, where possible, states and districts incorporate the use of administrative data in the evaluation.
- Make clear how the measures align with the theory of change and that the skills or content the program or policy is designed to address are captured in the measures.
- Describe the psychometric properties ([reliability](#) and [validity](#)) of your student education outcome measures.
- For programs and policies designed to directly change the teaching and learning environment and, in doing so, indirectly affect student outcomes, provide measures of the intermediate outcomes (e.g., teacher or leader behaviors) as well as measures of student education outcomes.

Moderators and Mediators:

- Analyses of [moderators](#) and [mediators](#) can make important additions to an evaluation. Such analyses can make your research more useful to policymakers and practitioners by helping to explain how or under what conditions a program or policy improves student education outcomes and can help explain the often-found variation in impacts across sites. Such analyses can also improve the quality and usefulness of future research syntheses or meta-analysis that may draw upon your work.

- Focus on a small set of moderators for which there is a strong theoretical and/or empirical base to expect they will moderate the impact of the program or policy on the student education outcomes measured. Consider factors that may affect the generalizability of the study (e.g., whether the intervention works for some groups of students but not others, or in schools or neighborhoods with particular characteristics).
- Conduct exploratory analyses of potential mediators of the program or policy. Most State/Local Evaluation studies are not designed or powered to rigorously test the effects of specific mediating variables; however, exploratory analyses can be used to better understand potential mediators of the program or policy.
- Describe the measures for the moderators and mediators you will examine, how they will be collected, and how they will be analyzed.

Determining Fidelity of Implementation and Comparison Group Practice:

- Identify the measures of the fidelity of implementation of the program or policy and describe how they capture its core components.¹⁴ If the program or policy includes training of district personnel, you should also identify the measures of fidelity of implementation of the training being provided.
- Identify the measures of comparison group practices so that you can compare treatment and comparison groups on the implementation of critical features of the program or policy and determine whether there was clear distinction in what the groups received.
- Show that these two sets of measures are sufficiently comprehensive and sensitive to identify and document critical differences between what the treatment and comparison groups receive.
- Describe your plan for determining the fidelity of implementation of the program or policy within the treatment group and the identification of practice (especially practices that are similar to the treatment) in the comparison group.
 - Include initial studies of [fidelity of implementation](#) and comparison group practice to be completed within the first year the program or policy is implemented.¹⁵

Determining fidelity of implementation and comparison group practice early on is essential to preventing a confounding of implementation failure and program or policy failure.

Data Analysis:

- Detail your data analysis procedures for all analyses (e.g., impact study, subgroup analyses, fidelity of implementation study), including both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Make clear how the data analyses directly answer your research questions.
- Address any clustering of students in classes and schools.
- Discuss how exclusion from testing and missing data will be handled in your analysis.

¹⁴ If needed, you can propose devoting a short period of time (e.g., 2-6 months) to develop a measure of fidelity of implementation or comparison group practice.

¹⁵ A State/Local Evaluation project can disseminate findings of low fidelity of implementation (or similar comparison group practice) but cannot provide resources for improving implementation.

- If you intend to link multiple data sets, provide sufficient detail for reviewers to judge the feasibility of the linking plan.

Cost Analysis:

- The cost analysis should help schools and districts understand the monetary costs of implementing the program or policy (e.g., expenditures for personnel, facilities, equipment, materials, training, and other relevant inputs). Annual costs should be assessed to adequately reflect expenditures across the lifespan of the program (e.g., start-up costs and maintenance costs). Program or policy costs can be contrasted with the costs of comparison group practice to reflect the difference between them. The Institute is not asking for an economic evaluation of the program (e.g., cost-benefit, cost-utility, or cost-effectiveness analyses), although such analyses can be proposed.

Dissemination Plan:

- Identify the audiences that you expect will be most likely to benefit from your research (e.g., other researchers, federal or state policymakers, state and local school system administrators, principals, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and others).
- Discuss the ways in which you intend to reach these audiences through the major publications, presentations, and products you expect from your project. These should include:

It is important to disseminate findings of impact as well as findings of no impact.

Ensure that dissemination goes beyond the researcher audience in ways that are of use to practitioners and policymakers.

- Publication in scientific, peer-reviewed journals and presentations at academic conferences.
- Reporting findings to the partner education agency and schools that provided the project with data and data-collection opportunities.
- Publications and presentations in venues designed for policymakers, practitioners, and the general public including electronic venues (e.g., websites, webinars, podcasts, press releases, videos).
- The Institute considers all types of findings from State/Local Evaluation projects to be potentially useful to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.
 - Findings of a beneficial impact on student outcomes support the wider use of the program or policy and its further adaptation to conditions that are quite different.
 - Findings of no impacts on student outcomes (with or without impacts on more intermediate outcomes such as a change in teacher instruction) are important for decisions regarding the ongoing use and wider dissemination of the program or policy, further revision of the program or policy and its implementation, and revision of its theory of change.

Timeline:

- Provide a timeline for each step in your evaluation including such actions as sample selection and assignment, baseline data collection, implementation, ongoing data

collections, fidelity of implementation and comparison group practice study, impact analysis, and dissemination.

- Indicate procedures to guard against bias entering into the data collection process (e.g., pretests occurring after the program or policy has been implemented or differential timing of assessments for treatment and control groups).
- The timeline may be discussed in the project narrative and/or presented in Appendix B.

d. Personnel – The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, the responsibilities of each team member, and each team member’s time commitments.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must** include a Personnel section that describes the following:

- (i) The research team at both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions.

Recommendations: The Institute recommends that, in order to address the above requirements, you include the following in your Personnel section to demonstrate that your team possesses the appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to implement the proposed research competently (i.e., maintaining the partnership; evaluating the program or policy; and building the capacity of both the partnership and the education agency for future research).

- Identify and briefly describe the following for all key personnel (i.e., Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators) on the project team: qualifications to carry out the proposed work, roles and responsibilities within the project, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project, and past success at working in similar partnerships, producing products of value to an education agency, and disseminating research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals and other venues targeting policymakers and practitioners.
- Describe the Principal Investigator’s qualifications and experience for managing a grant of this size.
- Include a plan to ensure the objectivity of the research if key personnel were involved in the development of the program or policy, are from for-profit entities (including those involved in its commercial production or distribution), or have a financial interest in the outcome of the research. Such a plan might include how assignment of units to treatment and comparison conditions, supervision of outcome data collection and coding, and data analysis are assigned to persons who were not involved in the development of the program or policy and have no financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.
- If you have previously received an award from any source to evaluate a program or policy, discuss any theoretical and practical contributions made by your previous work. By demonstrating that your previous evaluation was successful, you provide a stronger case for your evaluation of another program or policy.

- e. **Resources** – The purpose of this section is to describe how the partnership has both the institutional capacity to complete a project of this size and complexity and access to the resources needed to successfully complete this project.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the State/Local Evaluation topic **must** include a Resources section that describes the following:

- (i) Access to and/or a plan to acquire the resources you will need to successfully complete this project at the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).

Recommendations: In order to address the above requirements, the Institute recommends that you include the following in your Resources section to demonstrate that your team has a plan for acquiring or accessing the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed work and the commitments of each partner for the implementation and success of the project.

- Describe your institutional capacity and experience to manage a grant of this size.
- Describe your access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).
- Include a joint Letter of Agreement in Appendix D from the primary partnering institutions (the research institution and the education agency) documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. Include separate similar Letters of Agreement from the other members of the partnership.
- Describe your plan for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project (e.g., equipment, test materials, curriculum or training materials).
- Describe your access to the schools (or other authentic education settings) in which the research will take place. Include letters of agreement in Appendix D documenting the participation and cooperation of the schools. Convincing letters will convey that the organizations understand what their participation in the study will involve (e.g., ongoing student and teacher surveys, student assessments, classroom observations).
- Include information about student, teacher and school incentives, if applicable.
- Describe your access to any data sets that you will require. Include letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing MOUs in Appendix D to document that you will be able to access the data for your proposed use.
- If teachers or other school staff are expected to play an important role in the research (e.g., through teacher observations, surveys, logs), you should discuss how their cooperation will be obtained and how much they already know about and support the work. It would also be helpful to provide evidence from past work of high teacher or staff involvement in a study.

(2) Awards

A State/Local Evaluation project **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:

- **The maximum duration of a State/Local Evaluation project is 5 years.** An application of either type proposing a project length of greater than 5 years will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Cost Maximums:

- **The maximum award for a State/Local Evaluation project is \$5,000,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).** An application of either type proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.
 - Grant funding must be used solely for evaluation purposes. Funds must not be used to support implementation of the policy or the program (e.g., materials, texts, software, computers, assessments, training, or coaching required for implementation).
 - It is permissible to use grant funds to pay participants for completing questionnaires, surveys, and assessments that are part of evaluation so long as researchers obtain approval from an Institutional Review Board.

PART III: COMPETITION REGULATIONS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

A. FUNDING MECHANISMS AND RESTRICTIONS

1. Mechanism of Support

The Institute intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications.

2. Funding Available

Although the Institute intends to support the research topics described in this announcement, all awards pursuant to this Request for Applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications. The Institute makes its awards to the highest quality applications, as determined through scientific peer review regardless of topic.

The size of the award depends on the research topic and scope of the project. Please attend to the duration and budget maximums set for each topic in Part II Topic Requirements. If you request a project length longer than the maximum or a budget higher than the maximum, your application will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

Indirect Cost Rate

When calculating your expenses for research conducted in field settings, you should apply your institution's negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate, as directed by the terms of your institution's negotiated agreement with the federal government. Questions about indirect cost rates should be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Indirect Cost Group <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgindex.html>.

Institutions, both primary grantees and sub-awardees, not located in the territorial United States cannot charge indirect costs.

Meetings and Conferences

If you are requesting funds to cover expenses for hosting meetings or conferences, please note that there are statutory and regulatory requirements in determining whether costs are reasonable and necessary. Please refer to OMB's new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards <https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-30465> for more information.

In particular, federal grant funds cannot be used to pay for alcoholic beverages or entertainment, which includes costs for amusement, diversion, and social activities. In general, federal funds may not be used to pay for food. A grantee hosting a meeting or conference may not use grant funds to pay for food for conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business. You may request funds to cover expenses for working meetings (e.g., working lunches); however, the Institute will determine whether these costs are allowable in keeping with the new OMB Uniform Cost Principles. Grantees are responsible for the proper use of their grant awards and may have to repay funds to the Department if they violate the rules for meeting- and conference-related expenses.

4. Program Authority

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq., the "Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002," Title I of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

5. Applicable Regulations

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99. In addition 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

B. ADDITIONAL AWARD REQUIREMENTS

1. Public Availability of Data and Results

Recipients of awards are expected to publish or otherwise make publicly available the results of the work supported through this program. Institute-funded investigators must submit [final manuscripts](#) resulting from research supported in whole or in part by the Institute to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC, <http://eric.ed.gov>) upon acceptance for publication. An author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all graphics and supplemental materials that are associated with the article. The Institute will make the manuscript available to the public through ERIC no later than 12 months after the official date of publication. Investigators and their institutions are responsible for ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this requirement.

2. Special Conditions on Grants

The Institute may impose special conditions on a grant if the grantee is not financially stable, has a history of unsatisfactory performance, has an unsatisfactory financial or other management system, has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant, or is otherwise not responsible.

3. Demonstrating Access to Data and Authentic Education Settings

The research you propose to do under a specific topic will most likely require that you have (or will obtain) access to [authentic education settings](#) (e.g., classrooms, schools, districts), secondary data sets, or studies currently under way. In such cases, you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include Letters of Agreement in [Appendix D](#) from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, **the Institute may require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds**. If you cannot provide such documentation, the Institute may not award the grant or may withhold funds.

You will need supporting evidence of partnership or access if you are:

- *Conducting research in or with authentic education settings* - If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer-review panel and your research relies on access to authentic education settings (e.g., schools), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary settings in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to the Institute indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research before the full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, the Institute may ask

you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.

- *Using secondary data sets* - If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer-review panel and your research relies on access to secondary data sets (such as federally-collected data sets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary data sets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed data sets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to the Institute from the entity controlling the data set(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed data set prior to submitting your application, the Institute may ask you to provide updated documentation indicating that you still have permission to use the data set to conduct the proposed research during the project period.
- *Building off of existing studies* - You may propose studies that piggyback onto an ongoing study (i.e., that require access to subjects and data from another study). In such cases, the Principal Investigator of the existing study should be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

In addition to obtaining evidence of access, the Institute strongly advises applicants to establish a written agreement, within 3 months of receipt of an award, among all key collaborators and their institutions (e.g., Principal and Co-Principal Investigators) regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

C. OVERVIEW OF APPLICATION AND PEER REVIEW PROCESS

1. Submitting a Letter of Intent

The Institute strongly encourages potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent by June 5, 2014. Letters of Intent are optional, non-binding, and not used in the peer review of a subsequent application. However, when you submit a Letter of Intent, one of the Institute's Program Officers will contact you regarding your proposed research to offer assistance. The Institute also uses the Letter of Intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer-review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Should you miss the deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent, you still may submit an application. If you miss the Letter of Intent deadline, the Institute asks that you inform the relevant program officer of your intention to submit an application.

Letters of Intent are submitted online at (<http://iesreview.ed.gov>). **Select the Letter of Intent form for the topic under which you plan to submit your application.** The online submission form contains fields for each of the seven content areas listed below. Use these fields to provide the requested information. The project description should be single-spaced and should not exceed one page (about 3,500 characters).

- Descriptive title
- Topic that you will address
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Principal Investigator and any Co-Principal Investigators
- Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors

- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the Duration maximums for each topic)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the Budget maximums for each topic)

2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to one of the Institute's previous competitions but that was not funded, you must indicate on the [SF-424 Form of the Application Package \(Items 4a and 8\) \(see Part V.E.1.\)](#) that the FY 2015 application is a resubmission (Item 8) and include the application number of the previous application (an 11-character alphanumeric identifier beginning "R305" entered in Item 4a). The prior reviews will be sent to this year's reviewers along with the resubmitted application. You must describe your response to the prior reviews using [Appendix A \(see Part V.D.3.\)](#). Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2015 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past and did not receive an award but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should indicate on the application form that the FY 2015 application is a new application. You must provide a rationale explaining why the FY 2015 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision using [Appendix A \(see Part V.D.3.\)](#). Without such an explanation, if the Institute determines that the current application is similar to a previously unfunded application, the Institute may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year's reviewers along with the current application.

You may submit applications to more than one of the Institute's FY 2015 grant programs and to multiple topics within the Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy program. In addition, within a particular grant program or topic, you may submit multiple applications. However, you may submit a given application only once for the FY 2015 grant competitions (i.e., you may not submit the same application or similar applications to multiple grant programs, multiple topics, or multiple times within the same topic). If you submit the same or similar applications, the Institute will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

3. Application Processing

Applications must be submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time on August 7, 2014 through the Internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov website: <http://www.grants.gov/>. You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in [Part IV Preparing Your Application](#) and [Part V Submitting Your Application](#) and the instructions in the User Guides provided by Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html>).

After receiving the applications, Institute staff will review each application for [compliance](#) and [responsiveness](#) to this Request for Applications. Applications that do not address specific requirements of this request will not be considered further.

Once you formally submit an application, Institute staff will not comment on its status until the award decisions are announced (no later than July 1, 2015) except with respect to issues of compliance and responsiveness. This communication will come through the Applicant Notification System (<http://iesreview.ed.gov>).

Once an application has been submitted and the application deadline has passed, you may not submit additional materials for inclusion with your application.

4. Peer Review Process

The Institute will forward all applications that are compliant and responsive to this Request for Applications to be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Scientific reviews are conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below and the review procedures posted on the Institute's

website, http://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/application_review.asp, by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and Request for Applications.

Each compliant and responsive application is assigned to one of the Institute's scientific review panels. At least two primary reviewers will complete written evaluations of the application, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to each of the review criteria. Primary reviewers will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score, for each application they review. Based on the overall scores assigned by primary reviewers, the Institute calculates an average overall score for each application and prepares a preliminary rank order of applications before the full peer-review panel convenes to complete the review of applications.

The full panel will consider and score only those applications deemed to be the most competitive and to have the highest merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank order. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any application that he or she believes merits full panel review but that would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

5. Review Criteria for Scientific Merit

The purpose of Institute-supported research is to contribute to solving education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. The Institute expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in [Part II Topic Requirements](#).

a) Significance

Does the applicant provide a compelling rationale for the significance of the research as defined in the Significance section for the topic under which the applicant is submitting the application?

b) Partnership

Does the applicant provide a description of the current partnership and plans for the development of the partnership in line with what is requested in the Partnership section for the topic under which the applicant is submitting the application?

c) Research Plan

Does the applicant meet the Requirements and Recommendations in the Research Plan section for the topic under which the applicant is submitting the application?

d) Personnel

Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the Principal Investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research?

e) Resources

Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed activities? Do the commitments of each partner show support for the implementation and success of the project?

6. Award Decisions

The following will be considered in making award decisions for responsive and compliant applications:

- Scientific merit as determined by peer review,
- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award,
- Contribution to the overall program of research described in this Request for Applications,
- Availability of funds.

PART IV: PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

A. OVERVIEW

The application contents – individual forms and their PDF attachments – represent the body of an application to the Institute. All applications for Institute funding must be self-contained. As an example, reviewers are under no obligation to view an Internet website if you include the site address (URL) in the application. In addition, **you may not submit additional materials directly to the Institute after the application package is submitted.**

B. GRANT APPLICATION PACKAGE

The Application Package for this competition (84-305H2015) provides all of the forms that you must complete and submit. The application form approved for use in the competition specified in this Request for Applications is the government-wide SF-424 Research and Related (R&R) Form (OMB Number 4040-0001).

1. Date Application Package is Available on Grants.gov

The Application Package will be available on <http://www.grants.gov/> by June 5, 2014.

2. How to Download the Correct Application Package

To find the correct downloadable Application Package, you must first search by the CFDA number for this research competition without the alpha suffix. To submit an application to the Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy (Research Collaborations) program, you must search on: CFDA 84.305.

The Grants.gov search on CFDA 84.305 will yield more than one Application Package. For the Research Collaborations program, you must download the Application Package marked:

- Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy CFDA 84.305H

You must download the Application Package that is designated for this grant competition. If you use a different Application Package, even if it is for another Institute competition, the application will be submitted to the wrong competition. Applications submitted using the incorrect application package run the risk of not being reviewed according to the requirements and recommendations for the Research Collaborations competition.

See [Part V Submitting Your Application](#), for a complete description of the forms that make up the application package and directions for filling out these forms.

C. GENERAL FORMATTING

For a complete application, you must submit the following as individual attachments to the R&R forms that are contained in the application package for this competition in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF):

- Project Summary/Abstract;
- Project Narrative, and if applicable, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D (all together as one PDF file);
- Bibliography and References Cited;
- Research on Human Subjects Narrative (i.e., Exempt or Non-Exempt Research Narrative);
- A Biographical Sketch for each senior/key person;

- A List of Current and Pending Support for each senior/key person;
- A Narrative Budget Justification for the total Project budget; and
- Subaward Budget(s) that has (have) been extracted from the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form, if applicable.

Information about the formatting requirements for all of these documents except the [Subaward budget attachment \(see Part V.E.6.\)](#) is provided below.

1. Page and Margin Specifications

For all Institute research grant applications, a “page” is 8.5 in. x 11 in., on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

2. Page Numbering

Add page numbers using the header or footer function, and place them at the bottom or upper right corner for ease of reading.

3. Spacing

Text must be single spaced.

4. Type Size (Font Size)

Type must conform to the following three requirements:

- The height of the letters must not be smaller than a type size of 12 point.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi.
- Type size must yield no more than six lines of type within a vertical inch.

You should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. The type size used must conform to all three requirements. Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the application; consequently, the use of small type will be grounds for the Institute to return the application without peer review.

Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements is necessary so that no applicant will have an unfair advantage, by using small type or by providing more text in their applications. These requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted. As a practical matter, if you use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing or other alterations, the application will typically meet these requirements.

5. Graphs, Diagrams, and Tables

You are encouraged to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If color is used, you should ensure that the material reproduces well when photocopied in black and white.

Text in figures, charts, and tables, including legends, may be in a type size smaller than 12 point but must be readily legible.

D. PDF ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Summary/Abstract

a) Submission

You must submit the project summary/abstract as a separate PDF attachment at Item 7 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

The project summary/abstract is limited to 1 single-spaced page.

c) Content

The project summary/abstract should include the following:

- **Title** of the project.
- The **topic** to which you are applying (e.g., Research Partnerships).
- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose of the project (e.g., to adapt and revise an approach to improving student attendance) and its significance in improving education outcomes for U.S. students.
- **Setting:** A brief description of the location (e.g., state or states) where the research will take place and other important characteristics of the locale (e.g., urban/suburban/rural).
- **Sample:** A brief description of the sample that will be involved in the study (e.g., number of participants, age or grade level, race/ethnicity, SES).
- **Approach/Program/Policy:** If applicable, a brief description of the education approach, program, or policy to be revised or evaluated.
- **Control/Comparison Condition:** If applicable, a brief description of the control or comparison condition (i.e., who the participants in the control condition are and what they will experience).
- **Research Design and Methods:** Briefly describe the major features of the design and methodology to be used. (e.g., randomized controlled trial, quasi-experimental design, mixed method design; continuous improvement process, exploratory data analysis).
- **Key Measures:** A brief description of key measures and outcomes.
- **Data Analytic Strategy:** A brief description of the data analytic strategy that will be used to answer research questions.

Please see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/projects> for examples of the content to be included in your project summary/abstract.

2. Project Narrative

a) Submission

You must submit the project narrative as a separate PDF attachment at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

The project narrative is limited to 25 pages. **If the narrative exceeds this page limit, the Institute will remove any pages after the 25th page of the narrative.**

To help reviewers locate information and conduct the highest quality review, you should write a concise and easy to read application, with pages numbered consecutively using the header or footer function to place numbers at the top or bottom right-hand corner.

c) Format for citing references in text

To ensure that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects in the project narrative, use the author-date style of citation (e.g., James, 2004), such as that described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Ed. (American Psychological Association, 2009).

d) Content

Your project narrative **must** include five sections in order to be [compliant](#) with the requirements of this Request for Applications: (1) Significance, (2) Partnership, (3) Research Plan, (4) Personnel, and (5) Resources. Information to be included in each of these sections is detailed in [Part II Topic Requirements](#). **The information you include in each of these five sections will provide the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application.**

3. Appendix A (Required for Resubmissions)

a) Submission

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix A at the end of the project narrative. If your application is one that you consider to be new but that is similar to a previous application, you should include Appendix A. Include Appendix A after the Project Narrative as part of the same PDF attachment at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

Appendix A is limited to three pages.

c) Content

Appendix A is required if you are resubmitting an application. Use Appendix A to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments.

If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should use Appendix A to provide a rationale explaining why the current application should be considered a “new” application rather than a “resubmitted” application.

4. Appendix B (Optional)

a) Submission

If you choose to have an Appendix B, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix A (if included), and submit it as part of the same PDF attachment at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

Appendix B is limited to 15 pages.

c) Content

You may include figures, charts (e.g., a timeline for your research project), or tables that supplement the project narrative as well as examples of measures (e.g., tests, surveys, observation and interview protocols) to be used in the project in Appendix B. These are the only materials that may be included in

Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text that describes your project in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix B.

5. Appendix C (Optional)

a) Submission

If you choose to have an Appendix C, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix B (if no Appendix B is included, then Appendix C should follow Appendix A if it is included) and submit it as part of the same PDF attachment at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

Appendix C is limited to 10 pages.

c) Content

In Appendix C, if you are proposing to study, adapt and revise, or evaluate an education approach or program or policy you may include examples of curriculum material, computer screen shots, assessment items, or other materials used to be studied, adapted and revised, or evaluated. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix C; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text describing these materials in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix C.

6. Appendix D (Optional)

a) Submission

If you choose to have an Appendix D, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix C (if no Appendix C is included, then Appendix D should follow Appendix B if it is included, or Appendix A if it is included) and submit it as part of the same PDF attachment at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

Appendix D does not have a page limit.

c) Content

Include in Appendix D the Letters of Agreement from partners (e.g., research institutions, state and local education agencies, other partnering institutions), sites in which the research will take place (e.g., schools), data sources (e.g., state agencies holding administrative data), and consultants. The key research institution(s) and education agency(s) forming the partnership should submit a joint Letter of Agreement documenting their participation and cooperation in the partnership and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. Other members of the partnership should submit similar separate letters. Ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters. Although, see [Part V.D.4. Attaching Files](#) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

Letters of Agreement should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. A common reason for projects to fail is loss of participating schools and districts. Letters of agreement regarding the provision of data should make it clear that the author of the letter will provide the data described in the application for use in the proposed research and in time to meet the proposed schedule.

7. Bibliography and References Cited

a) Submission

You must submit this section as a separate PDF attachment at Item 9 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

The Bibliography and References Cited does not have a page limit.

c) Content

You should include complete citations, including the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), titles (e.g., article and journal, chapter and book, book), page numbers, and year of publication for literature cited in the project narrative.

8. Research on Human Subjects Narrative

a) Submission

The human subjects narrative must be submitted as a PDF attachment at Item 12 of the Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)).

b) Page limitations

The human subjects narrative does not have a page limit.

c) Content

The human subjects narrative should address the information specified by the U.S. Department of Education's Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (see <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html> for additional information).

Exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative

Provide an "exempt" narrative if you checked "yes" on Item 1 of the Research & Related Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)). The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by the Department that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The six categories of research that qualify for exemption from coverage by the regulations are described on the Department's website <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>.

Non-exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative

If some or all of the planned research activities are covered (not exempt) from the Human Subjects Regulations and you checked "no" on Item 1 of the Research & Related Other Project Information form (see [Part V.E.4 Research & Related Other Project Information](#)), provide a "nonexempt research" narrative. The nonexempt narrative should describe the following: the characteristics of the subject population; the data to be collected from human subjects; recruitment and consent procedures; any potential risks; planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks; the importance of the knowledge to be gained relative to potential risks; and any other sites where human subjects are involved.

Note that the U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit your application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is recommended/selected for funding, the designated U.S. Department of

Education official will request that you obtain and send the certification to the Department within 30 days after the formal request.

9. Biographical Sketches of Senior/Key Personnel

a) Submission

Each sketch will be submitted as a separate PDF attachment and attached to the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form (see [Part V.E.2 Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile \[Expanded\]](#)).

b) Page limitations

Each biographical sketch is limited to four pages.

c) Content

Provide a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator, each Co-Principal Investigator, and each Co-Investigator that includes information sufficient to demonstrate that key personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project (e.g., publications, grants, and relevant research experience). If you'd like, you may also include biographical sketches for consultants (this form will allow for up to 40 biographical sketches in total).

10. Current & Pending Support of Senior/Key Personnel

a) Submission

Each list of current and pending support will be submitted as a separate PDF attachment to the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form (see [Part V.E.2 Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile \(Expanded\)](#)).

b) Page limitations

Each list is limited to one page.

c) Content

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the Principal Investigator, each Co-Principal Investigator, and each Co-Investigator, along with the proportion of his/her time, expressed as percent effort over a 12-month calendar year, allocated to each project. This information should be provided as a table.

Note: Each senior/key person must include the proposed research project as one of his/her pending grants in this list. If the total 12-month calendar year percent effort across all current and pending projects exceeds 100 percent, you must explain how time will be allocated if all pending applications are successful in the Narrative Budget Justification.

11. Narrative Budget Justification

a) Submission

The narrative budget justification must be submitted as a PDF attachment at Section K of the first project period of the Research & Related Budget (SF 424) Sections A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K form for the Project (see [Part V.E.5 Research & Related Budget \(Total Federal + Non-Federal\) - Sections A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K](#)). For grant submissions with a subaward(s), a separate narrative budget justification for each subaward must be submitted and attached at Section K of the Research & Related Budget (SF 424) for the specific Subaward/Consortium that has been extracted and attached using the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form (see [Part V.E.6](#)).

b) Page limitations

The narrative budget justification does not have a page limit.

c) Content

A narrative budget justification must be submitted for the Project budget, and a separate narrative budget justification must be submitted for any subaward budgets included in the application. Each narrative budget justification should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project and its subawards, if applicable. The budget justification should correspond to the itemized breakdown of project costs that is provided in the corresponding Research & Related Budget (SF 424) Sections A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K form for each year of the project. The narrative should include the time commitments for key personnel expressed as annual percent effort (i.e., calculated over a 12-month period) and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel. For consultants, the narrative should include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs. A justification for equipment purchases, supplies, travel (including information regarding number of days of travel, mode of transportation, per diem rates, number of travelers, etc.), and other related project costs should also be provided in the budget narrative for each project year outlined in the Research & Related Budget (SF 424).

d) Indirect cost rate

You must use your institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate and use the off-campus indirect cost rate where appropriate (see [Part III.A.3 Special Considerations for Budget Expenses](#)).

If your institution does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate you should consult a member of the Indirect Cost Group (ICG) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Chief Financial Officer <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgreps.html> to help you estimate the indirect cost rate to put in your application.

PART V: SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

This part of the RFA describes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received on time (no later than 4:30:00pm Washington DC time on August 7, 2014) and accepted by the Institute. Any questions that you may have about electronic submission via Grants.gov should first be addressed to the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html>, or call 1-800-518-4726.

Additional help with submitting an application electronically through the Grants.gov website is available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html>. The Institute also offers webinars on the application submission process <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>.

A. MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted electronically through the Internet using the software and application package provided on the Grants.gov web site: <http://www.grants.gov/>. Applications must be received (fully uploaded and processed by Grants.gov) no later than 4:30:00 pm Washington, DC time on August 7, 2014. Applications received by Grants.gov after the 4:30:00 pm application deadline will be considered late and will not be sent forward for scientific peer review.

Electronic submission is required unless you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. A description of the Allowable Exceptions to Electronic Submissions is provided at the end of this document.

Please consider submitting your application ahead of the deadline date (the Institute recommends 3 to 4 days in advance of the closing date and time) to avoid running the risk of a late submission that will not be reviewed. The Institute does not accept late applications.

B. REGISTER ON GRANTS.GOV

To submit an application through Grants.gov, your institution must be registered with Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>).

Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <http://www.sam.gov> (formerly known as the Central Contractor Registry or CCR). Grants.gov recommends that your institution begin the registration process at least 4 weeks prior to the application deadline date.

1. Register Early

Registration involves multiple steps (described below) and takes at least 3 to 5 business days, or as long as 4 weeks, to complete. You must complete all registration steps to allow a successful application submission via Grants.gov. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you will not be permitted to submit your application until all of the Registration Steps are complete.

2. How to Register

- Choose "Organization Applicant" for the type of registration.
- Complete the DUNS OR DUNS+4 Number field.

- If your organization does not already have a DUNS Number, you can request one online by using the form at the Dun & Bradstreet website <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by phone (866-705-5711).
- To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM). **If you don't enter the same DUNS number as the DUNS you registered with, Grants.gov will reject your application.**
- Register with the System for Award Management (SAM) <http://www.sam.gov>.
 - You can learn more about the SAM and the registration process for grant applicants in the SAM user guide: [https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick Guide for Grants Registrations v1.7.pdf](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.7.pdf)
 For further assistance, please consult the tip sheet that the Department of Education has prepared for help with the SAM system <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.
 - Registration with the SAM may take a week to complete, but could take as many as several weeks to complete, depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. The SAM registration must be updated annually.
 - Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24 to 48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov. You will only be able to submit your application via Grants.gov once the SAM information is available in Grants.gov.
- Create your Username & Password
 - Complete your AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) profile on Grants.gov and create your username and password. You will need to use your organization's DUNS Number to complete this step. <https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/OrcRegister>.
- AOR Authorization
 - The E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) at your organization must login to Grants.gov to confirm you as an AOR. Please note that there can be more than one AOR for your organization. In some cases the E-Biz POC is also the AOR for an organization.

C. SUBMISSION AND SUBMISSION VERIFICATION

1. Submit Early

The Institute strongly recommends that you not wait until the deadline date to submit an application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on the application and then process it after it is fully uploaded.

The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. If Grants.gov rejects your application due to errors in the application package, you will need to resubmit successfully before 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date as determined by Grants.gov. As an example, if you begin the submission process at 4:00:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date,

and Grants.gov rejects the application at 4:15:00 p.m. Washington, DC time, there may not be enough time for you to locate the error that caused the submission to be rejected, correct it, and then attempt to submit the application again before the 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time deadline. **You are strongly encouraged to begin the submission process 3 to 4 days before the deadline date to ensure a successful, on-time submission.**

2. Verify Submission is OK

The Institute urges you to verify that Grants.gov and the Institute have received the application on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date and time that your application was received by Grants.gov, you need to log on to Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html>. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be no later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington DC time on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: (1) Validated (i.e., no errors in submission), (2) Received by Agency (i.e., Grants.gov has transmitted the submission to the U.S. Department of Education), and (3) Agency Tracking Number Assigned (the U.S. Department of Education has assigned a unique PR/Award Number to the application).

Note: If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date, the application is late. If the application has a status of "Received", it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change either to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," the application has not been received successfully. Grants.gov provides information on reasons why applications may be rejected in its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page.

- Grants.gov FAQ
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/general-support/faqs.html>
- Grants.gov Adobe Reader FAQs
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/general-support/faqs/adobe-reader-faqs.html>

You will receive four emails regarding the status of your submission; the first three will come from Grants.gov and the fourth will come from the U.S. Department of Education. Within 2 days of submitting a grant application to Grants.gov, you will receive three emails from Grants.gov:

- The first email message will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system and will provide you with an application tracking number beginning with the word "GRANT", for example GRANT00234567. You can use this number to track your application on Grants.gov using the "Track My Application" link <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html> before it is transmitted to the U.S. Department of Education.
- The second email message will indicate that the application EITHER has been successfully validated by the Grants.gov system prior to transmission to the U.S. Department of Education OR has been rejected due to errors, in which case it will not be transmitted to the Department.
- The third email message will indicate that the U.S. Department of Education has confirmed retrieval of the application from Grants.gov once it has been validated.

If the second email message indicates that the application, as identified by its unique application tracking number, is valid and the time of receipt was no later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington DC time, then the application is successful and on-time.

Note: You should not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether an application has been received on-time and validated successfully. The Institute urges you to use the "Track My Application" link on Grants.gov to verify on-time, valid submissions in addition to the confirmation emails.
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html>

Once Grants.gov validates the application and transmits it to the U.S. Department of Education, you will receive an email from the U.S. Department of Education.

- This fourth email message will indicate that the application has been assigned a PR/Award number unique to the application beginning with the letter R, followed by the section of the CFDA number unique to that research competition (e.g., 305H), the fiscal year for the submission (e.g., 15 for fiscal year 2015), and finally four digits unique to the application, for example R305H14XXXX. If the application was received after the closing date/time, this email will also indicate that the application is late and will not be given further consideration.

Note: The Institute strongly recommends that you begin the submission process at least 3 to 4 days in advance of the closing deadline to allow for a successful and timely submission.

3. Late Applications

If your application is submitted after 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the application deadline date, your application will not be accepted and will not be reviewed. **The Institute does not accept late applications.**

However, if you believe that a technical problem with the Grants.gov system prevented you from being able to submit your application on time, you must contact the Grants.gov Support Desk at support@grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html>, or call 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Support Desk will assign a Case Number (e.g., 12345678) that you must keep as a record of the problems.

If you wish to petition that the Institute accept your late application due to technical problems with the Grants.gov system, you should contact the program officer for the topic designated in your application and provide an explanation of the problem experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number.

Your application will be accepted only if it is possible to confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that the problem (as documented with the Grants.gov Support Desk) affected your ability to submit the application by 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the application deadline date. The Institute will contact you approximately 1 month after the submission deadline as to whether the application will be accepted.

D. TIPS FOR WORKING WITH GRANTS.GOV

The Institute strongly encourages you to use the "Check Application for Errors" button at the top of the grant application package to identify errors or missing required information that can prevent an application from being processed and sent forward for review.

Note: You must click the "Save and Submit" button at the top of the application package to upload the application to the Grants.gov website. The "Save and Submit" button will only become active after you have used the "Check Package for Errors" button and then clicked the "Save" button. Once the "Save and Submit" button is clicked, you will need to enter the user name and password that were created upon registration with Grants.gov.

1. Working Offline

When you download the application package from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload the completed application package and submit the application.

2. Dial-Up Internet Connections

Using a dial-up connection to upload and submit an application can take significantly longer than using a high-speed connection to the internet (e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1). Although times will vary depending upon the size of the application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete the grant submission using a dial-up connection.

3. Software Requirements

You will need Adobe software (at least Adobe Reader 10.1.14) to read and complete the application forms for submission through Grants.gov. You can verify if your Adobe software version is compatible with Grants.gov, and if it is not a compatible version, you can download the necessary version of Adobe from Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/recommended-software.html>).

4. Attaching Files

The forms included in the application package provide the means for you to attach Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. **You must attach read-only, non-modifiable PDF files**; any other file attachment will cause your application to be rejected by Grants.gov.

Grants.gov provides help for converting files to a PDF format:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/pdf-conversion-software.html>.

If you include scanned documents as part of a PDF file (e.g., Letters of Agreement in Appendix D), scan them at the lowest resolution to minimize the size of the file and expedite the upload process. PDF files that contain graphics and/or scanned material can greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. The average discretionary grant application package totals 1 to 2 MB; therefore, **check the total size of your application package before you attempt to submit it**. Very large application packages can take a long time to upload, putting the application at risk of being received late and therefore not accepted by the Institute.

PDF files included in the application **must** be the following:

- **In a read-only, non-modifiable format.**
- **Individual files** (attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files, or an interactive or fillable PDF file will not be read).
- **Not password protected.**
- **Given a file name that is the following:**
 - **Unique** - Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more file attachments that have the same name.
 - **No more than 50 characters.**
 - **Contains no special characters (e.g., &, -, *, %, /, #), blank spaces, periods, or accent marks in the file name** (you may use an underscore to indicate word separation in file names such as "my_Attached_File.pdf").

Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected by Grants.gov and not forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education.

E. REQUIRED RESEARCH & RELATED (R&R) FORMS AND OTHER FORMS

You must complete and submit the R&R forms described below. All of these forms are provided in the application package for this competition (84-305H2015). Please note that fields marked by an asterisk and highlighted in yellow and outlined in red on these forms are required fields and must be completed to ensure a successful submission.

Note: Although not required fields, Items 4a (Federal Identifier) and b (Agency Routing Number) on the Application for Federal Assistance SF 424 (R&R) form provide critical information to the Institute and should be filled out for an application to this research grant competition.

1. Application for Federal Assistance SF 424 (R&R)

This form asks for general information about the applicant, including but not limited to the following: contact information; an Employer Identification Number (EIN); a DUNS number; a descriptive title for the project; an indication of the project topic; Principal Investigator contact information; start and end dates for the project; congressional district; total estimated project funding; and Authorized Representative contact information. Because information on this form populates selected fields on some of the other forms described below, you should complete this form first.

Provide the requested information using the drop down menus when available. Guidance for completing selected items follows.

- Item 1

Type of Submission. Select either "Application" (for a new submission) or "Changed/Corrected Application" (for a resubmission). The Institute does not require Pre-applications for its grant competitions.

- Item 2

Date Submitted. Enter the date the application is submitted to the Institute.

Applicant Identifier. Leave this blank.

- Item 3

Date Received by State and State Application Identifier. Leave these items blank.

- Item 4

Note: This item provides important information that is used by the Institute to screen applications for [responsiveness](#) to the competition requirements and for assignment to the appropriate scientific peer review panel. **It is critical that you complete this information completely and accurately or the application may be rejected as nonresponsive or assigned inaccurately for scientific review of merit.**

- Federal Identifier. **Enter information in this field if this is a Resubmission and this has been marked as a "Changed/Corrected Application" under Item 1 Type of Submission.** If this application is a revision of an application that was submitted to an Institute grant competition in a prior fiscal year (e.g., FY 2014) that received reviewer feedback, then this application is considered a "Resubmission" (see Item 8 Type of

Application). You should **enter the PR/Award number that was assigned to the prior submission (e.g., R305H14XXXX) in this field.**

- Agency Routing Number. **Enter the code for the topic that the application addresses in this field.** Applications to the Research Collaborations (CFDA 84.305H) program must be submitted to a particular topic (see [Part II Topic Requirements](#) for additional information).

Topics	Codes
Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research	NCER-RPP
Continuous Improvement Research in Education	NCER-CIRE
Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies	NCER-State/Local

It is critical that you use the appropriate code in this field and that the code shown in this field agree with the information included in the application abstract. Indicating the correct code facilitates the appropriate processing and review of the application. Failure to do so may result in delays to processing and puts your application at risk for being identified as nonresponsive and not considered for further review.

- Item 5

Applicant Information. Enter all of the information requested, including the legal name of the applicant, the name of the primary organizational unit (e.g., school, department, division, etc.) that will undertake the activity, and the address, including the county and the 9 digit ZIP/Postal Code of the primary performance site (i.e., the Applicant institution) location. This field is required if the Project Performance Site is located in the United States. The field for "Country" is pre-populated with "USA: UNITED STATES." For applicants located in another country, contact the cognizant program officer ([Part II Topic Requirements](#)) before submitting the application. Use the drop down menus where they are provided.

Organizational DUNS. Enter the DUNS or DUNS+4 number of the applicant organization. A **Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)** number is a unique 9 character identification number provided by the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) to identify organizations. If your institution does not have a DUNS number and therefore needs to register for one, a DUNS number can be obtained through the Dun & Bradstreet website <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>.

Note: The DUNS number provided on this form must be the same DUNS number used to register on Grants.gov (and the same as the DUNS number used when registering with the SAM). **If the DUNS number used in the application is not the same as the DUNS number used to register with Grants.gov, the application will be rejected with errors by Grants.gov.**

Person to Be Contacted on Matters Involving this Application. Enter all of the information requested, including the name, telephone and fax numbers, and email address of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application. The role of this person is primarily for communication purposes on the budgetary aspects of the project. As an example, this may be the contact person from the applicant institution's office of sponsored projects. Use the drop down menus where they are provided.

- Item 6

Employer Identification (EIN) or (TIN). Enter either the Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Tax Identification Number (TIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. If the applicant organization is not located in the United States, enter 44-4444444.

- Item 7

Type of Applicant. Use the drop down menu to select the type of applicant. If Other, please specify.

Small Business Organization Type. If "Small Business" is selected as Type of Applicant, indicate whether or not the applicant is a "Women Owned" small business – a small business that is at least 51% owned by a woman or women, who also control and operate it. Also indicate whether or not the applicant is a "Socially and Economically Disadvantaged" small business, as determined by the U.S. Small Business Administration pursuant to section 8(a) of the Small Business Act U.S.C. 637(a).

- Item 8

Type of Application. Indicate whether the application is a "New" application or a "Resubmission" of an application that was submitted under a previous Institute competition and received reviewer comments. Only the "New" and "Resubmission" options apply to Institute competitions. Do not select any option other than "New" or "Resubmission."

Submission to Other Agencies. Indicate whether or not this application is being submitted to another agency or agencies. If yes, indicate the name of the agency or agencies.

- Item 9

Name of Federal Agency. Do not complete this item. The name of the federal agency to which the application is being submitted will already be entered on the form.

- Item 10

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number. Do not complete this item. The CFDA number of the program competition to which the application is being submitted will already be entered on the form. The CFDA number can be found in the Federal Register Notice and on the face page of the Request for Applications.

- Item 11

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project. **Enter a distinctive, descriptive title for the project.** The maximum number of characters allowed in this item field is 200.

- Item 12

Proposed Project Start Date and Ending Date. Enter the proposed start date of the project and the proposed end date of the project. The start date must not be earlier than July 1, 2015, which is the Earliest Anticipated Start Date listed in this Request for Applications, and must not be later than September 1, 2015.

- Item 13

Congressional District of Applicant. For both the applicant and the project, enter the Congressional District in this format: 2 character State Abbreviation and 3 character District Number (e.g., CA-005 for California's 5th district, CA-012 for California's 12th district). Grants.gov provides help for finding this information <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-fags/applying-for-grants.html> under "How can I find my congressional district code. If the program/project is outside the US, enter 00-000.

- Item 14

Project Director/Principal Investigator Contact Information. Enter all of the information requested for the Project Director/Principal Investigator, including position/title, name, address (including county), organizational affiliation (e.g., organization, department, division, etc.), telephone and fax numbers, and email address. Use the drop down menus where they are provided.

- Item 15

Estimated Project Funding

- Total Federal Funds Requested. Enter the total Federal funds requested for the entire project period.
- Total Non-federal Funds. Enter the total Non-federal funds requested for the entire project period.
- Total Federal & Non-Federal Funds. Enter the total estimated funds for the entire project period, including both Federal and non-Federal funds.
- Estimated Program Income. Identify any program income estimated for the project period, if applicable.

- Item 16

Is Application Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process? The Institute is not soliciting applications that are subject to review by Executive Order 12372; therefore check the box "Program is not covered by E.O. 12372" to indicate "No" for this item.

- Item 17

This is the Authorized Organization Representative's electronic signature.

By providing the electronic signature, the Authorized Organization Representative certifies the following:

- To the statements contained in the list of certifications
- That the statements are true, complete and accurate to the best of his/her knowledge.

By providing the electronic signature, the Authorized Organization Representative also provides the required assurances, agrees to comply with any resulting terms if an award is accepted, and

acknowledges that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject him/her to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

Note: The certifications and assurances referred to here are described in [Part V.E.7 Other Forms Included in the Application Package](#)).

- Item 18

SF LLL or other Explanatory Documentation. Do not add the SF LLL here. A copy of the SF LLL is provided as an optional document within the application package. See [Part V.E.7 Other Forms Included in the Application Package](#) to determine applicability. If it is applicable to the grant submission, choose the SF LLL from the optional document menu, complete it, and save the completed SF LLL form as part of the application package.

- Item 19

Authorized Representative. The Authorized Representative is the official who has the authority both to legally commit the applicant to (1) accept federal funding and (2) execute the proposed project. Enter all information requested for the Authorized Representative (AR), including name, title, organizational affiliation (e.g., organization, department, division, etc.), address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address of the Authorized Representative. Use the drop down menus where they are provided.

Signature of Authorized Representative. Leave this item blank as it is automatically completed when the application is submitted through Grants.gov.

Date Signed. Leave this item blank as the date is automatically generated when the application is submitted through Grants.gov.

- Item 20

Pre-application. Do not complete this item as the Institute does not require pre-applications for its grant competitions.

2. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

This form asks you to: (a) identify the Project Director/Principal Investigator and other senior and/or key persons involved in the project; (b) specify the role key staff will serve; and (c) provide contact information for each senior/key person identified. The form also requests information about the highest academic or professional degree or other credentials earned and the degree year.

This form also provides the means for attaching the Biographical Sketches of senior/key personnel and the Lists of Current and Pending Funding for senior/key personnel as PDF files. This form will allow for the attachment of a total of 40 biographical sketches and 40 lists of current and pending support: one of each for the project director/principal investigator and up to 39 additional sketches and lists for senior/key staff. See [Part IV.D.10 Biographical Sketches of Senior/Key Personnel](#) for information about page limitations, format requirements, and content to be included in the biographical sketches and lists of current and pending funding. The persons listed on this form should be the same persons listed in the Personnel section of the Project Narrative.

3. Project/Performance Site Location(s)

This form asks you to identify the primary site where project work will be performed. You must complete the information for the primary site. If a portion of the project will be performed at any other site(s), the

form also asks you to identify and provide information about the additional site(s). As an example, a research proposal to an Institute competition may include the applicant institution as the primary site and one or more schools where data collection will take place as additional sites. The form permits the identification of eight project/performance site locations in total. This form requires the applicant to identify the Congressional District for each site. See above, [Application for Federal Assistance SF 424 \(R&R\)](#), Item 13 for information about Congressional Districts. DUNS number information is optional on this form.

4. Research & Related Other Project Information

This form asks you to provide information about any research that will be conducted involving Human Subjects, including: (a) whether human subjects are involved; (b) if human subjects are involved, whether or not the project is exempt from the human subjects regulations; (c) if the project is exempt from the regulations, an indication of the exemption number(s); and, (d) if the project is not exempt from the regulations, whether an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is pending; and if IRB approval has been given, the date on which the project was approved; and, the Human Subject Assurance number. This form also asks you: (a) whether there is proprietary information included in the application; (b) whether the project has an actual or potential impact on the environment; (c) whether the research site is designated or eligible to be designated as an historic place; and, (d) if the project involves activities outside the U.S., to identify the countries involved.

This form also provides the means for attaching a number of PDF files (see [Part IV.D PDF Attachments](#) for information about page limitations, format requirements, and content) including the following:

- Project Summary/Abstract,
 - Project Narrative and Appendices,
 - Bibliography and References Cited, and
 - Research on Human Subjects Narrative.
-
- Item 1

Are Human Subjects Involved? If activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project at any performance site or collaborating institution, you must check "Yes." (You must check "Yes" even if the proposed project is exempt from Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects.) If there are no activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed project at any performance site or collaborating institution, you may check "No" and skip to Item 2.

Is the Project Exempt from Federal Regulations? If all human subject activities are exempt from Human Subjects regulations, then you may check "Yes." You are required to answer this question if you answered "yes" to the first question "Are Human Subjects Involved?"

If you answer "yes" to the question "Is the Project Exempt from Federal Regulations?" you are required to check the appropriate exemption number box or boxes corresponding to one or more of the exemption categories. The six categories of research that qualify for exemption from coverage by the regulations are described on the U.S. Department of Education's website <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>. Provide an Exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative at Item 12 of this form (see [Part V.D.9 Research on Human Subjects Narrative](#)).

If you answer "no" to the question "Is the Project Exempt from Federal Regulations?" you will be prompted to answer questions about the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review.

If no, is the IRB review pending? Answer either "Yes" or "No."

If you answer "yes" because the review is pending, then leave the IRB approval date blank. If you answer "no" because the review is not pending, then are required to enter the latest IRB approval date, if available. Therefore, you should select "No" only if a date is available for IRB approval.

Note: IRB Approval may not be pending because you have not begun the IRB process. In this case, an IRB Approval Date will not be available. However, a date must be entered in this field if "No" is selected or the application will be rejected with errors by Grants.gov. Therefore, you should check "Yes" to the question "Is the IRB review pending?" if an IRB Approval date is not available.

If you answer "no" to the question "Is the Project Exempt from Federal Regulations?" provide a Non-exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative at Item 12 of this form (see [Part V.D.9 Research on Human Subjects Narrative](#)).

Human Subject Assurance Number: Leave this item blank.

- Item 2

Are Vertebrate Animals used? Check whether or not vertebrate animals will be used in this project.

- Item 3

Is proprietary/privileged information included in the application? Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the applicant, should be included in applications only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. If the application includes such information, check "Yes" and clearly mark each line or paragraph on the pages containing the proprietary/privileged information with a legend similar to: "The following contains proprietary/privileged information that (name of applicant) requests not be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation."

- Item 4

Does this project have an actual or potential impact on the environment? Check whether or not this project will have an actual or potential impact on the environment.

- Item 5

Is the research site designated, or eligible to be designated as a historic place? Check whether or not the research site is designated, or eligible to be designated as a historic place. Explain if necessary.

- Item 6

Does the project involve activities outside of the United States or partnerships with international collaborators? Check "Yes" or "No." If the answer is "Yes," then you need to identify the

countries with which international cooperative activities are involved. An explanation of these international activities or partnerships is optional.

- Item 7.

Project Summary/Abstract. Attach the Project Summary/Abstract as a PDF file here. See [Part V.D PDF Attachments](#) for information about content, formatting, and page limitations for this PDF file.

- Item 8.

Project Narrative. Create a single PDF file that contains the Project Narrative as well as, when applicable, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D. Attach that single PDF file here. See [Part V.D PDF Attachments](#) for information about content, formatting, and page limitations for this PDF file.

- Item 9.

Bibliography and References Cited. Attach the Bibliography and References Cited as a PDF file here. See [Part V.D PDF Attachments](#) for information about content, formatting, and page limitations for this PDF file.

- Item 10.

Facilities and Other Resources. The Institute does not want an attachment here. Explanatory information about facilities and other resources must be included in the Resources Section of the 25-page Project Narrative for the application and may also be included in the Narrative Budget Justification. In the project narrative of competitive proposals, applicants describe having access to institutional resources that adequately support research activities and access to schools in which to conduct the research. Strong applications document the availability and cooperation of the schools or other education delivery settings that will be required to carry out the research proposed in the application via a letter of agreement from the education organization. Include letters of agreement in Appendix D.

- Item 11.

Equipment. The Institute does not want an attachment here. Explanatory information about equipment may be included in the narrative budget justification.

- Item 12.

Other Attachments. Attach a Research on Human Subjects Narrative as a PDF file here. You must attach either an Exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative or a Non-Exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative. See [Part V.D PDF Attachments](#) for information about content, formatting, and page limitations for this PDF file.

If you checked "Yes" to Item 1 of this form "Are Human Subjects Involved?" and designated an exemption number(s), then you must provide an "Exempt Research" narrative. If some or all of the planned research activities are covered by (not exempt from) the Human Subjects Regulations, then you must provide a "Nonexempt Research" narrative.

5. Research & Related Budget (Total Federal+Non-Federal)-Sections A & B; C, D, & E; F-K

This form asks you to provide detailed budget information for each year of support requested for the applicant institution (i.e., the Project Budget). The form also asks you to indicate any non-federal funds supporting the project. You should provide this budget information for each project year using all sections of the R&R Budget form. Note that the budget form has multiple sections for each budget year: A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K.

- Sections A & B ask for information about Senior/Key Persons and Other Personnel
- Sections C, D & E ask for information about Equipment, Travel, and Participant/Trainee Costs
- Sections F - K ask for information about Other Direct Costs and Indirect Costs

You must complete each of these sections for as many budget periods (i.e., project years) as you are requesting funds.

Note: The narrative budget justification for each of the project budget years must be attached at Section K of the first budget period, otherwise you will not be able to enter budget information for subsequent project years.

Note: Budget information for a subaward(s) on the project must be entered using a separate form, the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form, described in [Part V.E.6](#). This is the only form that can be used to extract the proper file format to complete subaward budget information. **The application will be rejected with errors by Grants.gov if subaward budget information is included using any other form or file format.**

Enter the Federal Funds requested for all budget line items as instructed below. If any Non-Federal funds will be contributed to the project, enter the amount of those funds for the relevant budget categories in the spaces provided.

All fields asking for total funds in this form will auto calculate.

- Organizational DUNS.

If you completed the SF 424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance form first the DUNS number will be pre-populated here. Otherwise, the organizational DUNS number must be entered here. See [Part V.E.1](#) for information on the DUNS number.

- Budget Type.

Check the box labeled "Project" to indicate that this is the budget requested for the primary applicant organization. If the project involves a subaward(s), you must access the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form to complete a subaward budget (see Part V.E.6 below for instructions regarding budgets for a subaward).

- Budget Period Information.

Enter the start date and the end date for each budget period. The system permits data entry for up to five budget periods; however, **enter only the number of budget periods allowed for the project as determined by the Award Duration Maximums for the relevant research topic selected for your project** (see [Part II Topic Requirements](#)).

- Budget Sections A & B

A. Senior/Key Person. The project director/principal investigator information will be pre-populated here from the SF 424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance form if it was completed first. Then, enter all of the information requested for each of the remaining senior/key personnel, including the project role of each and the number of months each will devote to the project, i.e., calendar or academic + summer. You may enter the annual compensation (base salary – dollars) paid by the employer for each senior/key person; however, you may choose to leave this field blank. Regardless of the number of months devoted to the project, indicate only the amount of salary being requested for each budget period for each senior/key person. Enter applicable fringe benefits, if any, for each senior/key person. Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

B. Other Personnel. Enter all of the information requested for each project role listed – for example Postdoctoral Associates, Graduate Students, Undergraduate Students, Secretary/Clerical, etc. – including, for each project role, the number of personnel proposed and the number of months devoted to the project (calendar or academic + summer). Regardless of the number of months devoted to the project, indicate only the amount of salary/wages being requested for each project role. Enter applicable fringe benefits, if any, for each project role category. Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

Total Salary, Wages, and Fringe Benefits (A + B). This total will auto calculate.

- Budget Sections C, D & E

C. Equipment Description. Enter all of the information requested for Equipment. Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the applicant organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than 1 year. List each item of equipment separately and justify each in the narrative budget justification. Allowable items ordinarily will be limited to research equipment and apparatus not already available for the conduct of the work. General-purpose equipment, such as a personal computer, is not eligible for support unless primarily or exclusively used in the actual conduct of scientific research. Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

Total C. Equipment. This total will auto calculate.

D. Travel. Enter all of the information requested for Travel.

Enter the total funds requested for domestic travel. In the narrative budget justification, include the purpose, destination, dates of travel (if known), applicable per diem rates, and number of individuals for each trip. If the dates of travel are not known, specify the estimated length of the trip (e.g., 3 days). Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

Enter the total funds requested for foreign travel. In the narrative budget justification, include the purpose, destination, dates of travel (if known), applicable per diem rates, and number of individuals for each trip. If the dates of travel are not known, specify the estimated length of the trip (e.g., 3 days). Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

Total D. Travel Costs. This total will auto calculate.

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs. Do not enter information here; this category is not used for project budgets for this competition.

Number of Participants/Trainees. Do not enter information here; this category is not used for project budgets for this competition.

Total E. Participants/Trainee Support Costs. Do not enter information here; this category is not used for project budgets for this competition.

- Budget Sections F-K

F. Other Direct Costs. Enter all of the information requested under the various cost categories. Enter the Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars.

Materials and Supplies. Enter the total funds requested for materials and supplies. In the narrative budget justification, indicate the general categories of supplies, including an amount for each category. Categories less than \$1,000 are not required to be itemized.

Publication Costs. Enter the total publication funds requested. The proposed budget may request funds for the costs of documenting, preparing, publishing or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under the award. In the narrative budget justification, include supporting information.

Consultant Services. Enter the total costs for all consultant services. In the narrative budget justification, identify each consultant, the services he/she will perform, total number of days, travel costs, and total estimated costs. Note: Travel costs for consultants can be included here or in Section D. Travel.

ADP/Computer Services. Enter the total funds requested for ADP/computer services. The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical, and education information may be requested. In the narrative budget justification, include the established computer service rates at the proposing organization if applicable.

Subaward/Consortium/Contractual Costs. Enter the total funds requested for 1) all subaward/consortium organization(s) proposed for the project and 2) any other contractual costs proposed for the project. Use the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form to provide detailed subaward information (see Part V.E.6).

Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees. Enter the total funds requested for equipment or facility rental/user fees. In the narrative budget justification, identify each rental user fee and justify.

Alterations and Renovations. Leave this field blank. The Institute does not provide funds for construction costs.

Other. Describe any other direct costs in the space provided and enter the total funds requested for this "Other" category of direct costs. Use the narrative budget justification to further itemize and justify.

Total F. Other Direct Costs. This total will auto calculate.

- G. Direct Costs

Total Direct Costs (A thru F). This total will auto calculate.

- H. Indirect Costs

Enter all of the information requested for Indirect Costs. Principal investigators should note that if they are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs, this information is to be completed by their Business Office.

Indirect Cost Type. Indicate the type of base (e.g., Salary & Wages, Modified Total Direct Costs, Other [explain]). In addition, indicate if the Indirect Cost type is Off-site. If more than one rate/base is involved, use separate lines for each. When calculating your expenses for research conducted in field settings, you should apply your institution's negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate, as directed by the terms of your institution's negotiated agreement with the federal government.

Institutions, both primary grantees and sub-awardees, not located in the territorial US cannot charge indirect costs.

If you do not have a current indirect rate(s) approved by a Federal agency, indicate "None--will negotiate". **If your institution does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate,** you should consult a member of the Indirect Cost Group (ICG) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Chief Financial Officer <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgreps.html> to help you estimate the indirect cost rate to put in your application.

Indirect Cost Rate (%). Indicate the most recent Indirect Cost rate(s) (also known as Facilities & Administrative Costs [F&A]) established with the cognizant Federal office, or in the case of for-profit organizations, the rate(s) established with the appropriate agency.

If your institution has a cognizant/oversight agency and your application is selected for an award, you must submit the indirect cost rate proposal to that cognizant/oversight agency office for approval.

Indirect Cost Base (\$). Enter the amount of the base (dollars) for each indirect cost type. Depending on the grant program to which you are applying and/or the applicant institution's approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, some direct cost budget categories in the grant application budget may not be included in the base and multiplied by the indirect cost rate. Use the narrative budget justification to explain which costs are included and which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied. If your grant application is selected for an award, the Institute will request a copy of the applicant institution's approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

Indirect Cost Funds Requested. Enter the funds requested (Federal dollars and, if applicable, the Non-Federal dollars) for each indirect cost type.

Total H. Indirect Costs. This total will auto calculate.

Cognizant Agency. Enter the name of the Federal agency responsible for approving the indirect cost rate(s) for the applicant. Enter the name and telephone number of the individual responsible for negotiating the indirect cost rate. If a Cognizant Agency is not known, enter "None."

- Total Direct and Indirect Costs

Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H). This total will auto calculate.

- J. Fee.

Do not enter a dollar amount here as you are not allowed to charge a fee on a grant or cooperative agreement.

- K. Budget Justification

Attach the Narrative Budget Justification as a PDF file at Section K of the first budget period (see [Part V.D.12](#) for information about content, formatting, and page limitations for this PDF file). Note that if the justification is not attached at Section K of the first budget period, you will not be able to access the form for the second budget period and all subsequent budget periods. The single narrative must provide a budget justification for each year of the entire project.

- Cumulative Budget. This section will auto calculate all cost categories for all budget periods included.

6. R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form

This form provides the means to both extract and attach the Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form that is to be used by an institution that will hold a subaward on the grant. Please note that separate budgets are required only for subawardee/consortium organizations that perform a substantive portion of the project. As with the Primary Budget, the extracted Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form asks you to provide detailed budget information for each year of support requested for a subaward/consortium member with substantive involvement in the project. The budget form also asks for information regarding non-federal funds supporting the project at the subaward/consortium member level. You should provide this budget information for each project year using all sections of the R&R Budget form. Note that the budget form has multiple sections for each budget year: A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K.

- Sections A & B ask for information about Senior/Key Persons and Other Personnel.
- Sections C, D & E ask for information about Equipment, Travel, and Participant/Trainee Costs.
- Sections F - K ask for information about Other Direct Costs and Indirect Costs.

“Subaward/Consortium” must be selected as the Budget Type, and all sections of the budget form for each project year must be completed in accordance with the R&R (Federal/Non-Federal) Budget instructions provided above in Part V.E.5. Note that subaward organizations are also required to provide their DUNS or DUNS+4 number.

You may extract and attach up to 10 subaward budget forms. When you use the button “Click here to extract the R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment,” a Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form will open. Each institution that will hold a subaward to perform a substantive portion of the project must complete one of these forms and save it as a PDF file with the name of the subawardee organization. Once each subawardee institution has completed the form, you must attach these completed subaward budget form files to the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form. Each subaward budget form file attached to this form must have a unique name.

Note: This R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form must be used to attach only one or more Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form(s) that have been extracted from this

form. Note the form's instruction: "Click here to extract the R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment". **If you attach a file format to this form that was not extracted from this attachment form your application will be rejected with errors by Grants.gov.**

7. Other Forms Included in the Application Package

You are required to submit the first two forms identified here. You are not required to submit the third form, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities – Standard Form LLL, unless it is applicable. To determine applicability, please review the provisions in Item 1 "Lobbying" of the ED 80-0013 – Combined Assurance Form.

- SF 424B-Assurances-Non-Construction Programs.
- ED 80-0013 – Combined Assurance.
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities – Standard Form LLL (if applicable).

F. SUMMARY OF REQUIRED APPLICATION CONTENT

R&R Form	Required	Instructions Provided	Additional Information
Application for Federal Assistance SF 424 (R & R)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part V.E.1	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part V.E.2	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part V.E.3	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
Other Project Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part V.E.4	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
Budget (Total Federal + Non-Federal): Sections A & B Sections C, D, & E Sections F - K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part V.E.5	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form	--	Part V.E.6	Form provided in Grants.gov application package. Use this form to <i>extract and attach</i> a subaward budget(s).
SF 424B Assurances – Non-Construction Programs ED 80-0013 – Combined Assurance Disclosure of Lobby Activities – Standard Form LLL (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> --	Part V.E.7	Form provided in Grants.gov application package
Project Summary/Abstract	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.1	Add as an attachment (PDF file) using Item 7 of the "Other Project Information" form
Project Narrative and Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative • Appendix A • Appendix B • Appendix C • Appendix D 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -- -- -- --	Part IV.D.2-6	The Project Narrative, and if applicable Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D must ALL be included together in one PDF file and attached at Item 8 of the "Other Project Information" form.
Bibliography and References Cited	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.7	Add as an attachment (PDF file) using Item 9 of the "Other Project Information" form.
Research on Human Subjects Narrative, if human subjects are involved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.8	Add as an attachment (PDF file) using Item 12 of the "Other Project Information" form.

Biographical Sketches of Senior/Key Personnel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.9	Add each as a separate attachment (PDF file) using the "Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form.
Lists of Current & Pending Support for Senior/Key Personnel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.10	Add each as a separate attachment (PDF file) using the "Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form.
Narrative Budget Justification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part IV.D.11	Add as an attachment (PDF file) using <i>Section K – Budget Period 1</i> of the "Budget (Total Federal + Non-Federal)" form.

G. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Have each of the following forms been completed?	
	SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance
	For item 4a, is the PR/Award number entered if this is a Resubmission following the instructions in Part VI.E.1?
	For item 4b, is the correct topic code included following the instructions in Part V.E.1?
	For item 8, is the Type of Application appropriately marked as either "New" or "Resubmission" following the instructions in Part V.E.1?
	Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
	Project/Performance Site Location(s)
	Other Project Information
	Budget (Total Federal + Non-Federal): Sections A & B; Sections C, D, & E; Sections F - K
	R&R Subaward Budget (Federal/Non-Federal) Attachment(s) form (if applicable)
	SF 424B Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
	ED 80-0013 – Combined Assurance
	Disclosure of Lobby Activities – Standard Form LLL (if applicable)
Have each of the following items been attached as PDF files in the correct place?	
	Project Summary/Abstract, using Item 7 of the "Other Project Information" form
	Project Narrative, and where applicable, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D as a single file using Item 8 of the "Other Project Information" form
	Bibliography and References Cited, using Item 9 of the "Other Project Information" form
	Research on Human Subjects Narrative, either the Exempt Research Narrative or the Non-exempt Research Narrative, using Item 12 of the "Other Project Information" form
	Biographical Sketches of Senior/Key Personnel, using "Attach Biographical Sketch" of the "Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form
	Lists of Current & Pending Support, using "Attach Current & Pending Support" of the "Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form
	Narrative Budget Justification, using Section K – Budget Period 1 of the "Budget (Total Federal + Non-Federal)" form

	Budget (Total Federal + Non-Federal): Sections A & B; Sections C, D, & E; Sections F – K for the Subaward(s), using the "R&R Subaward Budget (Federal/Non-Federal) Attachment(s)" form, as appropriate
Have the following actions been completed?	
	The correct PDF files are attached to the proper forms in the Grants.gov application package
	The "Check Package for Errors" button at the top of the grant application package has been used to identify errors or missing required information that prevents an application from being processed
	The "Track My Application" link has been used to verify that the upload was fully completed and that the application was processed and validated successfully by Grants.gov before 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time on the deadline date

H. PROGRAM OFFICER CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact the Institute's program officers with any questions you may have about the best topic for your application. Program officers function as knowledgeable colleagues who can provide substantive feedback on your research idea, including reading a draft of your project narrative. Program officers can also help you with any questions you may have about the content and preparation of PDF file attachments. However, any questions you have about individual forms within the application package and electronic submission of your application through Grants.gov should be directed first to the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html>, or call 1-800-518-4726.

Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research

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 Institute of Education Sciences
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 Email: Allen.Ruby@ed.gov
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Continuous Improvement Research in Education

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Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies

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GLOSSARY

Assessment: “Any systematic method of obtaining information from tests and other sources, used to draw inferences about characteristics of people, objects, or programs” (AERA, 1999).

Assessment framework: Includes the definition of the construct(s); theoretical model on which the assessment is based; and the rationale for validity evidence to support its use for the intended purpose and population.

Authentic education setting: Your proposed research must be relevant to education in the United States and meet the Setting Requirements for the Topic that you select. Setting refers to the environment where education is being delivered not the physical location of the researcher. In general, topics require that research is conducted in authentic education settings or on data collected from authentic education settings (although some topics also allow for research conducted in laboratory settings). Authentic education setting varies by education level as set out below.

- Authentic Pre-K Education Settings are defined as:
 - center-based prekindergarten programs
- Authentic K-12 Education Settings are defined as:
 - schools and alternative school settings
 - school systems (e.g. local education agencies, state education agencies, and charter management organizations)
 - supplemental education services (as defined in Section 1116(e) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
- Authentic Postsecondary Education Settings are defined as:
 - 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities that have education programs leading to occupational certificates and associate’s or bachelor’s degrees
- Authentic Adult Education Settings are defined as:
 - adult English language programs
 - adult basic education (ABE)
 - adult secondary education (ASE)
 - GED preparation
 - programs that assist students who lack secondary education credentials (e.g., diploma or GED) or basic skills that may lead to course credit or certificates

Compliant: The part of the process of screening applications for acceptance for review that focuses on compliance with the application rules (e.g., page length and formatting requirements, completion of all parts of the application).

End user: The person intended to be responsible for the implementation of the intervention. Efficacy/Replication studies and Effectiveness studies should test an intervention implemented by the end user.

Feasibility: The extent to which the intervention can be implemented within the requirements and constraints of an authentic education setting.

Fidelity of implementation: The extent to which the intervention is being delivered as it was designed to be by end users in an authentic education setting.

Final manuscript: The author's final version of a manuscript accepted for publication that includes all modifications from the peer-review process.

Final research data: The recorded factual materials commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to document and support research findings. For most studies, an electronic file will constitute the final research data. This dataset will include both raw data and derived variables, which will be fully described in accompanying documentation. Researchers are expected to take appropriate precautions to protect the privacy of human subjects. Note that final research data does not mean summary statistics or tables, but rather, the factual information on which summary statistics and tables are based. Final research data do not include laboratory notebooks, preliminary analyses, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer-reviewed reports, or communications with colleagues.

Impact Across a Variety of Conditions: Determining whether a program or policy produces benefits for certain subgroups (e.g., students or schools) or under certain conditions (e.g., moderating factors).

Intervention: The wide range of education curricula, instructional approaches, professional development, technology, and practices, programs, and policies that are implemented at the student, classroom, school, district, state, or federal level to improve student education outcomes.

Moderators: Factors that affect the strength or the direction of the relationship between the intervention and student education outcomes (e.g., an intervention's impacts may differ by such student characteristics as achievement level, motivation, or social-economic status; and by organizational or contextual factors, such as school or neighborhood characteristics).

Mediators: Factors through which the relationship between the intervention and student education outcomes occurs (e.g., many interventions aimed at changing individual student education outcomes work through changing teacher behavior, student peer behavior, and/or student behavior).

Overall Impact: The degree to which a program/policy has on average a net positive impact on the outcomes of interest in relation to the program or practice to which it is being compared.

Reliability: "The degree to which scores for a group of test takers are consistent over repeated applications of a measurement procedure and hence are inferred to be dependable and repeatable for an individual test taker; the degree to which scores are free of errors of measurement for a given group" (AERA, 1999).

Responsive: The part of the process of screening applications for acceptance for review that focuses on responsiveness to the Request for Applications. This screening includes making sure applications 1) are submitted to the correct competition and/or topic and 2) meet the basic requirements set out in the Request for Applications.

Routine conditions: Conditions under which an intervention is implemented that reflect 1) the everyday practice occurring in classrooms, schools, and districts and 2) the heterogeneity of the target population.

Student education outcomes: The outcomes to be changed by the intervention. The intervention may be expected to directly affect these outcomes or indirectly affect them through intermediate student or instructional personnel outcomes. There are two types of student education outcomes. The topic you choose will determine the types of student education outcomes you can study.

- Student academic outcomes: The Institute supports research on a diverse set of student academic outcomes that fall under two categories. The first category includes academic outcomes that reflect learning and achievement in the core academic content areas (e.g.,

measures of understanding and achievement in reading, writing, math, and science). The second category includes academic outcomes that reflect students' successful progression through the education system (e.g., course and grade completion and retention in grade K through 12; high school graduation and dropout; postsecondary enrollment, progress, and completion).

- Social and behavioral competencies: Social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that may be important to students' academic and post-academic success.

Theory of change: The underlying process through which key components of a specific intervention are expected to lead to the desired student education outcomes. A theory of change should be specific enough to guide the design of the evaluation (e.g., selecting an appropriate sample, measures and comparison condition).

Usability: The extent to which the intended user understands or can learn how to use the intervention effectively and efficiently, is physically able to use the intervention, and is willing to use the intervention.

Validity: The degree to which accumulated evidence and theory support specific interpretations of scores entailed by proposed uses of an assessment (AERA, 1999).

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