

GRANTS FOR STATEWIDE, LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS: NCES 23 01

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

<http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

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I. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites State education agencies to apply for grants to assist them in using data in statewide, longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to inform their efforts to improve education in critical areas. Applicants may apply for funds to carry out

projects in one of the following data use priorities: 1) Infrastructure and Interoperability; 2) College and Career; 3) School Finance; 4) State Policy Questions.

Under any of these priorities, States should consider how their proposals would enhance their ability to use their SLDS to address the needs of at-risk students, including children and youth who are or have been homeless or in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Applicants may also indicate an interest in assisting the Department by participating in the development of open-source data use assets built upon the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) and within the Open Source Community (OSC). States do not have to include information about how they would do this work in the application, but merely may indicate that they are interested in this work.

States and territories that received grants in both the FY15 and FY19/20 rounds (Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin) are not eligible to apply for this grant. All other States and territories are eligible to apply for this grant.

II. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Institute will hold webinars describing the RFA process and to discuss questions pertaining to the RFA. Based on these webinars, the Institute may create a Frequently Asked Questions sheet to assist applicants through the RFA process.

The Institute asks potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent 30 days prior to the application submission deadline, indicating both whether the State intends to apply for the Grant, and the Priority for which the State expects to apply. Letters of Intent are optional but strongly encouraged by the Institute. If you submit a Letter of Intent, a Program Officer may contact you regarding your proposal. In addition, Institute staff use the letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

III. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Under the Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program, the Secretary of Education is authorized to make competitive grants to State educational agencies to enable them to design, develop, and implement SLDS to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data. The long-term goal of the program is to enable all States to create comprehensive early learning through workforce (P-20W) data systems that permit the generation and use of accurate and timely data, support analysis and informed decision-making at all levels of the education system, increase the efficiency with which data may be analyzed to support the continuous improvement of education services and outcomes, facilitate research to improve student academic achievement and close achievement gaps, support education accountability systems, and simplify the processes used by State educational agencies to make education data transparent through Federal and public reporting.

Under previous competitions, the Institute awarded SLDS grants to 49 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These funds supported SLDS grantees in the design, development, and implementation of statewide longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12

(K-12) data systems, or to expand their K-12 systems to include early childhood data and/or postsecondary and workforce data. Grants awarded also supported the development and implementation of systems that link individual student data across time and across databases, including the matching of teachers to students; promoting interoperability and data standardization across institutions, agencies, and States; and protecting student and individual privacy consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.

States are using their SLDS systems in unprecedented ways. The Covid pandemic saw states pivoting from the planned work of education data systems to helping to develop, roll out and track new attendance policies and procedures, identifying locations in need of hotspots to enable students to access digital content and online instruction, and even helping to locate child care openings available to front-line workers. An influx of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ARP ESSER) funds has been made available to states, which have used the funds to safely reopen schools and also to try to mitigate the learning losses that occurred during the pandemic. It has become clear that SLDS systems are essential to respond to unanticipated events, and also that they need to be flexible enough to link new data and provide critical information to stakeholders for unexpected purposes.

Because States have been engaged in the process of developing these longitudinal data systems for a number of years, this competition focuses on using data that have already been linked or managed in State data systems. Recognizing that infrastructure conceived more than a decade ago may be increasingly obsolete and not readily be able to meet new challenges and take advantage of new technologies, States may apply for infrastructure grants in this round. Grants will not be made available to support ongoing maintenance of current data systems, but they may be used to improve existing systems to make more effective use of the data contained in these statewide systems, or to create a system where none previously existed, or a linkage that didn't already exist.

Supplement not supplant. The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA) requires that funds made available under this grant program be used to supplement, and not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing State data systems.

IV. STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible to receive funds made available pursuant to this competition, States must certify that their implementation of an SLDS has certain, required capabilities.

In order to receive funding under this program, applicants must also demonstrate that they meet or will meet the elements described below. Applications must identify which of the following requirements are in place, and if the requirements are not currently being met, describe how the requirements will be developed through the project.

Governance and Policy:

- **Need and Uses.** In addition to providing information that helps to improve student achievement and reduce opportunity gaps among students, a successful data system must provide data and data-use tools that can be used in education decision-making at multiple levels, from classroom instruction to informing policy.
- **Governance.** A successful data system rests upon a governance structure involving State and

local stakeholders in the system's design and implementation. Particularly when expanding the data capacity of existing K-12 systems to include other educational data, an SLDS program and project must identify the entities responsible for the operation of the statewide data system and should include a common understanding of data ownership, data management, and data confidentiality and access, as well as the means to resolve differences among partners.

- **Institutional Support.** A successful data system requires institutional support from leadership within the SEA and from relevant stakeholders within and outside the SEA. The support must include authorization to develop and implement the SLDS, as well as the commitment of necessary staff and other resources. If the SLDS is to be expanded to include data from other systems, all involved institutions must agree to a shared vision for deliverables and objectives.
- **Sustainability.** A successful data system requires ongoing support from the SEA after it has been implemented. At a minimum, the system requires ongoing commitment of staff and other resources for system maintenance, quality control, and user training.

Technical:

- **Federal Reporting.** A successful data system must increase efficiency in meeting Federal reporting requirements, including those of the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) *EDFacts* system. The system should provide efficiencies that reduce the burden of Federal reporting for schools and districts and meet expectations of *EDFacts* Modernization of high-quality data at the file submission deadline. These efficiencies could be achieved through aligning the elements associated with federal reporting to the Common Education Data Standards and implementing the Generate Tool, a software application that improves data quality and automates reporting for state education agencies (SEAs) through standardization. For additional information, see <https://ciidta.grads360.org/#program/generate>.
- **Privacy Protection and Data Accessibility.** An SLDS and its associated processes must ensure the confidentiality of student data, consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as any other applicable Federal and State laws or regulations concerning the confidentiality of individual records. The system must also include public documentation that clearly articulates what data will be accessible, to which users, and for what purposes.
- **Interoperability.** The system must use a common set of data elements with common data standards such as the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS, <http://ceds.ed.gov>), or be mapped to match elements across different data sources, to enable interoperability and comparability of data among programs, and increase efficiency in reporting, as available and applicable. A successful data system has the capacity to exchange data between the SEA and its LEAs, as well as among LEAs, or with other appropriate State agencies or educational entities.
- **Data Quality.** A successful data system must ensure the integrity, security, and quality of data. It must include an ongoing plan for training those entering or using the data, as well as procedures for monitoring the accuracy of information.

- **Enterprise-wide Architecture.** A successful SLDS includes an enterprise-wide data architecture that links records across information systems and data records across time and allows for longitudinal analysis of dropout and graduation rates and student achievement growth. The architecture should include, at a minimum, a system for assigning unique student identifiers, a data dictionary, a data model, and business rules. The system must make data dictionaries publicly available.

Data Use:

- **Secure Access.** Appropriate and secure access to data must be provided to key stakeholder groups including policymakers, SEA program staff, external researchers, local administrators, and school or campus educators. Access must be balanced with the need to protect student privacy and confidentiality consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.
- **Data Use Deliverables.** The system must include deliverables to meet end-user needs to inform decision-making and evaluate policies and programs. Design of these deliverables must be informed by early and sustained engagement of representatives from user groups to ensure the system will meet their information current and evolving needs. The system also must include a professional development program both to prepare end-users to effectively use the data to inform decision-making and improve practices.
- **Evaluation.** The system should include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the data use deliverables, and training and professional development programs.
- **Partnerships with Research Community.** The State must have a policy in place for the processing of requests for data for research purposes and for communicating the scope of data available for analysis. The State should establish partnerships with internal and/or external research groups to assist with answering questions that can inform policy and practice. The State should actively disseminate analysis findings to the public while ensuring confidentiality of individual student data. This dissemination could include presentations or publications, including, for example:
 - Discussion of findings with regional and local education agencies and schools
 - Discussion findings with state leaders
 - Presentations and workshops at meetings of professional associations of teachers and leaders
 - Presentations at the IES STATS-DC conference and the SLDS Best Practices conference
 - Presentations and publications for the general public including parents, students, and community organizations
 - Publications in practitioner journals
 - Publications in researcher journals
 - Activities with relevant IES-funded research and development (R&D) centers, research networks, or regional educational laboratories (RELs)
 - The development and deployment of tools based on the research
- **Sustainability Plan.** The system must include a plan for sustaining the deliverables and training beyond the life of the grant.

V. SLDS PRIORITIES

As stated above, each grant awarded under this competition will fund SLDS work in one of the following Priorities for development and use of an SLDS. For each priority, applicants must identify all data, data sources, and infrastructure involved in the proposed work, and how the resulting products would be used to inform programs and policies. Where new data and/or systems are being brought together in new or existing systems, the proposal must indicate how the data and/or systems will be added to or linked together.

Infrastructure and Interoperability

Applicants seeking funding under this priority must describe how they would use the funds to develop or improve currently existing statewide longitudinal data system infrastructure in the State to improve the linking and use of education data in the State. The focus in this Priority is on improving and expanding data linking and the interoperability of data across levels (for example, LEA to SEA or SEA to USED data transmission) or across sectors (for example, K12 data to Workforce data). While the other three priorities focus on answering specific questions related to those priorities, the focus here is on improving the data infrastructure.

States seeking funding under this priority must describe the plans for the infrastructure improvements, and the data that will be linked using the system. At a minimum, States must propose to link at least one data source to currently existing K12 data. Data sources may include early childhood education data, postsecondary data, workforce data, or other non-education data sources, including social services and juvenile justice data. States must also demonstrate how their proposed system will use a common set of data elements with common data standards to allow interoperability and comparability of data among programs such as the Common Education Data Standards (<http://ceds.ed.gov>), as available and applicable. States must also indicate how the proposed infrastructure improvements will enable the State to provide data to stakeholders and other data users to inform policy and practice.

College and Career

Applicants seeking funding under this priority must describe how they would use the SLDS to assess students' college and career readiness in order to improve their postsecondary education and workforce outcomes.

States are encouraged to rely on their own postsecondary data linkages and not simply purchase this data from an organization external to the agencies partnering under this application.

Applicants must describe specific policy questions that would be addressed under this priority. For example, applicants could propose to develop reports for secondary and postsecondary education programs with information on college entry and completion rates, employment, and earnings for their former students, in order to help these programs better prepare current and future students. States could provide students and parents with better information on the cost, student success rates, and workforce outcomes for postsecondary institutions and programs. Applicants could also propose to use their SLDS to determine whether the number of people enrolled in education or training programs is aligned with the current and anticipated needs of the State's workforce. States also might explore the role of non-degree certificates and credentials in workforce preparation and training programs, or examine the effects of dual enrollment programs on high school graduation and college matriculation, retention, and graduation rates.

States might also explore educator labor markets, exploring such areas as identifying teacher shortage areas, analyzing efforts to alleviate such shortages and the outcomes associated with these efforts.

Applicants must identify all data that would be needed for these analyses, and how the resulting information would be used to inform programs and policies. If the data currently exist, then the application must indicate where the data are housed in the SLDS. If the data are not currently housed within or linked to the SLDS, then the application must identify the source system or data collection mechanism and describe how the data would be added to/or linked to the SLDS to support these analyses.

School Finance

Applicants seeking funding under this priority should describe how they would use the SLDS to improve school-level finance data in order to support transparency about education spending. Applicants also should describe how this work would provide information to support policymakers' allocation decisions, and also support evaluations concerning spending decisions and outcomes.

If funds are requested under this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the SLDS includes information currently collected for the Common Core of Data School-Level finance survey for *all* schools. If data are not currently collected or available for all schools, the application must indicate where the data are housed and how they would be added or linked to the SLDS.

Applicants must also demonstrate how these data would be used to support program needs. For example, applicants could analyze funding patterns over time, particularly as learning modalities may have been affected by pandemic school closures, or how ARP funds have been allocated to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on student learning. They could explore learning outcomes associated with changes in school funding allocations. At a minimum, applicant should be able to do school-based fiscal reporting to meet local, state, and federal requirements.

State Policy Questions

Applicants seeking funding under this priority must describe how they would improve the ability of the SEA and local educational agencies within the State to explore policy questions to inform efforts to improve outcomes in pre-school, K12, and post-secondary systems.

Applicants seeking funding under this priority should demonstrate how they would build capacity to explore questions using data that already exists within or is linked to the SLDS and should not include questions that could be answered through the College and Career or School Finance priorities. For example, states could assess how new State or local policies and programs are implemented and the results they are achieving so that adjustments could be made quickly to improve effectiveness before the policies or programs are expanded. Other applicants might propose to develop or expand research partnerships between SEA staff and external researchers in order to expand the State's capacity to analyze data and develop reports and tools that can inform policies and programs. A research partnership would be expected to answer policy questions that could be developed through the partnership. Another way in which applicants might respond to this priority is to improve access to data by researchers through enhanced systems for providing restricted use data licenses and other mechanisms that facilitate research and answer agreed upon

policy questions to improve education in the State while ensuring that the privacy and integrity of data is safeguarded.

Scalable Data Use Development

Applicants awarded funding under any of the 4 priorities would also be eligible to receive \$250,000 in additional funding to participate in the development of open-source data use assets built upon the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) and within the CEDS Open Source Community (OSC). States participating in this project would contribute to the identification and prioritization of data use applications (e.g., reports, dashboards, research request tools, etc.) for statewide longitudinal data stored in or expressed in CEDS. State participants will then contribute to an Agile development process to collaboratively produce these outputs within the CEDS OSC. These outputs would be immediately deployable within the States who participate in the project, but also more broadly scalable to any State or education stakeholder who uses CEDS. States who participate would be in control of the implementation of outputs from the work and no data would be shared outside of the State. States participating would be expected to engage in a series of working sessions, collaborative development and communication with the broader CEDS stakeholder community. States who understand Agile development processes, have experience with the CEDS community and standards, and have or plan to implement the CEDS Integrated Data Store or CEDS Data Warehouse are strongly encouraged to identify interest.

States would not have to submit an application for this work but would be expected to indicate an interest in participating. States are not asked to submit project plans or budgets for this work as part of the current application. Because this scope of work may exceed the work planned under the other priorities of the grant application, States that are awarded grants and elect to participate in this project will receive an additional \$250,000 to complete this work in addition to the amount awarded for the State's primary work. Only States that apply for and are awarded an SLDS Grant in any of the 4 priorities may also be awarded the additional \$250,000.

VI. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available for this program no later than May 5, 2023 at the Grants.gov system. Applicants should refer to this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

VII. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award grants in the form of *cooperative agreements*. Applicants should note that *cooperative agreements* allow Federal involvement in the activities undertaken with Federal financial support. The Institute intends to work with grantees to identify best practices in designing and implementing statewide, longitudinal data systems, establish partnerships among States, and disseminate useful products or "lessons learned" through these grants. The specific responsibilities of the Institute and the grantee will be outlined in the cooperative agreement.

VIII. FUNDING AVAILABLE

Applicants may request no more than \$3.75 million for one grant priority area (Infrastructure and Interoperability, College and Career, School Finance, and Policy Questions). States that agree to

participate in the Scalable Data Use Project may request no more than \$4 million, which includes up to \$3.75 million for the priority area work, and up to \$250,000 for costs associated with the Scalable Data Use Project work. Grants are limited to no more than 48 months.

IX. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Only State educational agencies are eligible to apply. By law, for this program, the State educational agency is the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of elementary schools and secondary schools. States and territories that did not receive SLDS grants in both the FY 2015 and FY 2019/2020¹ competitions are eligible to receive grants in this round.²

A State educational agency must propose to work jointly and collaboratively with other agencies in the State. For example, if a State submits an application that proposes an analysis including early childhood education data, it would be expected that the agency capable and responsible for such data would be a partner in the grant application. Despite the requirement that the K-12 State educational agency, as defined above, be the applicant and the fiscal agent for the grant, the design, development, and subsequent implementation of the grant-funded work must be carried out by the most relevant and capable State agency in partnership with the other participating organizations.

Individual States may also propose to collaborate with other States. Each State educational agency participating in a collaborative should submit its own application for its own activities and funding. If the collaborating States determine that funding for the joint activities cannot be easily and clearly apportioned among them, or that such apportioning would result in inefficiency and higher costs, one State could serve as the fiduciary agent for the joint activities. In that case, funding for the joint activities should be included in the application of the State acting as fiscal agent. If proposing collaboration with other States, the response must also identify any legal or regulatory issues that may prevent there being a successful cross-State collaboration or provide agreements or laws that demonstrate that the States have agreed that the collaboration and data sharing may proceed.

X. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should budget for travel and accommodations for two senior project staff to attend a two-day meeting each year in Washington, DC with other grantees and Institute staff to discuss accomplishments, problems encountered, and possible solutions/improvements.

State educational agencies that receive grants must agree to participate in an evaluation of the SLDS program, if the Department decides to conduct such an evaluation. The agreement of a State to participate in such an evaluation would extend to an evaluation conducted after termination of the State's assistance under this program.

¹ Grants that were awarded to States in FY 2020 included funds appropriated in FY 2019. These grants are referred to as FY 19/20 grants to reflect the funding source and the award date.

² State and Territories eligible to apply are: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Northern Mariana Islands, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

In order to leverage the value of work supported through these grants, resulting products would be subject to the Open Licensing Rule (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4c310877c610dd2a9e1a85f7c979602a&mc=true&node=se2.1.3474_120&rgn=di_v8).

IES requires all grantees to submit the electronic version of their final manuscripts upon acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly publication to ERIC (<https://eric.ed.gov/>), a publicly accessible and searchable electronic database of education research that makes available full text documents to the public for free. This public access requirement (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>) applies to peer-reviewed, original scholarly publications that have been supported (in whole or in part) with direct funding from IES, although it does not apply to book chapters, editorials, reviews, or non-peer-reviewed conference proceedings. **As the designated representative for the grantee institution, IES holds the principal investigator responsible** for ensuring that authors of publications stemming from the grant comply with this requirement.

The author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all modifications from the peer review process. Submission of accepted manuscripts for public accessibility through ERIC is strongly encouraged as soon as possible **but must occur within 12 months of the publisher's official date of publication**. ERIC will not make the accepted manuscripts available to the public prior to the end of the 12-month embargo period, unless specified by the publisher.

The ERIC website includes a homepage for the Grantee and Online Submission System (<https://eric.ed.gov/submit/>), as well as a Frequently Asked Questions (<https://eric.ed.gov/?granteefaq>) page. During the submission process, authors will submit bibliographic information from the publication, including title, authors, publication date, journal title, and associated IES award number(s).

Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs>, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

XI. CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION

The sections described below (summarized in Table 1) represent the body of applications to be submitted to the Institute and should be organized in the order they appear in the Request for Application (RFA).

As noted above under section VI. *Applications Available*, all of the required forms and instructions for the forms will be in the application package to be made available at www.Grants.gov. The application package will also provide specific instructions about where applicants will be able to attach those application sections that must be submitted in PDF (Portable Document Format).

Applicants could indicate which, if any, parts of their application materials they consider to be proprietary and not subject to release under FOIA.

Table 1. List of proposal sections.

Section
<p>1. <i>Application for Federal Education Assistance (SF 424)</i></p> <p>Available at http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html</p>
<p>2. <i>Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424</i></p> <p>Available at http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html</p> <p>Note: If human subjects are involved, please also include the appropriate narrative (as described below in the appendix of this document) as part of the body of the proposal.</p>
<p>3. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Sections A and B</i></p> <p>Available at http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html</p> <p>Note The application must include a budget for each year of support requested and a cumulative budget for the full term of requested IES support. Applicants must provide budget information for each project year using the ED 524 form</p>
<p>4. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C (No page limit)</i></p> <p>Available at http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html</p> <p>Note: Section C requires the provision of an itemized budget breakdown and justification for each project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A and B. Applicants must provide this itemized budget information, Section C, as a separate document created by the applicant and then attached to the ED 524 Form and instructions.</p>
<p>5. <i>Project Abstract (Maximum length: 1 page)</i></p>
<p>6. <i>Project Narrative (Maximum length: 40 pages)</i></p>
<p>7. <i>Budget Narrative (Justification) (No page limit)</i></p>
<p>8. <i>Appendix A – Optional Attachments (Maximum length: 15 pages)</i></p>
<p>9. <i>Appendix B – Current Status of State’s Longitudinal Data System (Maximum page length: 6 pages)</i></p>
<p>10. <i>Appendix C -- Documentation Pertaining to Data Security and Privacy (Provide links instead of documents, when possible) (No page limit)</i></p>
<p>11. <i>Appendix D - Letters of Support, MOUs, and Relevant State Legislation or Executive Orders (No page limit)</i></p>

12. <i>Appendix E – Résumés of Key Personnel (No more than 4 pages per résumé)</i>
13. <i>Appendix F–Acronym List (No page limit)</i>

1. *Application for Federal Education Assistance (SF 424).* Applicants must use this form to provide basic information about the applicant and the application.

2. *Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424.* Applicants must use this form to provide contact information for the Project Director and research on human subjects information. The Department has determined that the collection, maintenance, use of individual level records within typical SLDS projects is considered human subjects research. 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, Human Subject Assurance number which has been assigned.

- 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 the remaining items in this section.
- Is the Project Exempt from Federal Regulations? It has been determined that the use of individual level data within an SLDS requires ongoing monitoring for human subjects protection and therefore cannot be considered “exempt”. Please mark this item as “no” and provide the assurance number. You must also attach a copy of the Institutional Review Board Approval and a copy of the Non-exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative to this form. The Non-exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative should describe the following: the characteristics of the subject population; the data to be collected from human subjects; recruitment and consent procedures (if applicable); any potential risks; planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks; the importance of the knowledge to be gained relative to potential risks. If an Institutional Review Board Approval is pending, please indicate provide an estimate of when the Approval will be completed within the narrative. If the project has not yet been submitted to an Institutional Review Board for approval please indicate this. The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit your application. However, your application is recommended/selected for funding, the designated U.S. Department of Education official will request that you obtain and send the certification of the Institutional Review Board approval to the Department within 30 days after the formal request.

3. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Sections A and B.* The

application must include a budget for each year of support requested. Applicants must use this form to provide the budget information for each project year. (Note: ED 524 Section A is for Federal sources of funding being requested in the grant application. ED 524 Section B identifies non-Federal sources such as State funding or foundational funding, which will contribute to the proposed work).

4. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Section C.* The application must provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year, for each budget category listed in *Sections A and B* (Federal and non-Federal, respectively).

The budget breakdown by project year and category must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project:

- For each person listed in the Personnel category, include the time commitments, including an indication of the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel by project year and corresponding cost.
- For consultants include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs.
- For applications that include contracts for work, submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each contract for each project year, and the details of the contract costs should be included in the budget narrative. It is understood that some level of detail may not be provided due to overall timing of the process (i.e. contracts cannot be articulated unless grants have been awarded).
- Itemized costs for equipment purchases, supplies, travel, and other related project costs should also be provided.
- Any other expenses should be itemized by category (Personnel, Fringe, etc.) and unit cost.

The budget must also be organized around the specific outcomes listed in 6. *b) Project Outcomes*, with a projected cost total for each outcome. If, for example, an applicant proposes six outcomes for funding, each outcome must include an estimated total cost. In this example, the total cost for these six outcomes must equal the total requested amount for this application in 4. *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section A*. If staffing or equipment will be utilized to support multiple project outcomes, the applicant should either a) divide the costs of the resource among the relevant outcomes, or b) assign the total cost of the resource to one outcome but provide explanation of how that resource will also be utilized to support other outcomes in X: 7. *Budget Narrative (Justification)*.

All information provided should be displayed as a spreadsheet and should directly correspond to the written description provided in section X:7. *Budget Narrative (Justification)*.

5. *Project Abstract.* The *Project Abstract* must include: (1) The title of the project, (2) the Priority for which funding is requested, (3a) the name(s) of the agency responsible for the direction and implementation of the grant, (3b) the names of collaborating States if the State proposes to participate in a multi-State collaboration, (4) a short description of the project, including goals and major activities, and (5) the expected outcomes of the project. The

maximum length for the *Project Abstract* is one page.

6. *Project Narrative.* This section provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application. The narrative should describe the State's current SLDS and how the applicant proposes to use data from the SLDS to inform and improve programs and policies with respect to the Priority for which funding is requested as described in section V. As applicable, the applicant should address how the State either meets or proposes to make progress toward incorporating each of the capabilities and requirements outlined in section IV. *Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements.* The project narrative should also describe how applicant plans to implement the project and sustain the outcomes of the project beyond the end of the grant.

The narrative should be set out in seven sections – (a) through (g) as described here – to facilitate reviewers' application of the five review criteria described in section XV. *Review Criteria.*

(a) Need for Project

Briefly summarize the current status of the SLDS and how these capabilities and key elements will support the State's education improvement efforts, goals, and accountability system. Briefly describe the current capacity in the State to use data in the SLDS to support improvement efforts, including previous data standards use, and the unmet needs that will be addressed through the grant. Any training or technical assistance needs that will be addressed through the grant should also be described here.

In summarizing the current status of the State's system, refer to the Requirements outlined in section IV. *Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements.* Identify each requirement and indicate whether work on each is a) completed, b) currently in progress, or c) has not begun. With regard to the Requirements for the Priority for which funding is requested, specify whether any current resources (especially grants from the Institute) are being used for design or development of the element. Display this information in chart format and attach as *Appendix B.*

(b) Project Outcomes

For each Priority that the applicant is proposing to address, describe proposed outcomes (such as analyses and/or tools,) that will be supported through this grant. For each of these outcomes, include explanatory discussion of how the applicant will accomplish the goals (e.g., practical matters such as stakeholder involvement, participation in grantee workgroups or Communities of Practice, collaboration with other agencies in the State, technical and organizational challenges to be overcome, or other relevant information). A proposed outcome should represent completion or substantial progress toward completion of the requirement.

Outcomes must be expressed as products (example: develop standards-based tools), features (example: form P-20 governance structure), or benchmarks (example: integration and analysis of school-level finance data) that can be measured at the end of the grant period.

If the State proposes to participate in a multi-State collaboration, clearly identify the extent to which CEDS will be employed to facilitate the collaboration and through which platform or approach (that is, Workgroups, the CEDS Open Source Community, the CEDS Data Warehouse Expansion Process, etc.).

(c) Timeline for Project Outcomes

Briefly describe how the outcomes of the project will be achieved. The applicant may determine the format for the timeline, but the timeline must include all proposed outcomes for the project, a set of supporting events or tasks for each of the proposed outcomes, the party or parties responsible for the events or tasks, and estimated dates (month can be used) for both initiation and completion of each task.

If applicable, describe how activities supported by a grant funded by this competition will be coordinated with activities supported by an existing grant, including a State Workforce Data Quality Initiative or other grants administered by the US Department of Labor,³ if applicable. In particular, please make certain to address plans for avoiding duplication.

(d) Project Management and Governance Plan

Indicate where the project will be located within the organizational structure of the State educational agency and other appropriate State agencies and identify the entities responsible for approval and oversight of project activities.

Describe the management protocol that will be exercised in order to achieve the goals of the proposed project on time and within budget. In describing this protocol and the related control activities, refer to the timeline and activities described above.

Briefly describe the governance structure for the proposed project. Identify the organizational units which will have authority regarding the project, that will be responsible for the project's operation, and that will be responsible for the subsequent operation of the statewide data system. Identify any units or agencies that will work as partners in the project and describe how the project proposes to include other relevant State and local stakeholders. Describe how such partnerships or other working agreements will be coordinated and funded. Describe partnerships that will support implementation activities (i.e., training and technical assistance for users) and how those will be funded.

Specify how the input of all intended users of the system (e.g., educators, ECE leaders, State policymakers, etc.) will be obtained and utilized.

Include as *Appendix C* letters of support or other documentation, such as MOUs or MOAs that are evidence of the anticipated participation and coordination by all agencies or institutions that will be partners in the project (e.g., letters of support from postsecondary institution leaders, the Governor, the chief State school officer, etc.), as well as links to relevant executive orders or legislation that describe the authority or

³ For more information about the Workforce Data Quality Initiative, see <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>

relationships among the partners relative to this type of work.

If a multi-State collaboration is proposed, explain how it will be managed and what steps the State will take to mitigate risk and ensure that the project achieves its intended outcomes. Also identify any legal or regulatory issues that may prevent there being a successful cross-State collaboration or provide agreements or laws that demonstrate that the States have agreed that the collaborate and data sharing may proceed. Please describe to what degree CEDS may be employed to facilitate the multi-State collaboration. Please include both current state of use and expected future state of use of the CEDS tools, Align and Connect; implementation of physical assets, such as the Integrated Data Store and the Data Warehouse; participation in CEDS Workgroups; and contributions to the CEDS Open Source Community.

(e) Staffing

Discuss how the project will be staffed and managed. Describe the specific roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of the individuals involved with the project; this information should complement the information provided in *Project Management and Governance Plan*. This section can refer to the résumés of key personnel included in *Appendix D*, to demonstrate that the proposed staff has needed qualifications, but the section should also provide specific information to describe how the key personnel are qualified to manage and implement the proposed activities.

(f) Data Security and Privacy

Applicant should explain how the SLDS system will ensure the confidentiality of student data, consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as any other applicable Federal and State laws or regulations concerning the confidentiality of individual records, and how the system will include public documentation that clearly articulates what data will be accessible, to which users, and for what purposes.

(g) Contribution to the SLDS Community

Applicant should explain how the project team will ensure its participation in and contribution to the broader SLDS Community through a wide range of activities such as a) sharing policies, practice, and source code; b) participating as webinar presenters, workshop participants, or workgroup members (in particular, if implementing CEDS and its associated physical assets such as the Integrated Data Store or Data Warehouse, participation in the Open Source Community (OSC, <https://ceds.communities.ed.gov/#communities/ceds-osc>) is strongly encouraged.

Plans to participate in the OSC will be used to plan support for the OSC and will not be used in the evaluation of proposals.

The *Project Narrative* is limited to the equivalent of 40 pages, where a page is 8.5 x 11 inches, on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. All text in the Project Narrative must be single-spaced and at least 12-point font to ensure that reviewers can easily read the application. .

Use only black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. The application must contain only material that reproduces well when photocopied in black and white. Color graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts are discouraged for this reason.

7. *The Budget Narrative (Justification)*. This justification narrative should correspond to the itemized breakdown of Federal and non-Federal project costs by project year that applicants are asked to provide in a spreadsheet format. See above, 4. *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C*.

The budget justification should be organized around the specific outcomes listed in 6.b) *Project Outcomes*. A projected cost should be shown for each outcome. If, for example, an applicant proposes six outcomes for funding, each outcome must include an estimated total cost and budget justification. In this example, the total cost for these six outcomes must equal the total requested amount for this application in 4. *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section A*. If staffing or equipment will be utilized to support multiple project outcomes, the applicant should either a) divide the costs of the resource among the relevant outcomes, or b) assign the total cost of the resource to one outcome but provide explanation of how that resource will also be utilized to support other outcomes.

The *Budget Narrative* must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project:

- For each person listed in the Personnel category, include the time commitments, including an indication of the percentage of FTE by project year and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel.
- For consultants include justification for the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs.
- For applications that include contracts for work, include justifications for each contract for each project year and the details of the contract costs. It is understood that some level of detail may not be provided due to overall timing of the process (i.e. contracts cannot be articulated unless grants have been awarded).
- Justifications for the itemized costs for equipment purchases, supplies, travel, and other related project costs should also be provided.
- Brief descriptions of any other expenses itemized by category (Personnel, Fringe, etc.) and unit cost.

A page limit does not apply to this section.

8. *Appendix A – Optional Attachments*. In *Appendix A* of the proposal, applicants should include any figures, charts, tables, or images that supplement section XI. 6. *Project Narrative* (example: illustration of current system, or planned system or system component). **This section must not exceed 15 pages. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.**

9. *Appendix B – Current Status of State’s Longitudinal Data System.* The chart described in section X. 6. *Project Narrative* should be provided. The chart must include three columns that

- 1) identify the requirements that are set out in section IV. *Statewide, Longitudinal Data System Requirements*;
- 2) identify the current status of each requirement as either a) completed, b) currently in progress, or c) has not begun; and
- 3) describe the current status of each requirement.

This section must not exceed 6 pages. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.

10. *Appendix C – Documentation pertaining to Data Security and Privacy.* In *Appendix C* of the proposal, applicants must include links and citations to sections of State laws and regulations concerning the confidentiality of individual records when such links and citations are available. It must also include links and citations to any currently existing policies related to data security and privacy when such links and citations are available. Copies of documents will be accepted only if the documents do not have a public link or do not have a citation

These may include but are not limited to:

- Data security policies
- Staff access policies
- Acceptable use policies
- Associated State IT security policies
- Researcher access agreements/policies
- Data sharing agreements/policies
- Data flow documentation (planned and/or implemented)
- Data Governance policies
- Organizational charts showing where the project fits into the organizational structure

There is no maximum page limit on this section. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix C; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.

11. *Appendix D – Evidence of Coordination and Support.* In this appendix, applicants should provide letters of support or other documentation that are evidence of the anticipated participation and coordination by all agencies or institutions that will be

partners in the project. Such evidence of support can also include key letters of agreement (e.g., memoranda of understanding) from partners and consultants, as well as copies of relevant executive orders or legislation that describe the authority or relationships among the partners relative to this type of work. 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 project that will be required if the application is funded. There is no maximum page length for this section.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix D; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.

12. *Appendix E –Résumés of Key Personnel.* Abbreviated résumés should be provided for the project director and other key personnel. Each résumé should include information sufficient to demonstrate that personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their duties. The résumés must adhere to the margin and format requirements described above in the section *XI. 6. Project Narrative*. **Each resume must be no more than 4 pages.**

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix E; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.

13. *Appendix F–Acronym List.* Combined, alphabetical list of all acronyms used in application. There is no maximum page length for this section.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix F; all other material will be removed prior to peer review of the application.

Please note that applicants selected for funding will be required to submit the certifications and assurances noted below before a grant is issued. The electronic application will provide these forms so that applicants can complete and submit them with their applications.

- (a) SF 424B Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
- (b) ED 80-0013 Certification Regarding Lobbying
- (c) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable

XII. SUBMITTING A LETTER OF INTENT

The Institute strongly encourages potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent no later than May 19, 2023. Letters of intent are optional, non-binding, and not used in the scientific 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 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 on line at <https://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 is recommended to be no more than one page (about 3,500 characters).

- Descriptive title
- Topic and goals that you will address
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors
- Duration of the proposed project
- Estimated total budget request

XIII. APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND PROCESSING

Applications must be completely received by 11:59:59 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this request for applications. The Grants.gov system will not accept an application for this competition that finishes transmission after 11:59:59 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Therefore, the Department strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process. Please note that this application process includes submission of a number of attachments. You may be submitting your application at the same time as several other States which may affect how quickly the system accepts all of your documents. You are strongly encouraged to allow adequate time for this part of the process.

Each application that is received on time will be reviewed for completeness and for responsiveness to this request for applications.

XIV. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

All applications that are complete and responsive to this request will be evaluated and rated by peer reviewers. A panel of technical experts who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the design, development, implementation, and utilization of statewide, longitudinal data systems will conduct reviews in accordance with the review criteria stated below.

Each application will be assigned to at least two primary reviewers, who 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. At the full panel meeting, each application will be presented to the panel by the primary reviewers. After discussion of the application's strengths and weaknesses, each panel member will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score.

XV. REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will be expected to evaluate the application on the basis of the following criteria:

- (1) Substantial need for the project. The application clearly describes the status of the State's longitudinal data system and demonstrates that the State lacks one or more requirements. It provides a convincing case that the project is necessary to accelerate the State's capacity to use data from its Statewide Longitudinal Data System to make informed decisions regarding education- related policy and practice. Failure to meet the goals outlined for the project would seriously threaten or impede significant State progress toward using State data to drive improved outcomes for students.
- (2) Clear goals and appropriate and measurable outcomes. The goals of the project are clearly articulated and demonstrate a commitment to creating a robust system, which includes data access and usage, that meets the Priority-specific requirements, and supports transparency, accountability and improvement. Proposed outcomes relate directly and logically to the stated needs with respect to the State's data use goals. The application clearly describes measurable or observable outcomes that will be accomplished by the end of the grant. These outcomes will represent completion or substantial progress toward completion of the requirements described in section *IV*, as well as appropriate attention to promoting effective use of the system described in section *V*. If the required system capabilities cannot be accomplished during the grant, the application provides a compelling explanation and indicates when each of those capabilities will be accomplished.
- (3) High-quality, logical, and feasible activities and timeline. The project activities are reasonable and well designed to achieve project goals. Proposed collaborations will promote efficiency. The timeline clearly describes work that logically will lead to accomplishment of the proposed outcomes. The work appears feasible in terms of the State's current status as described in section *XI. 6 (a) Need for the Project*, and the time and resources available for the project.
- (4) Effective management and governance plan. The management plan for the project demonstrates that there will be sufficient administrative oversight and controls to enable the work to proceed on time, as planned, and within budget. If applicable, the governance plan describes an active partnership between K-12 and early childhood or higher education agencies and with other agencies and institutions responsible for data to be included in the statewide data system, as well as the involvement of appropriate parties to promote use of the system to support reform and accountability. In particular, the plans describe any new staffing required to provide useful data back to school districts, schools, and teachers.
- (5) Data Security and Privacy awareness. The project is aware of the State and Federal laws and policies regarding data security and privacy and State policies. The project also indicates efforts to follow State and Federal laws and regulations pertaining to data security and privacy.
- (6) Personnel and financial resources. The project personnel have the qualifications and time commitment needed to implement the project within the proposed project period. If personnel will be hired or contracted for the project, the qualifications and duties of these new hires or contractors are clearly described. The proposed budget and budget justification are reasonable in terms of the activities to be carried out and commensurate with the proposed outcomes and goals of the project.

XVI. RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Application Deadline Date and Time: June 29, 2023 11:59:59 p.m., Washington, DC time

Earliest Anticipated Start Date: September 15, 2023

XVII. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

1. Overall merit of the proposal, as determined by the peer review;
2. Responsiveness to the requirements of this Request for Applications;
3. Prior funding under this program and stage of development of State's system;
4. Performance and use of funds under previous Federal awards; and
5. Funding available.

XVIII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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 11:59:59 pm Washington, DC time on June 29, 2023. Applications received by Grants.gov after the 11:59:59 pm application deadline will be considered late and will not be sent forward for scientific peer review. You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

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.

After applications are fully uploaded and validated at Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Education receives the applications for processing and transfer to the IES PRIMO system (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/>). PRIMO allows applicants to track the progress of their application via the Applicant Notification System (ANS).

Approximately one to two weeks after the application deadline, invitation emails are sent to applicants who have never applied to IES before to create their individual PRIMO ANS accounts. Both the PI and the AOR will receive invitation emails. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks after the application deadline, all applicants (new and existing ANS users) will begin to receive a series of emails about the status of their application. See the IES Application Submission Guide for additional information about ANS and PRIMO.

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

XIX. INQUIRIES ADDRESS

Dr. Nancy Sharkey

Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education
Statistics

550 12th Street, SW, Room 4162 Washington, DC 20202 Email:
Nancy.Sharkey@ed.gov

Telephone: (202) 987-1082

XX. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

20 U.S.C. 9607 et seq., the “Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002,” Title II of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

XXI. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) codified at CFR Part 200. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 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.