

Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.305S

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Part I: Overview and General Requirements

Through its National Center for Education Research (NCER), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports a program of research to build knowledge and understanding of education practice and policy. IES was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA - P.L. 107-279), in part to improve academic achievement and access to educational opportunities for all learners (ESRA, § 111.b.1.B), but also to focus on learners whose increased achievement would help close achievement gaps (ESRA, § 115.a.1) or who lack access to educational opportunities (ESRA, § 115.a.2.A). In carrying out this mission, IES takes steps to ensure that our work is carried out in a manner that is objective, secular, neutral, and nonideological and free of partisan political influence and racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias (ESRA, § 111.b.2.B).

In this Request for Applications (RFA), NCER invites applications for projects that will contribute to its Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking (Using Data for Recovery) grant program. Through the Using Data for Recovery grant program, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports state agencies' use of their state's education longitudinal data systems as they and local education agencies reengage their students after the disruptions caused by COVID-19. State agencies can apply for these grants, on their own or in collaboration with other organizations, to support research to inform their decisions regarding issues, programs, and policies related to learning acceleration and recovery. Learners may be in pre-kindergarten, K-12, postsecondary, and adult education.

State agencies' examination of SLDS data from before, during, and after the disruptions caused by COVID-19 can (1) identify subpopulations of students that did not engage or progress at expected rates during and after the disruption and the reasons why, and (2) develop evidence on the implementation and impact of programs and policies intended to help these students fully reengage in education.

Student reengagement can be measured by their:

- Academic learning
- Progression through the education system
- Preparation for the labor market
- Interest, motivation, and participation in their education
- Social, behavioral, and emotional learning

SLDSs are designed to help states, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders 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, and 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. For information on what is contained in SLDS, see the *Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Survey Analysis: Descriptive Statistics* (NCES 2021-126) which reports aggregate summary statistics of SLDS capacity and includes the state-level response to the 2018 SLDS Survey collection (available at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2021126>).

IES supports the research use of SLDS through its research grants programs, its Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant program, and the Using Data for Recovery grant program. The Using Data for Recovery grant program focuses on supporting state agencies as they identify what additional supports schools, staff, and students may need after the disruptions caused by COVID-19, determine whether the programs and policies that provide such supports are being well implemented, and generate evidence regarding which program and policies are linked to improvements in student education overall and for underrepresented student subgroups who were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 identifies the following subgroups for IES to carry out research related to addressing learning loss caused by the coronavirus: students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and subgroups identified in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which includes major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English proficiency status, gender, and migrant status.

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

A. Eligible Applicants

An applicant **must** be the state agency responsible for the education issue, program, or policy to be examined. The applicant **must** include a letter in Appendix C describing its responsibility for the education issue, program or policy, its access to the SLDS data, and its authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study.

Eligible state agencies include the State educational agency (SEA) responsible for the state's K-12 sector as well as state agencies responsible for other specific education sectors such as prekindergarten, career and technical education, postsecondary education, and adult education. If a state has no state higher education authority, a state postsecondary system may serve as the applicant. Where the issue, program, or policy crosses education sectors (such as pre-K to elementary school or high school to postsecondary), state agencies responsible for the different sectors should apply together and either can serve as the applicant.

Where the eligible state agency does not have the authority to use and release the SLDS data to be analyzed, the applicant **must** include letters of agreement from the state agencies or other organizations that have those authorities in Appendix C.

The principal investigator (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 from the eligible state agency. Multiple persons on the grant, from the eligible state agency or other collaborating organizations, may share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically. However, the state agency 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>) and virtual office hours to provide advice on choosing the appropriate competition, grant writing, and submitting your application. The program officers for the Using Data for Recovery grant program are:

- Dr. Corinne Alfeld (202-245-8203; Corinne.Alfeld@ed.gov)
- Dr. James Benson (202-245-8333; James.Benson@ed.gov)
- Dr. Allen Ruby (202-245-8145; Allen.Ruby@ed.gov)

C. Award Limits

Applications to the Using Data for Recovery grant 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 to support IES's involvement in the planning and implementation of project activities. 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* provides information on how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. [Part I](#) provides an overview of the Using Data for Recovery grant program and sets out the requirements regarding applicants and education outcomes examined. [Part II](#) provides detail on the specific requirements for what must be included in your project narrative for your application to be accepted for review and recommendations for your project narrative. [Part III](#) provides information about general formatting and other narrative content for the application, including required appendices. [Part IV](#) provides 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](#) provides the program codes that you must select from and enter the appropriate code in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form.
2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) provides 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 will be 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 August 12, 2021.

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 C: Letters of Agreement](#).

3. Responsiveness

- The applicant includes a letter in Appendix C describing the applicant's responsibility for the education issue, program or policy, its access to the SLDS data, and its authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study (see [Part I.A](#)).
- If the applicant does not have access to the SLDS data or authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, the applicant includes a letter or letters from the state agencies or organizations that will be providing access to the SLDS data (see [Appendix C](#)).
- The PI is from the state agency primarily responsible for the issue, program, or policy being examined (see [Part I.A](#)).
- The research includes measures of learner outcomes (see [Part I.F](#)).
- The project narrative meets Project Narrative Requirements (see [Part II.A](#)).

F. Learner Outcomes

For the Using Data for Recovery grant program, the applicant **must** propose to measure academic outcomes of learners, which can reflect **learning and achievement** in content domains, as well as learners' **successful progression** through education systems. IES is interested in the following academic outcomes, especially for the lowest performing students:

- For **prekindergarten**, school readiness outcomes, including pre-reading, language, vocabulary, early-STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics) knowledge, English language proficiency, digital literacy, and social and behavioral competencies (including self-regulation and executive function) that prepare young children for school.

- For **kindergarten through Grade 12**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in the academic content areas of literacy (including digital literacy), STEM, and social studies¹; English language proficiency; career and technical education (CTE) achievement or attainment; and progression through education systems as indicated by course and grade completion, retention, high school graduation, and dropout.
- For **postsecondary education**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses; and 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.
- For **adult education**², achievement in literacy, English language proficiency, and numeracy, as well as access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of adult education courses and programs including the full range of course and program types described in Title II of the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015.

Applicants are encouraged to also include **social and behavioral competencies**, defined as social and emotional 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 state agency. IES also encourages applicants to include, along with academic outcomes, more immediate measures of student reengagement in their education such as student interest, motivation, and participation.

¹ Social studies outcomes are defined as a learner's understanding of government structures and processes and how to be an engaged and knowledgeable citizen through skills and knowledge in civics, citizenship, geography, history, and economics.

² The system and authorized providers that serve learners at least 16-years old who are not enrolled in the standard K-12 system but are or could be preparing for, transitioning into, or currently enrolled in adult literacy programs, as defined in Title II, the "Adult Education and Family Literacy Act", of the 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), such as Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, Integrated Education Training, Family Literacy, Integrated English Language and Civics.

Part II: Project Narrative Requirements and Recommendations

The project narrative describes and justifies the research you propose to do and its usefulness for decision making by state agencies. 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 state agency, the research questions to be addressed and how addressing them will help the state agency in its decision making during the recovery period, and the substantive expertise of the personnel.

You must describe

- The key issue, program, or policy that the state agency wants to examine to support its decision making related to learning acceleration and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19
- Your research questions about the key issue, program, or policy

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 state agency decisions, and describe the analytical expertise of the personnel.

You must describe

- The research design and methods to address your research questions
- 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 discuss how the project's findings will be used by the state agency in the improvement of its program or policy related to learning acceleration and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, how the findings will be disseminated to multiple audiences, and what is the dissemination expertise of the personnel.

You must describe

- How you will present the project's findings to the state agency 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 state agency wants to examine and how it is related to reengaging students, learning acceleration, and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Describe the population of learners (including the subgroups identified in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021³) involved and how their immediate and longer-term education outcomes are linked to the issue, program, or policy. IES is particularly concerned with improving the performance of the nation's lowest performing students, especially since the disruptions caused by COVID-19 seem to have had differential effects across learner subgroups. If you are examining a policy or program, discuss its key components and how it is implemented.

Present the state agency's research questions regarding the key issue, program, or policy. Describe them in straightforward terms and explain their practical importance for the state agency's decision making aimed at reengaging students and accelerating COVID-disrupted learning. Present the available quantitative and qualitative evidence (if available) that indicates the importance of answering these questions. Describe any existing approaches that have been attempted to address this issue and how the current research will advance existing understanding of COVID-related learning disruptions and solutions for accelerating learning and recovery.

Discuss the key personnel from the state agency and any collaborating organizations who have expertise in the key issue, program, or policy. 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.

³ The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 identifies the following subgroups for IES to carry out research related to addressing learning loss caused by the coronavirus: students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and subgroups identified in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which includes major racial and ethnic groups, economical disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English proficiency status, gender, and migrant status.

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 - describe which are shorter- and which are longer-term outcomes

Describe the type of analyses you intend to do. You may propose descriptive, correlational, predictive and/or causal analyses. Link the analyses to the research questions and the decisions the state agency needs to make that you discussed in the Significance section. For example, a state agency may need to determine which students require specific types of services, or whether a program is being well-implemented or is reaching a specific subpopulation. In such a case, the project might focus on a predictive study or an implementation study paired with a correlational student outcomes study. In another case, a state agency may need to determine whether a program is improving student outcomes and the project will focus on a causal study. Any of these types of analyses, alone or in combination, is appropriate for this competition, as long as the analyses can address the research questions and support the decisions the state agency needs to make.

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, if necessary.
- 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 (including subgroups identified in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) 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 state agency'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.

Describe 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 from the state agency or any collaborating organization. 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 to be used in the project.

- Describe how the data will be obtained.
- Describe whether/how the data will be linked and merged with the SLDS data.

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 if any variables were not collected due to COVID-19 disruptions and how the project team plans to address such missing data.

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.

- Include a letter from the applicant in Appendix C describing its access to the SLDS data and its authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study.
 - If the applicant does not have access to the SLDS data or authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, include letters of agreement from the appropriate state agencies or organizations stating they will provide the data or authorization to use them (see [Appendix C](#)).

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 proposed time commitment to the project for completing their work.

4. Decision Making and Dissemination

Describe the state agency's personnel and 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 these persons will receive and consider the project's findings in their decision making.
- Describe how these persons will consider the rigor of the findings (how much confidence to place in them for decision making), given the type of research design used.

Discuss how you can integrate the findings into research-informed tools used by state agency stakeholders. Describe any potential data-informed applications that will be developed if the research results in substantively important findings. For example, the project could support the development of tools to predict which students might benefit from a program, to track whether participating students are benefiting from a program, or to provide data directly to learners to use in their own decision making.

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)
- The development and deployment of tools based on the research

Discuss the key personnel from the state agency and any collaborating organizations who have expertise in dissemination. 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 dissemination.

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. 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 scientific peer review. Adherence to these requirements also is necessary to ensure that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using smaller type or line spacing to provide more text in the application.

As a practical matter, if you use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing, or other alterations, and use footnotes sparingly, if at all, the application will typically meet these requirements. Readability should guide your selection of an appropriate font and your use of footnotes.

5. Citations

Use the parenthetical author-date style for citations (see for example the American Psychological Association, 2009) rather than numeric citations that correspond to the reference list.

6. 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, Data, Decision Making and Dissemination) is followed by three appendices. Appendix A is required for resubmissions, Appendix B is optional, and Appendix C is required. 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.

1. Appendix A: Response to Reviewers (Required for Resubmissions)

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix A. If your application is one that you consider to be new but that is similar to a previous application, you should include Appendix A. Appendix A **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages**. If Appendix A exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review. Note that an application that was previously submitted to another IES grant competition is still considered a resubmission.

Use Appendix A to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments. If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should use Appendix A to provide a rationale explaining why the current application should be considered a “new” application rather than a “resubmitted” application.

This response to the reviewers is the only information that should be included in Appendix A; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

2. Appendix B: Supplemental Materials (Optional)

Appendix B **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix B 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 B may be used to provide supplementary materials to your application. In Appendix B, 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 B; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

3. Appendix C: Applicant Letter and Letters of Agreement (Required)

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

In Appendix C, include a letter from the applicant describing its responsibility for the education issue, program or policy to be studied, its access to the SLDS data, and its authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study.

If the applicant does not have access to the SLDS data, the state agencies or organizations that can provide access to the SLDS data must provide a letter of agreement stating they will provide the data for use in the proposed study.

If the applicant does not have the authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, the state agencies or organizations that can authorize the use of the SLDS data must provide a letter of agreement stating they will authorize its use for the proposed study.

Include letters of agreement from any organization who will participate in or provide data for the proposed research, from any organization carrying out the data analysis or other research activities, take part in the dissemination of the findings, and from persons who will serve as consultants. 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 C; 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 and consultants 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/Structured 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:** Identify the RFA (Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking) to which you are applying.

(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 learning acceleration and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. 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 the project team will develop, 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. IES is particularly interested in improving the performance of the lowest performing students.

- **Key Issue, Program or Policy:** The key issue, program, or policy you will be studying related to learning acceleration and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19.
- **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:** A list of any other completed or on-going IES-funded projects that are related to this one, noting the title of the related IES project and providing a link to the online IES abstract, where *related* refers to a project that you are drawing upon or building on as part of your proposed project.

See 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/structured abstract.

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You **must submit** the bibliography and references cited as a separate pdf attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a 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/hrsnarrative1.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. You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). 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.

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. IES will accept the SciENcv format for your biographical sketch even though it does not adhere exactly to our general formatting requirements. You may also develop your own biosketch format.

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. 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.

The biographical sketch for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, other key personnel, and consultants (if included) should show how members of the project team possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience, including experience working with the study population as applicable.

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

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 and grantees will work with IES to plan and implement their activities.

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

State agencies 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-idx?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

“American Rescue Plan Act” of 2021 (H.R. 1319) Sec. 2010, and 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 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 the scientific 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 and the data needed for the project prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include [Letters of Agreement in Appendix C](#) 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

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).

(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. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to a previous NCER competition but that was not funded, you **must** indicate on the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance Form in the application package (see IES Application Submission Guide; <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) that the FY 2022 application is a resubmission (Item 8) and include the application number of the previous application (an 11-character alphanumeric identifier beginning “R305” entered in Item 4a). Prior reviews will be sent to this year’s reviewers along with the resubmitted application. You **must describe** your response to the prior reviews using [Appendix A: Response to Reviewers](#). Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2022 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past and did not receive an award but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should indicate on the application form (Item 8) that your FY 2022 application is a new application. In Appendix A, you should provide a rationale explaining why your FY 2022 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision. If you do not provide such an explanation, then IES may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year’s reviewers along with the current application.

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 August 12, 2021 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 for Recovery” in order to identify that you are submitting your application to the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking (Using Data for Recovery) 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 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 (<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 to assess the scientific rigor and practical significance of the research proposed in order to judge the likelihood that it will make a

meaningful contribution to the larger IES mission. Information about 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 related to learning acceleration and recovery in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. and make a meaningful contribution to the state agency'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 state agency'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 state agency 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?			
	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			
	If you are resubmitting an application, have you included Appendix A: Response to Reviewers ?			
	Have you included Appendix C: Letters of Agreement ?			
	Are you within the maximum award limits (\$1 million award and 3-year duration)?			
Responsiveness				
	Have you met all the Requirements for an application?			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the applicant a state agency with primary responsibility for the issue, program, or policy being studied? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the PI from this state agency? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your proposed research include measures of learner academic 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 state agency leadership Disseminating the findings to multiple audiences

Part VI: Submission Code

The IES submission guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf>) will direct you to enter a code for Item 4b Agency Routing Number on the form SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance. You should enter the code “NCER-Using Data for Recovery” to identify that you are submitting your application to the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking (Using Data for Recovery) grant program.