



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research

CFDA Number: 84.305H

<u>COMPETITION</u>	Letter of Intent Due Date	Application Package Available	Application Due Date
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PART I GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

In this announcement, the Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites applications for research projects that will contribute to its newly established Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant program. For the FY 2013 competition, the Institute will consider only applications that meet the requirements outlined below in this Request for Applications.

Separate announcements are available on the Institute's website that pertain to the other research and research training grant programs funded through the Institute's National Center for Education Research and National Center for Special Education Research (<http://ies.ed.gov/>). An overview of the Institute's research grant programs is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/overview.asp>.

PART II RESEARCHER-PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCHER-PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIPS

The Institute has established the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research (Research Partnership) grant program (CFDA 84.305H) with the intention of funding partnerships composed of research institutions and State or local education agencies. These partnerships are to identify an education issue with important implications for improving student achievement that is of high priority for the education agency, carry out initial data analyses regarding the education issue, and develop a plan for further research on the issue culminating in an application to one of the Institute's research grant programs. The ultimate goal of the partnerships is to conduct research that has direct implications for improving programs, processes, practices or policies that will result in improved student outcomes. To ensure a full partnership, each organization involved in the partnership will provide at least one Principal Investigator (or Co-Principal Investigator) to the partnership and the Principal or Co-Principal Investigator from the education agency is to have decision-making authority regarding the issue to be examined.

As one of its priorities, the Institute seeks to encourage education researchers to develop partnerships with stakeholder groups to advance the relevance of education research and the usability of its findings for the day-to-day work of education practitioners and policymakers (see <http://ies.ed.gov/director/board/priorities.asp>). The Institute is also interested in the development of such partnerships in order to build research capacity in practitioner settings and support the use of rigorous research-based evidence in decision-making. The establishment of such partnerships between researchers and State and local education agencies (as well as school leadership and staff) has traditionally been encouraged under the Institute's Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.305A) and Special Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.324A), required under the Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies program (CFDA 84.305E), and, more recently, encouraged under the Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences (CFDA 84.305B) through the addition of a new topic on Researcher and Policymaker Training and under the Statewide Longitudinal Data System Program (CFDA 84.372) through the new Data Use Requirement.¹ The Research Partnership program differs from the Institute's other research grant programs in that it provides support for a partnership's development of a research plan. The Institute's other research grant programs support similar partnerships but only after they have developed a research plan.

¹ State education agencies are required to meet a series of data use requirements with FY12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System grants, including establishing partnerships with the research community. Specifically, the State must have a policy in place for the processing of requests for data for research purposes and for communicating the scope of data available for analysis. The State should establish partnerships with internal and/or external research groups to assist with answering questions that can inform policy and practice. The State should actively disseminate research and analysis findings to the public while ensuring confidentiality of individual student data.

In addition, the Institute intends for the Research Partnership program to foster greater use of State and district administrative data for research. As part of their research planning activities, partnerships are expected to complete an initial analysis of administrative data to help understand their education issue and consider future research approaches. They may also identify other relevant existing data sources, determine whether and how the additional data sources might be combined with the administrative data, actually combine datasets, and carry out analysis of the combined data. In addition, the analysis of administrative data may be complemented by further quantitative data collection and/or qualitative fieldwork and their analysis. However, given the limit on the size of the grant award, the Institute expects that any large-scale data collection (quantitative or qualitative) will not be possible under the Research Partnership project (although pilot studies may be possible) but will be proposed in the application to the Institute for further research that is to be developed as part of the research partnership.

The Institute expects the grantee to provide the following at the *end* of a Research Partnership project:

- 1) A description of the partnership as developed over the course of the grant.
- 2) A description of the education issue addressed by the partnership.
- 3) The results of the completed initial data analyses of administrative data.
- 4) The results from any additional data collections and/or analyses.
- 5) A fully developed application, ready for submission to one of the Institute's grant competitions, to support the partnership in carrying out further research on the issue.
- 6) Recommendations for how the partnership could be maintained over the longer term.
- 7) Lessons learned from developing the partnership that could be used by others in forming such partnerships.

PART III REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

3. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

A. Focus on Student Outcomes

The Institute seeks to improve the quality of education for all students through advancing the understanding of and practices for teaching, learning, and organizing education systems. To that end, all research supported by the Institute must address student academic outcomes. Therefore, as you discuss the education issue your research partnership will examine, you will need to show how it is directly or indirectly linked to student academic outcomes. For example, if you intend to examine teacher professional development in your district, you may be interested in examining how professional development is linked to teacher instructional practices but you will also have to look at student outcomes as well. If your application does not link your issue to student outcomes then it will not be considered responsive to this Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review. The Institute supports research on a diverse set of student outcomes including the following:

- For prekindergarten, school readiness is the primary student outcome.
- For kindergarten through Grade 12, the primary student outcomes include learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in the core academic content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science measured by specific assessments (e.g., researcher-developed assessments, standardized tests, grades, end of course exams, exit exams) as well as course completion, grade retention, high school graduation and dropout rates along with the social skills, dispositions, and behaviors that support academic outcomes.

- For postsecondary education (Grades 13-16), the primary student outcomes are access to, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education.
- For adult education (i.e., for students at least 16 years old and outside of the K-12 system who are engaged in adult basic education, adult secondary education, programs for adults who are learning English, and programs designed to help under-prepared students acquire the skills to succeed in college), the primary outcomes are student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics as measured by specific assessments and course and program completion.

B. Requirements of Institutions and Key Personnel

Under the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant program:

- Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply as the research institution partner(s). These include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities. State and local education agencies are eligible to apply as the education agency partner(s).
- Applications must include at least one Principal Investigator from a research institution and at least one Principal Investigator from a State or local education agency. All should have expertise in the education issue to be addressed and at least one of the State or local agency's Principal Investigators should have decision-making authority for the issue within their agency. The partnership must choose one Principal Investigator to be the Principal Investigator/Project Director who will have overall responsibility for the administration of the award and interactions with the Institute. All other Principal Investigators should be listed as Co-Principal Investigators.
- Partnerships may include more than one State or local education agency. However, the inclusion of more than one education agency should be justified based on their similarities and shared interests in the proposed work (e.g., contiguous school districts or similar types of districts that seek to address the same issue). You should avoid the appearance of creating a convenience partnership; that is, a group of State or district education agencies that have little in common besides their relationship with the research institution.
- Partnerships may include more than one research institution. However, the inclusion of more than one research institution should be justified based on their shared interests in the proposed work, the research complementarities they bring to the partnership, and their ability to maintain a long-term working relationship within the partnership.
- An applying research institution or education agency may be part of no more than one Research Partnership application for the FY 2013 competition.
- All institutions involved in a proposed partnership must submit letters of agreement (placed in Appendix C of the application) documenting their participation and cooperation in the partnership and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership.
- The Principal Investigator and a Co-Principal Investigator (representing the research institution and the education agency) must attend the Institute's annual Principal Investigator meeting in Washington, D.C. In addition, the Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator must attend, if applicable to their work, the Institute's annual Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Conference held in Washington, D.C.

C. Applying to multiple competitions

You may submit applications to more than one of the Institute's FY 2013 grant programs. However, you and your institution may not submit more than one application to the FY 2013 Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant program. You also may not submit a given application or similar applications more than once to the Institute's FY 2013 competitions. In cases of an applicant submitting the same or similar applications, the Institute will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

4. THE PROJECT NARRATIVE

In your 25-page project narrative, use the **Significance** section to explain the strength of the proposed partnership and the importance of the issue the partnership will investigate. Use the **Research Plan** to detail how the partnership will be fully established, how a research plan to examine the issue of interest will be developed (including plans for initial analyses of data to better understand the issue), and how the application for Institute funding to carry out the research plan will be developed. Use the **Personnel** section to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, their responsibilities within and time commitments to the project, and the inclusion of education agency personnel with responsibility for the issue of interest. Use the **Resources** section to describe your access to institutional resources, schools, and relevant data sources.

A. Significance of the Research-Practitioner Partnership

In the Significance section you should clearly describe (a) the strength of the partnership and (b) the research aims of the project including the issue to be examined and its importance to the education agencies involved in the partnership, other education agencies, and the field of education research.

a. Strength of the partnership

You should clearly describe all the members of the partnership. You should describe why they have a common interest in working together and how all members will contribute to and benefit from the partnership. Specifically, you should explain how the research institution and the education agency have common interests, complementary abilities, and the capacity to work together. Furthermore, you should describe how the partnership will improve the research capacity of the State or local education agency in the longer run. If several education agencies and/or research institutions are involved in the partnership, you should describe their commonalities and complementarities and justify the benefit to the partnership of including more than one of the same type of institution.

You should describe the process through which the involved organizations decided to propose a Research Partnership project. As part of this, you should discuss any past or ongoing collaborations between the members of the partnership and the results of those joint efforts. The purpose of this discussion is for you to show that the proposed partnership is well grounded in previous discussions and agreements, and possibly joint activities, among the institutions involved.

You should note any other research partnerships the education agency already has in place. If such collaborations exist, you should discuss how this proposed partnership differs from them and how it would provide non-overlapping research support to the education agency.

You should discuss the long-term possibilities for the partnership. This could include discussing the longer-term research interests of the partners; the type of structures that might be put into place to support the identification of additional issues for joint research, the development of research agendas and plans, and grant applications to support such work; and the maintenance of these structures when changes in leadership occur.

b. Research aims of the partnership

You should clearly describe the issue to be examined by the research partnership. The issue may be described at a general level with specifics to be determined by the joint research to be done by the partnership (as described under the Research Plan). You should also describe the research aims regarding the issue, i.e., what the education agency hopes to learn about the issue and how this knowledge would be useful to its practice. For example, a partnership might propose to examine the general issue of student mobility because of descriptive data showing a high level of student mobility or small-scale qualitative data showing the disruptive results of mobility. The research to be done by the partnership (both under the partnership project and the resulting grant application to support future research) might be aimed at addressing the specific details that would provide a better understanding of student mobility (e.g., the factors associated with mobility, the types of students more likely to be mobile, whether all mobility is related to poorer student academic performance, whether the relationship between mobility and student performance differs by subject, which schools suffer from the greatest student mobility, whether mobility primarily occurs within district or across districts).

An important part of the description of the issue is its links (both theoretical and empirical) with student academic achievement. As discussed above, the Institute supports work on education factors that can be linked directly or indirectly to student academic outcomes. For example, high student mobility may be directly linked to student academic outcomes while high teacher mobility may have indirect links to student outcomes (e.g., loss of continuity of instruction which then impacts student learning). You should describe the theoretical links between the issue and specific student academic outcomes and any empirical support for these links. Regardless of whether the issue has a direct or indirect link to student outcomes, the significance of the research aim of the partnership is heavily dependent on whether the issue to be examined has a strong link to student academic outcomes. Issues that cannot be strongly linked to student academic outcomes, though possibly of high importance to the education agency, should not be proposed as the subject of a Research Partnership project.

Also, you should clearly link the issue that is the focus of the partnership to a potential decision that can be made by the State or local education agency to improve student academic outcomes. The Institute intends that issues addressed by Research Partnership projects be more than theoretically or empirically interesting. You should clearly show how the partnership's work could contribute to specific actions taken by a State or local education agency to improve student academic outcomes.

In addition to justifying the importance of the issue, you should justify its importance to the education agency involved in the partnership. Evidence of its importance might include identifying past and ongoing agency efforts regarding the issue and showing that the issue falls within the agency's current priorities and research agenda. Overall, you are making the point that the issue is of great concern to the education agency and, as a result, the agency will have a major stake and interest in the work. In addition, you could also note past research done on the issue by the research institution. In this way, you show that the proposed issue is one of strong interest to all the organizations in the partnership.

The importance of the issue depends upon its concern to other education agencies as well. You might argue that the research you propose may be of value to other States and districts and may lead them to carry out similar work should your results prove useful. Similarly, the issue's importance may be greater if it is an ongoing topic within the education research literature. You should discuss how your proposed research could contribute to the literature through your findings or to the field of applied research/models used by education agencies through your research design.

B. Research Plan

In the Research Plan you should clearly describe (a) how the partnership will be fully established, (b) how the partnership will develop its research plan to examine the issue, what initial analyses of administrative data will be done to better understand the issue, and what other data collections and analyses will be

carried out, and (c) how the grant application for further Institute funding to carry out the research plan will be developed.

a. Developing the partnership

Your partnership may be newly developed or stem from earlier collaborations but in either case you should describe the ways in which the partnership will be maintained and deepened over the course of the Research Partnership project. This description includes partnership activities organized around the proposed research, such as how often partnership personnel meet, how decisions on research direction will be made, and how the initial research will be jointly carried out. You should identify those partnership activities that while contributing to the proposed research are also aimed at maintaining a longer-term collaboration.

b. Developing the research plan

The primary purpose of the partnership is to explore an important education issue linked to student academic achievement and develop a research plan to address the issue in future joint research. You should describe how the partnership will develop its research plan and ensure that it reflects the priorities of the education agency. This may include how the partnership will narrow the issue to be examined if it is broad, how the initial research will be planned and jointly carried out, how decisions on the research direction will be made as the research progresses, how the research capacity of the agency will be increased, and how the results will be jointly examined and presented to other members of the education agency and the public. Strong applications will provide specific processes for addressing these aspects of the partnership. For example, you might propose:

- Creating a broad based advisory group to provide input at several points during the project to ensure that the partnership receives comments from the spectrum of stakeholders in the education system,
- Increasing the agency's research capacity, e.g., through the sharing of coding and methodological plans,
- Creating a joint review process for the release of results, and/or
- Releasing a report and/or holding a meeting for a general audience describing what the partnership found and what its future research plans are.

In exploring the education issue, the partnership must carry out initial research and you must describe the plan for that initial research. The initial research includes the analysis of administrative data and you should describe the dataset(s) to be used including the sample the data is taken from and the population it represents, the data's strengths and weaknesses regarding the analysis of the issue, and the key variables to be used include the measures of the issue and of student academic outcomes. In addition, you should detail the type of analysis to be done using the data.

Other planned data collections and analyses should be detailed including the sample to be used, the measures collected (and the instruments used to obtain them) and the specific methods of analysis to be used. It may be that such additional data collections and analyses will depend upon the results of the initial analysis of administrative data. In such cases, you should describe what type of additional data collections and analysis would be done given different results from the initial data analyses. If the partnership's research will build off any already completed analysis regarding the issue, the results of this work should be described as well as how these results have influenced the initial research proposed.

The type of initial analysis you do may depend upon the state of knowledge regarding the issue you are researching and the needs of the education agency. Your research may entail exploring the issue to better understand it and its potential links to student outcomes or you may be more interested in examining how current education agency practice or policy is related to student outcomes. For example, a district may be undergoing a large demographic change through the influx of students from immigrant families. The district may be interested finding out the magnitude of the change, which of its schools are

experiencing it, how capable the teachers and schools feel about responding, and what supports are in place to help them and the students. The purpose of your initial research might be to provide the basis for a future research project exploring these points in more detail or it might be to provide the basis for the development of a district intervention to better support these students. Another district might have a longer history of serving children of immigrants and its interest might be to develop a future project evaluating how well its ongoing programs support these students' academic achievement. The partnership's initial analysis might entail a similar analysis of the number of such students and their location but might also include a cataloging of the ongoing district programs to support them and analyses linking student participation in these programs and their academic outcomes to see if there is any initial evidence of the programs' success.

c. Developing the application for further Institute funding

The primary outcome expected from a Research Partnership project is the development of an application to one of the Institute's research grant programs in order to carry out a more intensive research project on the issue of interest that will be of value to the education agency. You should describe the process and timeline the partnership will follow to develop and submit the application. In addition, you should discuss how the partnership will obtain the commitment to the research from the research personnel, education agency personnel, sources of data that will be used, and districts/schools that will need to be involved.

The Institute expects that most applications will be submitted to its Education Research Grants Program (CFDA 84.305A) or its Special Education Research Grants Program (CDFDA 84.324A). You should note which research topic your research issue would best fit under. In addition, you should describe how the partnership's future research will address one of the Institute's research goals.² The work done under the three most relevant research goals includes the following:

- Research supported under the Exploration goal identifies (1) malleable factors that are associated with student academic outcomes and (2) factors and conditions that may mediate or moderate the relations between malleable factors and student outcomes. This identification is to be done through the analysis of data (collected by the project and/or using a secondary data set). By malleable factors, the Institute means factors that can be changed by the education system. Projects under the Exploration goal are to (a) generate hypotheses regarding the potential causal relations between malleable factors and education outcomes, (b) contribute to theories of change for education interventions, (c) contribute to the development of interventions that can improve student outcomes or to identify the conditions that are associated with better implementation of interventions, and (d) identify potentially beneficial interventions.
- Research supported under the Development and Innovation goal supports the development of innovative education interventions and improvement of existing education interventions that are to produce beneficial impacts on student outcomes when implemented in authentic education delivery settings (e.g., classrooms, schools, districts). The Institute considers interventions to encompass curricula, instructional approaches, technology, education practices, programs, and policies. An iterative development process is expected to be used including a cycle of development, implementation, observation, and revision. The cycle is to continue until the interventions can be shown to be usable by the intended end users and feasible for use within the intended authentic delivery setting. A pilot study is done to determine if there is evidence of the promise of the intervention for achieving its intended student outcomes.

² See the FY 2013 Request for Applications for the Education Research Grants Programs or Special Education Research Grants program available at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/13rfas.asp> for a description of the research topics and research goals.

- Research supported under the Efficacy and Replication goal determines whether or not fully developed interventions produce a beneficial impact on student outcomes (and the practical importance of that impact) relative to a counterfactual when implemented in authentic education delivery settings. Interventions can be implemented under ideal conditions which may include use of greater implementation support or a more homogeneous sample than would be expected under routine practice. Research under this goal also examines the fidelity of implementation of the intervention both to determine how feasible the use of the intervention is and to identify the organizational supports, tools, and procedures that may be needed for sufficient implementation of the core components of the intervention.

You may also want to discuss any processes you will use or structures you will establish to ensure that, as it is developed, the research application maintains a focus on a potential action by the State or local education agency to improve student academic outcomes. For example, a broad based advisory group, reflecting multiple perspectives and experiences, may be useful for establishing and maintaining such a focus.

C. Personnel

In this section, you must identify all key personnel on the project team including the Principal Investigator and the Co-Principal Investigator(s). The Principal Investigator may be from either the research institution or the education agency, but there must also be a Co-Principal Investigator from each of the other members of the partnership. The Principal or Co-Principal Investigator from the education agency must have decision-making authority for the issue being examined. You should discuss how the research and program expertise of the key personnel together reflect the content and methodological foci of the partnership. In addition, you should briefly describe the following for each key personnel:

- 1) Qualifications and how these contribute to the issue and initial research to be addressed by the partnership,
- 2) Roles and responsibilities within the partnership,
- 3) Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the partnership, and
- 4) Previous experience working in this type of partnership and outcomes from that work.

All key personnel must be named in the application. The Institute will not accept applications that propose to hire experts in specific methodological or policy issues after the grant is received.

D. Resources

You should describe the institutional resources of all the institutions involved in the partnership and how these resources will contribute to both building the partnership and contributing to the research the partnership will carry out. You should describe the partnership's access to the districts and/or schools (or other education delivery settings) in which the research will take place and to any data sets that will be analyzed. You must include letters of support in Appendix C from all institutions involved in the partnership documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. In addition, if any individual schools are to take part in the work, they should also provide letters of support conveying an understanding of their role in the partnership. Also, organizations holding data to be analyzed should provide letters of support stating their willingness to release the data for use by the partnership.

5. AWARDS

Research Partnership projects can last one to two years. The maximum length of the grant is 2 years, and the maximum amount of the award is \$400,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).

Any application proposing a project length longer than the maximum length or a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

PART IV GENERAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW INFORMATION

6. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications. The maximum length of the award period is 2 years.

7. FUNDING AVAILABLE

Although the plans of the Institute include the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research program described in this announcement, awards pursuant to this Request for Applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications. The number of projects funded depends upon the number of high quality applications submitted. The Institute does not have plans to award a specific number of grants under this competition.

The size of the award depends on the scope of the project. Please attend to the maximums set for project length (2 years) and budget (\$400,000). If you request a project length longer than the maximum length or a budget higher than the maximum award, your application will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed.

8. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply as the research institution partner(s). These include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities. State and local education agencies are eligible to apply as the education agency partner(s).

State and local education agencies included in the proposed partnerships must be located in the territorial United States. You may propose working with research institutions not located in the territorial United States; however, your proposed work must be relevant to education in the United States. Also, institutions not located in the territorial U.S. (both primary grantees and sub-awardees) cannot charge indirect costs.

You may collaborate with, or be from, for-profit entities that develop, distribute, or otherwise market products or services that can be used in the proposed research activities. Involvement of the developer or distributor must not jeopardize the objectivity of the research.

All research supported by the Institute **must be relevant to education in the United States.**

9. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

The Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant program requires collaboration between at least one research institution and one education agency. Both the research institution and the education agency must designate a representative within the partnership, referred to as the Principal Investigator and the Co-Principal Investigator.

- The **Principal Investigator** represents the partner (e.g., the research institution or education agency) that is submitting the application and must, therefore, be on the staff of the partner that is submitting the application. He or she will have overall responsibility for the administration of the award, as well as, responsibility for the proper conduct of the research project, including the appropriate use of federal funds, and the submission of required scientific progress reports.
- The **Co-Principal Investigator** represents the other partner (e.g., the research institution or education agency) that is not submitting the application. He or she shares the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research partnership intellectually and logistically.
- If additional education agencies and/or research institutions are involved in the partnership, each must designate a Co-Principal Investigator.
- The Principal and Co-Principal Investigator(s) must have expertise in the education area to be addressed by the partnership.
- The Principal or Co-Principal Investigator from the education agency must have decision-making authority for the education issue to be addressed by the partnership.

10. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIRECT COST RATES

When calculating your expenses for research conducted in field settings, you should apply your institution's negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate, as directed by the terms of your institution's negotiated agreement with the federal government.

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

11. DEMONSTRATING ACCESS TO DATA AND EDUCATION DELIVERY SETTINGS

You may propose to conduct research that requires access to studies currently under way, secondary data sets, or education delivery settings (e.g., classrooms, schools, districts). In such cases, you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, you should include letters of support from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, the Institute may require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds. If you cannot provide such documentation, **the Institute may not award the grant or may withhold funds.**

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

Building off of existing studies

You may propose studies that piggyback onto an ongoing study (i.e., that require access to subjects and data from another study). In such cases, the Principal Investigator of the existing study must be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

Using secondary data sets

If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer review panel and your research relies on access to secondary data sets (such as federally

collected data sets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary data sets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed data sets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to the Institute from the entity controlling the data set(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed data set prior to submitting your application, the Institute may ask you to provide updated documentation indicating that you still have permission to use the data set to conduct the proposed research during the project period.

Conducting research in/with education delivery settings

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

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

12. SPECIAL CONDITIONS ON GRANTS

The Institute may impose special conditions on a grant if the applicant or 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.

13. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS

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

14. SUBMITTING A LETTER OF INTENT

The Institute asks that you submit a letter of intent by **4:30 p.m.** Washington D.C. time on the relevant due date for the competition to which you plan to submit. Institute staff uses the information in the letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer review panels, secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications, and provide feedback to you on your research idea. The Institute encourages you to submit a letter of intent even if you think you might later decide not to submit an application. The letter of intent is not binding and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application. The letter of intent must be submitted electronically using the

instructions provided at <https://iesreview.ed.gov>. Receipt of the letter of intent will be acknowledged via email. Should you miss the deadline for submitting a letter of intent, you still may submit an application. If you miss the deadline, the Institute asks that you inform the relevant program officer of your intention to submit an application.

A. Content

The letter of intent should include the following:

- 1) Descriptive title
- 2) Brief description of the proposed project
- 3) Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Principal Investigator and all Co-Principal Investigators
- 4) Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors
- 5) Duration of the proposed project
- 6) Estimated total budget request (the estimate need only be a rough approximation)

B. Format and Page Limitation

After selecting LOI Submission at <http://iesreview.ed.gov>, select the letter of intent form for the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research. The online submission form contains fields for each of the content areas listed above. Use these fields to provide the requested information. The project description should be single-spaced and should not exceed one page (about 3,500 characters).

15. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION PACKAGE

A. Documents Needed to Prepare an Application

To complete and submit an application, you need to review and use three documents: the Request for Applications, the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide, and the Application Package.

- 1) The *Request for Applications* for the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research (CFDA 84.305H) describes the substantive requirements for a research application.
 - ✓ Request for Applications <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>
- 2) The *IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide* provides the instructions for completing and submitting the forms included in the Application Package.
 - ✓ IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

Additional help navigating Grants.gov is available in the Grants.gov User Guides:

 - ✓ Grants.gov User Guides http://www.grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp
- 3) The *Application Package* provides all of the forms that you must complete and submit. The application form approved for use in the competitions specified in this RFA is the government-wide SF-424 Research and Related (R&R) Form (OMB Number 4040-0001). *Section C* below explains how to download the Application Package from Grants.gov.

B. Date Application Package is Available on Grants.gov

The Application Package for CFDA 84.305H will be available on <http://www.grants.gov/> by **July 19, 2012**.

C. How to Download the Correct Application Package

a. CFDA number

To find the correct downloadable Application Package, you must first search by the CFDA number for the research competition *without* the alpha suffix. To submit an application to the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research, you must search on: **CFDA 84.305**.

b. Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research Application Package

The Grants.gov search on CFDA 84.305 will yield more than one Application Package. For the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research Request for Applications, applicants must download the package marked:

Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research CFDA 84.305H

You must download the Application Package that is designated for the grant competition and competition deadline. If you use a different Application Package, even if it is for an Institute competition, the application will be submitted to the wrong competition. Applications submitted using the incorrect application package may not be reviewed for the Education Research competition.

16. MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINE

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time** on the application deadline date.

Grant applications must be submitted electronically through the Internet using the software and application package provided on the Grants.gov web site: <http://www.grants.gov/>. You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the Institute's Grants.gov Application Submission Guide and the instructions in the User Guides provided by Grants.gov.

Please note that to submit an electronic application through Grants.gov, your institution must be registered with Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp).

To register with Grants.gov, your institution must have

- a valid Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering Systems (DUNS) number, and
- an active registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

Your institution is strongly encouraged to start the Grants.gov registration process *at least four weeks* prior to the application due date.

Applications submitted in paper format will be rejected unless you (a) qualify for one of the allowable exceptions to the electronic submission requirement described in the Federal Register notice announcing the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research (CFDA Number 84.305H) competitions described in this Request for Applications and (b) submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Institute that documents that you qualify for one of these exceptions. For more information on using Grants.gov, you should visit the Grants.gov web site.

17. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Institute encourages you to contact the Institute's program officer listed in *Section 24 Inquiries Can Be Sent To* below as you develop your application. The program officer can offer advice on preparing your application, as well as substantive advice on your research idea and draft project narrative.

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

18. WRITING YOUR APPLICATION: CONTENT AND FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Overview

In this section, the Institute provides instructions regarding the content of the (a) project summary/abstract, (b) project narrative, (c) Appendix A, (d) Appendix B, (e) Appendix C, and (f) bibliography and references cited. Instructions for all other documents to be included in the application (i.e., the SF-424 forms, biographical sketches, narrative budget justification, and human subjects narrative) are provided in the *IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide*.

B. General Format Requirements

Margin, format, and font size requirements for the project summary/abstract, project narrative, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and bibliography are described in this section. You must adhere to the type size and format specifications for the entire narrative, including footnotes, to ensure that your text is easy for reviewers to read and that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their project.

a. Page and margin specifications

For the purposes of applications submitted under this RFA, a "page" is 8.5 in. x 11 in., on one side only, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

b. Spacing

Text must be single spaced in the narrative.

c. 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.
- The 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.
- The type size must yield no more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch.

To ensure your font meets these requirements, 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. **These requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted.**

When applicants use small type size, it difficult for reviewers to read the application and applicants may receive an unfair advantage by allowing for more text in their applications. **Consequently, the use of small type font is grounds for the Institute to not accept an application for review.**

As a practical matter, applicants who use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing, or other alterations typically meet these requirements. Figures, charts, tables, and figure legends may be in a smaller type size but must be readily legible.

d. Graphs, diagrams, tables

The Institute encourages applicants to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If you choose to use color, you must ensure that the material reproduces well when photocopied in black and white.

C. Project Summary/Abstract

a. Submission

You must submit the project summary/abstract as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

The project summary/abstract is limited to one single-spaced page and must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 18.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

The project summary/abstract should include:

- 1) Title of the project
- 2) The RFA under which you are applying (Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research)
- 3) A brief description of the research partnership to be established and how it will be maintained
- 4) A brief description of the education issue to be examined by the partnership and its significance
- 5) A brief description of the setting in which the research will be conducted
- 6) A brief description of the population being addressed and/or the sample that will be involved in the study
- 7) A brief description of the initial analysis to be done
- 8) A brief description of any other data collections or analyses being considered

D. Project Narrative

a. Submission

You must submit the project narrative as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

The project narrative is limited to **25 single-spaced pages** for all applicants. The 25-page limit for the project narrative does not include any of the SF-424 forms, the 1-page summary/abstract, the appendices, research on human subjects information, bibliography, biographical sketches of senior/key personnel, narrative budget justification, subaward budget information, or certifications and assurances. If the Institute determines that the narrative exceeds the 25 single-spaced page limit, the Institute will remove any pages after the twenty-fifth page of the narrative.

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

c. Format for citing references in text

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

d. Content

Your project narrative must include **four sections** in order to be compliant with the requirements of the Request for Applications: (a) **Significance**, (b) **Research Plan**, (c) **Personnel**, and (d) **Resources**. Information to be included in each of these sections is detailed in *Part III*. The information you include in each of these four sections will provide the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application.

E. Appendix A (Optional)

a. Submission

Appendix A should be included at the end of the Project Narrative and submitted as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix A is limited to 10 pages. It must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 18.B. General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

You may include figures, charts, or tables that supplement the project narrative as well as examples of measures (e.g., tests, surveys, observation and interview protocols) to be used in the project in Appendix A. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix A.

F. Appendix B (Optional)**a. Submission**

If you choose to have an Appendix B, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix A (if included), and submit it as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix B is limited to 10 pages. It must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in Section 18.B General Format Requirements.

c. Content

In Appendix B, if you are proposing to study an intervention or assessment you may include examples of curriculum material, computer screen shots, assessment items, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text describing these materials in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix B.

G. Appendix C (Required)**a. Submission**

You must include Appendix C at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix B (or if no Appendix B is included, then Appendix C should follow Appendix A if it is included) and submit it as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix C does not have a page limit. Appendix C contains letters of agreement from research partners. You must ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters.

c. Content

You must include letters of support in Appendix C from all institutions involved in the partnership documenting their participation and cooperation and clearly setting out their expected roles and responsibilities in the partnership. In addition, you should include in Appendix C the letters of agreement from data sources (e.g., state agencies holding administrative data showing agreement to provide any data to be analyzed) and letters of agreement from consultants.

Letters of agreement from partners should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, activities, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. Letters of agreement regarding the provision of data should make it clear that the author of the letter will provide the data described in the application for use in the proposed research and in time to meet the proposed schedule.

H. Bibliography and References Cited

a. Submission

You must submit this section as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

There are no limitations to the number of pages in the bibliography. The bibliography must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 18.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

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

19. APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time** on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this Request for Applications. After receiving the applications, Institute staff will review each application for completeness and for responsiveness to this Request for Applications. Applications that do not address specific requirements of this request will be returned to the applicants without further consideration.

Once you formally submit an application, Institute personnel will not comment on its status until the award decisions are announced except with respect to issues of completeness and eligibility.

20. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The Institute will forward all applications that are compliant and responsive to this request to be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Reviews are conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below, and the review procedures posted on the Institute's website http://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/application_review.asp, by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the research project and request for applications.

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

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

21. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT

The purpose of Institute-supported research is to contribute to solving education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. The Institute expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal.

A. Significance

Does the applicant provide a compelling rationale for the significance of the project as defined in the Significance discussion in *Section 4.A*?

B. Research Plan

Does the applicant meet the requirements described in the Research Plan discussion in *Section 4.B*?

C. Personnel

Do the proposed Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s) meet the requirements set out in the Personnel section in *Section 4.C*? Does the description of the key personnel make it apparent that they possess appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research partnership?

D. Resources

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

22. RECEIPT AND START DATE SCHEDULE

A. Letter of Intent Receipt Date

July 19, 2012

B. Application Deadline Date

September 20, 2012

C. Earliest Anticipated Start Date

July 1, 2013

D. Latest Possible Start Date

September 1, 2013

The grant review and award process takes approximately eight months from the time of submission of the application. Applicants will be notified about funding decisions via email *no later than* the earliest anticipated start date (July 1, 2013).

23. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

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

24. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO

Dr. Allen Ruby
Institute of Education Sciences
400 Maryland Ave, SW
CP-610e
Washington, D.C. 20202

Email: Allen.Ruby@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 219-1591

25. 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.

26. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

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