

Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Product of the National Center for Education Research

Letter of Intent Due:	May 28, 2020	iesreview.ed.gov
Application Package Available:	May 7, 2020	Grants.gov
IES Submission Guide Available:	April 1, 2020	ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf
Application Deadline:	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 30, 2020	Grants.gov
Possible Start Dates:	March 1 - September 1, 2021	

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Part I: Overview

Through the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Policymaking (Using Data) grant program, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) seeks to expand state education agencies' use of their state longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to provide evidence for use when making policy decisions. State education agencies (SEAs) can apply for these grants, on their own or in collaboration with other organizations, to analyze the data in their own SLDS in order to examine long-term trends in key issues, programs, and policies affecting learner outcomes.

SLDSs are designed to help states, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. In addition to a set of common K-12 student data elements such as student demographics, grade level, enrollment and completion, attendance, state assessment scores, many of these systems include other K-12 student elements and link K-12 student data to other data including K-12 teacher data, prekindergarten data, postsecondary data, Perkins CTE data, workforce data, and health and human services data. Over the past 15 years and through 6 rounds of SLDS funding, 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa have received at least one SLDS grant.

IES supports the research use of SLDS through its research grants programs and its Grants for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems. The Using Data grant program further extends this support with an emphasis on examining longer term student pathways and outcomes that has become possible as SLDS follow student cohorts for longer periods and include more cohorts. The type of research to be supported by the Using Data grant program may take different forms. For example, retrospective analyses of the progress of students in previous cohorts may identify factors or pathways that could predict successful student outcomes for future cohorts. Current outcomes of students who took part in a program in the past could be examined to help assess the longer term results of the program. Students recently or currently involved in a program could be followed through the life of the project to check their future outcomes. Cohorts from before and after a policy was implemented could be compared to see if their longer term impacts differed.

The type of research proposed should be aligned with what the SEA wants to know about the issue, program, or policy and the findings should have practical implications for the SEA's decision making.

A. Eligible Applicants

An applicant must be a U.S. state education agency (SEA), defined as a state or territory's K-12 authority, alone or in conjunction with research organizations such as universities and research firms, and/or with other appropriate organizations (such as other state agencies or local education agencies).

The SEA will be the grantee and must provide the principal investigator (PI). 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. The PI must be SEA staff. Multiple persons on the grant, from the SEA or other collaborating organizations, may share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually

and logistically. However, the SEA applying for funding must designate a single PI for the project and the other persons sharing responsibility should be listed as co-principal investigators.

B. Technical Assistance

IES provides technical assistance to applicants that addresses the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition and methodological and other substantive issues concerning research in education settings. IES program officers work with applicants through a variety of formats up until the time of Grants.gov submission. If you submit a letter of intent (LOI) on the IES Review webpage (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/>), a program officer will contact you regarding your proposed project. IES also provides funding opportunities webinars (live and on demand; <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>) that include advice on choosing the appropriate competition, grant writing, and submitting your application.

Program Officer: Allen Ruby
Email: Allen.Ruby@ed.gov
Phone: 202-245-8145

Program Officer: James Benson
Email: James.Benson@ed.gov
Phone: 202-245-8333

C. Award Limits

Applications to the Using Data grants program **must** conform to the following limits on award duration and cost. The maximum duration of the award is 3 years and the maximum award is \$1 million. The award will be made as a cooperative agreement. The requested award should be commensurate with the proposed work. If necessary, IES will adjust the award size or workload as appropriate.

D. Reading the RFA and the IES Application Submission Guide

In order to submit a compliant, responsive, and timely application, you will need to review two documents:

1. *This RFA* - to learn how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. [Part I](#) sets out the requirements regarding applicants and education outcomes examined. [Part II](#) provides the requirements for what must be included in your project narrative for your application to be accepted for review. [Part III](#) provides information about preparing your application and other narrative content for the application, including required appendices. [Part IV](#) provides general information on competition regulations and the review process. [Part V](#) provides **a checklist that you can use to ensure you have included all required application elements to advance to expert peer review**. [Part VI](#) lists external links that may be useful for preparing and submitting your application.
2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) - for important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure your application is complete and received without errors on time through Grants.gov.

We strongly recommend that both the principal investigator (PI) and the authorized organization representative (AOR) read both documents.

E. Ensuring Your Application is Forwarded for Peer Review

Only compliant and responsive applications received before the date and time deadline are peer reviewed for scientific merit. The PI and the AOR should work together to ensure that the application meets these criteria. The [Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist](#) in [Part V](#) will help you make sure you have the minimum necessary.

1. On-time submission - see the separate IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>).

- Received and validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 30, 2020.

2. Compliance

- Includes the **required project narrative** (see [Part II](#)).
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see [Part III.B](#)).
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the project narratives and appendices. IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for peer review.
- Includes Appendix B: Letters of Agreement (see [Part III.A.2](#))
- Adheres to the maximum award limits (\$1 million and 3-year duration) (see [Part I.C](#))

3. Responsiveness

- The applicant must be a SEA (a state or territory's K-12 authority) (see [Part I.A](#))
- The PI is from the SEA (see [Part I.A](#))
- The research includes measures of learner outcomes (see [Part I.F](#))
- Meets Project Narrative Requirements (see [Part II.A](#)).

F. Learner Outcomes

For the Using Data grant program, IES is interested in the following academic outcomes that fall into two categories: (1) learning and achievement and (2) successful progression through education systems.

For **kindergarten through Grade 12**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in academic content areas, including reading, writing, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics); English language proficiency; and progression through education systems as indicated by course and grade completion, retention, high school graduation, and dropout.

For **postsecondary education**, access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education, which includes developmental education courses and bridge programs as well as programs that lead to occupational certificates, associate's, or bachelor's degrees; and learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses.

For **adult education**,¹ achievement in reading, writing, English language proficiency, and STEM, as well as access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of adult education courses and programs.

Applicants are encouraged to also include **social and behavioral competencies**, defined as social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are important to learners' success in school and beyond, **career and technical education outcomes**, such as skills and credentials, and **labor market outcomes**, such as employment and earnings, when these are of interest to the SEA.

For these outcomes, your application **must** take advantage of the longitudinal nature of the data and focus on the longer term outcomes regarding the key issue, program, or policy.

¹ Learners at least 16-years old and outside the K-12 system who are preparing for, transitioning into, or currently enrolled in adult education, as defined in Title II of the 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIAO), such as Adult Basic Education, adult English literacy programs, and preparation programs for high school equivalency exams.

Part II: Project Narrative

The project narrative describes and justifies the research you propose to do and its usefulness for decision making by SEAs. The project narrative **must** include four sections: Significance, Research Plan, Data, and Decision Making and Dissemination. The project narrative is limited to 22 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 22nd page of the narrative. The project narrative must also conform to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)).

Below are the requirements for the project narrative that must be met before your application will be forwarded for peer review. A set of recommendations for the project narrative are provided next and these will be used by the peer reviewers as they review your application

A. Requirements for the Project Narrative

1. Significance

The purpose of this section is to describe the key issue, program, or policy to be examined, its importance to the SEA, the research questions to be addressed and how addressing them will help the SEA in its decision making, and the substantive expertise of the personnel.

You **must describe** the key issue, program, or policy that the SEA wants to examine.

2. Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your research design and analysis plan, demonstrate how these will address the research questions and inform SEA decisions, and describe the analytical expertise of the personnel.

You **must describe**

- The research design and methods
- The data analysis plan

3. Data

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that you have access to the SLDS (and any other) data necessary for the project and describe the data expertise of the personnel.

You **must describe**

- The SLDS data you will use
- How and when the required data will be made available for the study

4. Decision Making and Dissemination

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the project's findings from the research will be considered by the SEA in the improvement of the program or policy and will be disseminated to multiple audiences, and to describe the dissemination expertise of the personnel.

You **must describe**

- How you will present the project's findings to the SEA leadership
- How you will disseminate the findings to multiple audiences

B. Recommendations for a Strong Project Narrative

These recommendations are intended to improve the quality of your project narrative, and the peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

1. Significance

Describe the key issue, program, or policy that the SEA wants to examine. Note the population of learners and educators involved, and how learner immediate and long-term outcomes are linked to it. If you are examining a policy or program, discuss its key components and how it is implemented.

Present the SEA's research questions regarding the key issue, program, or policy. Describe them in straightforward terms and explain their practical importance for the SEA's decision making aimed at improving learners' education outcomes.

Discuss the key personnel who have expertise in the key issue, program, or policy from the SEA and any collaborating organizations. Describe their knowledge of the key issue, program or policy; their involvement in implementing, overseeing, or reviewing it; the work they will do on the project; and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

2. Research Plan

Describe your setting and sample and how these are appropriate for responding to the research questions. Show that the setting and sample to be studied include the educators and learners you described under Significance as being involved in the key issue, program or policy.

- Discuss whether you will be using data from all schools, teachers, and students or from a subset or sample of them
- Identify the years of data to be included

Identify the key variables you will be examining to address your research questions. Typical variables may include

- Background characteristics of students, teachers, other personnel, schools, and districts
- Measures of the key issue, program, or policy
- Learner outcome measures - describing which are longer term outcomes

Describe the type of analyses you intend to do. You may propose descriptive, correlational, predictive and/or causal analyses. Detail each analysis you intend to do and how it will contribute to addressing your research questions.

For your data analyses:

- Describe and justify the statistical models to be used, including how they address the multilevel nature of education data and how well they control for selection bias.
- Discuss how you will address exclusion from any data set and missing data. Describe sensitivity tests to assess the influence of key procedural or analytic decisions on the results.
- Provide separate descriptions for all analysis of factors that influence the relationship between the intervention and learner outcomes (mediators and moderators).
- Describe any subgroup analyses that will be conducted to examine learners from diverse backgrounds and experiences within your sample.

Describe how the research will provide enough information to address the research questions and contribute to the SEA's decision making regarding the key issue, program, or policy with the goal of improving learners' education outcomes. Elaborate on the practical use of the findings depending on what they might indicate.

Identify the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the research on track and ensure the quality of the work.

Discuss the key personnel who will carry out the research plan. Describe the work each person will do, their expertise and experience for this type of work, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

3. Data

Describe the structure of the SLDS data to be used in the project.

- If the SLDS data are in separate data sets, describe how they will be linked and combined.

Describe any non-SLDS data sets to be used in the project.

- Describe how the data will be linked and merged.

Show that all the variables to be analyzed as described under the Research Plan are available in the data or can be created from the data.

- A list of variables may be placed in Appendix B.
- If some variables will be created from the data, describe this process and the expected amount of work involved.

Note whether the SLDS uses a common set of data elements with common data standards to allow interoperability and comparability of data such as the Common Education Data Standards (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/ceds/>).

Describe how and when the data will be made available to carry out the research.

- A Letter of Agreement certifying the availability of the data for the project from the office responsible for data will provide greater support for data availability and may be placed in Appendix B.

Discuss the key personnel from the office responsible for the SLDS who will provide the SLDS data, link it if necessary, address missing or incorrect data found during data cleaning, and provide advice on its

use. Describe their expertise and experience for this type of work and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

Also, identify any other personnel who may be cleaning the SLDS data and linking it to different data within the SLDS and from outside it. Describe their expertise and experience for this type of work, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

4. Decision Making and Dissemination

Describe the personnel and SEA organizational structures that make decisions regarding the key issue, program or policy being studied. Note if such structures are found at different levels (such as at the state, regional or intermediary, and local levels).

- Discuss how the project's findings will be presented to and considered by these persons and structures.
- Describe how you will present the rigor of the findings (how much confidence to place in them for decision making) given the type of research design you will use.

Describe a dissemination plan that discusses the different ways in which you intend to reach multiple audiences through the publications, presentations, and products you expect to produce. These may include -

- Discussion of findings with regional and local education agencies and schools
- Discussion of 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 and students
- 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)

Discuss the key personnel who have expertise in dissemination from the SEA and any collaborating organizations. Describe the work each person will do regarding informing decision making and dissemination with the findings, their expertise and experience for this type of work, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

Part III: Preparing Your Application

A. Overview

The application contents—individual forms and their PDF attachments—represent the body of an application to IES. IES encourages you to refer to the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) for additional information about preparing to submit your application and ensuring your application is sufficient.

B. General Formatting

To ensure that reviewers can read your applications and that all applicants have similar expectations for length and space, IES specifies the following formatting conventions. 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, unless otherwise specified. In order for an application to be compliant and sent forward for review, the applicant should ensure that each narrative section follows both the page limit maximums and the formatting guidelines below unless otherwise specified.

1. *Page and Margin Specifications*

For all IES 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 6 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 IES to return the application without peer review.

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*

IES encourages you to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If color is used, you should ensure that the material reproduces well when printed or 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.

C. Appendices

The required [project narrative](#) (Significance, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources) is followed by two appendices. Appendix B is required, and Appendix A is optional. When you submit your application through Grants.gov, you will create a single PDF file that *contains the project narrative and all appendices* and include it as an attachment in the application package. Include appendices in alphabetical order and simply skip an appendix if it is not required for your application or if you choose not to include one of the optional appendices. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

The attachments and narratives are a critical part of the IES application because they include the substantive content that will be reviewed for significance and merit. The following recommendations will help ensure you are meeting the page-length requirements and that the expert peer reviewers can easily read your application.

1. *Appendix A: Supplemental Materials (Optional)*

Appendix A **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix A exceeds this 15-page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for peer review.

Appendix A may be used to provide supplementary materials to your application. In Appendix A, you may include figures, charts, or tables with supplementary information on the key issue, program, or policy you will examine or for your proposed study. For example, data tables on the population or sample, a timeline for your research project, the variables in the SLDS that you will be using in your research, an organizational chart of who is responsible for the key issue, program or policy you are researching, or a diagram of the management structure of your project. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

2. *Appendix B: Letters of Agreement (Required)*

Appendix B has **no maximum length**, and IES encourages applicants to ensure the letters are legible and adhere to the guidance in [Part III.B](#).

Appendix B must be used to provide the letter of agreement from the office that controls the SLDS data agreeing to the use of the data for the project. In addition, letters of agreement from any organization who will participate in or provide data for the proposed research, and from persons who will serve as consultants should also be provided. Such letters of agreement should 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. Ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

Letters of agreement are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

D. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the [project narrative](#) and required and optional appendices, you will also prepare a project summary/abstract, a bibliography and references cited, an exempt or non-exempt research on human subjects narrative, and biosketches for key personnel to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

1. Project Summary/Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/structured abstract as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. If your project is recommended for funding, IES will use this abstract as the basis for the online abstracts that we post when new awards are announced. We recommend that the project summary/structured abstract be two pages long and follow the format used for IES online abstracts (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/>).

(a) Title

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title of the project.
- **Competition:** Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Policymaking.

(b) Project Summary

The purpose of the project summary is to provide a high-level overview that is accessible to a range of audiences, such as policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. This section should use short, active sentences to briefly describe the significance of the project, project activities, and the intended outcomes.

- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose of the project and its significance for improving education in the state and the nation. This should include why the research is important, what this project will do to address the need, and the general expected outcomes of the project.
- **Project Activities:** An overview of the sample, research design, and methods.
- **Products:** A brief description of the expected products of the project, including the information that will be learned and disseminated.

(c) Structured Abstract

The purpose of the structured abstract is to provide key details about the project activities. This section is most likely to be used by other researchers but should be written in a way that is accessible to anyone who wants more information about the project.

- **Setting:** A brief description of the location where the research will take place and other important characteristics of the locale, such as whether it is rural or urban.
- **Population/Sample:** A brief description of the sample including number of participants; the composition of the sample including age or grade level, race/ethnicity, or disability status as appropriate; and the population the sample is intended to represent.
- **Key Issue, Program or Policy:** The key issue, program or policy you will be studying.
- **Research Design and Methods:** A brief description of the type of analyses to be done (e.g., descriptive, correlational, predictive, causal) and the design and methodology to be used. Describe design and methods year by year, in terms of steps or phases as applicable.
- **Control Condition:** If applicable, a brief description of the control or comparison condition, including the participants and what they will experience. If there is no treatment contrast, that can be noted as well.
- **Key Measures:** A brief description of key measures including the learner outcomes to be used in the study.
- **Data Analytic Strategy:** A brief description of the data analytic strategies that the research team will use to answer research questions.
- **Related IES Projects:** Indicate whether the proposed research is related to a completed or ongoing IES-funded project by noting the title of the related IES project and providing a link to the online IES abstract.

See abstracts of our funded grants in our online search engine of funded research grants (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/>) for examples of the content to be included in your two-page project summary/abstract.

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You **must submit** the bibliography and references cited as a separate pdf attachment in the application package. There is **no recommended page length** for the bibliography and references cited. You should include complete citations, including the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), titles of relevant elements such as the article/journal and chapter/book, page numbers, and year of publication for literature cited in the project narrative.

3. Human Subjects Narrative

You **must** submit an exempt or non-exempt human subjects narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a page length for the human subjects narrative. See *Information About the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by the Department of Education* (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>) for a brief overview of principles, regulations, and policies which affect research involving human subjects in research activities supported by the Department of Education.

Note that the Revised Common Rule is now in effect with changes that will affect Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of your proposed research protocol. Take care to address how changes to exemption and continuing review procedures, and the use of a single IRB, will be addressed should your application be recommended for funding.

The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of IRB approval at the time you submit your application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is

recommended 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 of the formal request.

4. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel

You **must** submit a biographical sketch (an abbreviated CV plus information about current and pending support) for each person named as key personnel in your application. Each biographical sketch with current and pending support information **must be no more than five pages in length**. If a biographical sketch exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page before it is forwarded for peer review

You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). Biographical sketches are submitted as separate PDF attachments in the application package. IES strongly encourages applicants to use SciENCv (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>) where you will find an IES biosketch form. You may also develop your own biosketch format. If you use SciENCv, the information on current and pending support will be entered into the IES biosketch template. If you use your own format, you will need to provide this information in a separate table.

Be sure to include your ORCID number (Open Researcher and Contributor Identification; <https://orcid.org/>) if you have one and consider establishing one if you have yet to do so.

The biographical sketch for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, and other key personnel should show how key personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience.

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, and other key personnel, along with the proportion of their time, expressed as percent **effort over a 12-month calendar year**, allocated to each project. Include the proposed IES grant as one of the pending grants in this list.

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Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award cooperative agreements pursuant to this Request for Applications.

2. Funding Available

All awards pursuant to this Request for Applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications. IES makes its awards to the highest quality applications, as determined through scientific peer review.

The size of the award depends on the scope of the project. The maximum duration of the award is 3 years and the maximum award is \$1 million.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

(a) Indirect Cost Rate

SEAs should apply their indirect cost rate negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education. **Please note that the** Indirect Cost Group (ICG) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Chief Financial Officer will not be available for assistance during the application preparation process. If your institution does not have an indirect cost rate and you receive a grant from IES, the ICG group can help with obtaining an indirect cost rate once the grant is awarded.

(b) 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 the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR, §200.432 Conferences (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-id.x?SID=dcd3efbcf2b6092f84c3b1af32bdcc34&node=se2.1.200_1432&rgn=div8).

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, such as working lunches; however, IES will determine whether these costs are allowable in keeping with the Uniform Guidance 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 or other disallowed expenditures.

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

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.

B. Additional Award Requirements

1. Pre-Award

(a) Clarification and Budget Questions

IES uses the peer review process as the first step in making funding decisions. If your application is recommended for funding based on the outcome of peer review, an IES program officer will contact you to clarify any issues that were raised by the peer reviewers and to address whether the proposed budget adequately supports the scope of work and meets federal guidelines.

(b) Demonstrating Access to Data and Other Studies

You will need to provide evidence that you have access to the appropriate SLDS prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include [Letters of Agreement in Appendix B](#) from those who have responsibility for or access to the data you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, **IES will require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds**. If you cannot provide such documentation, IES may not award the grant or may withhold funds.

If you are building onto an ongoing or a completed study and will require access to those subjects and data, you must provide evidence that you will have such access. In such cases, IES recommends that the principal investigator, or other key personnel, of the previous study should be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

(c) Assessment of Past Performance

IES considers the applicant’s performance and use of funds under a previous federal award as part of the criteria for making a funding decision. Performance on previous Department of Education awards is considered as is additional information that may be requested from the applicant, including compliance to the IES Public Access Policy (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>), which is applicable for all grants funded from 2012 to present.

2. Post Award

(a) Compliance with IES Policy on Public Access to Data and Results

All principal investigators are required 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.

Principal investigators must submit any peer-reviewed scholarly publications to ERIC.

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).

(b) Special Conditions on Grants

IES may impose special conditions on a grant pertinent to the proper implementation of key aspects of the proposed research design or 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.

(c) Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting

The principal investigator (PI) is required to attend one meeting each year (for up to 3 days) in Washington, DC with other IES grantees and IES staff. The project's budget should include this meeting. PIs who are not able to attend the meeting may designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

C. Overview of Application and Scientific Peer Review Process

1. Submitting Your Letter of Intent

Letters of intent (LOIs) are submitted online at the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO; <https://iesreview.ed.gov/>) system. **Select the Letter of Intent form for this competition.** 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). The LOI is non-binding and optional but strongly recommended. If you submit an LOI, a program officer will contact you regarding your proposed research. IES staff also use the information in the LOI to identify the expertise needed for the peer review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Elements for the Letter of Intent

- Descriptive title
- Grant competition
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email 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 (no more than 3 years)
- Estimated total budget request (no more than \$1 million)

2. Multiple Submissions

You may submit multiple applications to this grant program as long as they address different key issues, programs, or policies. If you submit multiple similar applications, IES 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 no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 30, 2020 through the internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) website. You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) and on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

The submission guide will direct you to enter a code for Item 4b Agency Routing Number on the form Application for Federal Assistance SF 424. You should enter “NCER-Using Data” in order to identify that you are submitting your application to the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Policymaking (Using Data) grant program.

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 1 to 2 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 (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) 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.

4. Scientific Peer Review Process

IES will forward all applications that are compliant and responsive to this Request for Applications to a panel of experts (<https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/reviewers.asp>) who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and Request for Applications. Reviews are conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below and the review procedures posted on the IES website (https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/application_review.asp).

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, IES 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

The purpose of IES-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 learners. IES 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 purpose. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in [Part II: Project Narrative](#).

(a) Significance

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section? Will the proposed project inform practice and make a meaningful contribution to the SEA's decision making on the key issue, program, or policy being examined?

(b) Research Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan? Will the proposed provide useful information for the SEA's decision making on the key issue, program, or policy being examined?

(c) Data

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Data section? Does the applicant have access to the data necessary to complete the research and the expertise to use it?

(d) Decision Making and Dissemination

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Decision Making and Dissemination section? Has the applicant identified which persons and organizational structures within the SEA should receive the findings from the project because they are involved in decision making on the program or policy studied? Has the applicant identified the appropriate audiences for dissemination?

6. Award Decisions

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

- Scientific merit as determined by scientific 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
- Ability to carry out the proposed research within the maximum award and duration requirements
- Availability of funds

Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

Only compliant and responsive applications will be peer reviewed. Use these three checklists below to better ensure you have included all required components for compliance, all general requirements, and all required project narrative elements. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) for an Application Checklist that describes the forms in the application package that must be completed and the PDF files that must be attached to the forms for a successful submission through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

Compliance				
	Have you included a project narrative (Part II)?			
	Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements			
	Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all page maximums as described in the RFA? IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application			
	Have you included Appendix B: Letters of Agreement?			
	Are you within the maximum award limits (\$1 million award and 3-year duration)?			
General Requirements				
	Have you met all the Requirements for an application?			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the applicant an SEA (a state or territory’s K-12 authority)? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the PI from the SEA? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your proposed research include measures of learner outcomes? 			
	Does your project narrative include the four required sections and the associated requirements? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below?			
Required Project Narrative Sections and Elements				
	<u>Significance</u>	<u>Research Plan</u>	<u>Data</u>	<u>Decision Making and Dissemination</u>
Describe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key issue, program, or policy to be examined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research design and methods The data analysis plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLDS data you will use How and when the required data will be made available for the study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting the project’s findings to the SEA leadership Disseminating the findings to multiple audiences