

## **Process for Requesting Funding for Supplemental Activities in the Research Networks**

### Background:

Funds permitting, the Institute will invite applications for supplementary activities to foster new ideas and support collaboration within the Early Learning, College Completion, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Research Networks. These funds are intended for research and dissemination activities that are carried out by two or more network members and that go beyond the scope of individual project grants. The supplemental activities must support the overall purpose and objectives for each network and meet the general requirements for sample, outcomes, and setting specified in the Request for Applications for each network topic.

The Institute intends to make available up to \$1,000,000 for supplementary activities for each network. The Institute will begin accepting proposals for supplementary activities from a network during the second full year the network is in operation and will review proposals on a rolling basis until all supplementary funds for a network are obligated or the network reaches the beginning of its fifth year of the grant, whichever comes first.<sup>1</sup> Networks may propose to use the funds for a single supplementary activity or several, smaller activities.

Research Teams (and, in the Early Learning Network, the Assessment Team) will work with the Network Lead to generate ideas and set priorities. The network members should establish a decision-making process and rules (e.g., majority or consensus) for identifying supplementary activities that will be submitted to the Institute for consideration. The Network Lead will be responsible for managing the requests and interacting with the Institute.

### 1. Initiation of a Supplemental Activity Request:

The Network Lead will work with the members of each network to generate ideas for supplemental studies or activities. The IES Program Officer responsible for each network may also participate in these discussions and offer suggestions. The Network Lead will make an initial request for Supplementary Activities to the Institute via a phone call or brief email to the Program Officer. This initial contact should serve as a means to judge initial interest on the part of the Institute in supporting this line of work.

### 2. Submission and Review of a Prospectus

If the Institute determines that an idea for a supplementary activity is of interest and feasible given available funds, the Program Officer will ask the Network Lead to submit a written prospectus no longer than 6 pages in length. (References and budget do not count as part of the 6 page limit.) The prospectus should include:

- 1) A description of the proposed project and how it will help the network achieve its goals. Proposals to conduct research, evaluation, or statistics projects should also include descriptions of the proposed methods and data analysis strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> For the Early Learning Network, requests for supplementary funding will be considered between February 1, 2017 and December 31, 2019. For the College Completion Network, requests for supplementary funding will be considered between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2020. For the CTE Network, requests for supplementary funding will be considered between February 1, 2019 and December 31, 2022.

- 2) A project timeline.
- 3) A total budget (including both direct and indirect costs) and budget narrative.
- 4) The names, institutional affiliations, and project roles of the members of the network who will be carrying out the proposed work.

The Institute will follow one of two procedures for making funding decisions on supplemental activities based on the requested budget amount. For projects with a budget less than \$100,000 (direct and indirect costs), the Institute will use an internal review process. For projects with a budget equal to or greater than \$100,000 (direct and indirect costs), the Institute will request a full proposal that will be sent for external review.

#### A. Supplemental activities with a budget **less than \$100,000**

Within two weeks of receiving the prospectus, NCER staff, including the relevant Program Officer, Associate Commissioner, and Commissioner, will review the document and make one of the following recommendations:

- a) Recommend for funding.
- b) Request additional information or a revision of the prospectus. If the Network accedes to this request, IES will perform a second review resulting in another determination.
- c) Decline funding.

If the recommendation is to fund, the NCER Commissioner will notify the IES Director and Deputy Director for Administration. The IES Director must give final approval before any funds are awarded. The Program Officer will communicate the decision to the Network Lead.

#### B. Supplemental activities with a budget **of \$100,000 or more**

Within two weeks of receiving the prospectus, NCER staff, including the relevant Program Officer, Associate Commissioner, and Commissioner, will review the document and make one of the following recommendations:

- a) Request a formal application.
- b) Request additional information or a revision of the prospectus before determining whether to proceed with a formal application.
- c) Decline further consideration.

If the recommendation is to request a formal application, the IES Standards and Review Office will send the Network Lead instructions for submitting an application, including a project narrative of not more than 20 pages, a budget (using the SF-424 Research and Related Budget form), and a budget narrative. If the proposed project involves conducting research, the application must also include the following Appendices:

- A. Dissemination History and Plan (max. 3 pages)
- B. Response to Reviewers (if resubmitting a revision of an earlier proposal) (max. 3 pages)
- C. Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures (Optional) (max. 15 pages)
- D. Examples of Intervention or Assessment Materials (Optional) (max. 10 pages)
- E. Letters of Support from All Partner Institutions, Agencies, Schools or Districts, and Consultants (no page limit)

F. Data Management Plan (for Exploration, Initial Efficacy, or Follow-Up research project types) (max. 5 pages)

The Network Lead will have 30 days to prepare and submit an application, which will be sent out for external peer review by the Standards and Review Office.

If the NCER Commissioner decides to fund the project, he or she will notify the IES Director and the Deputy Director for Administration. The IES Director must give final approval before any funds are awarded. The Program Officer will communicate the decision to the Network Lead, and the Standards and Review Office will send the reviewer comments to the Network Lead. The project team must respond to any additional requests for information from IES prior to award and, if the project involves conducting research with human subjects, must submit IRB approval to IES prior to commencing data collection.

If the NCER Commissioner decides not to fund the project, he or she will notify the Standards and Review Office. The Standards and Review Office will send a regret letter and the reviewer comments to the Network Lead.

### 3. Budgetary Considerations

The work plan and budget for the supplemental activities must conform to the time frame of each institution's original grant. Supplemental activities may not be used to justify an extension of the original grant.

Network members must use their institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate. When calculating indirect costs on expenses for research conducted in field settings, network members should use their institution's federally negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate.