

GRANTS FOR STATEWIDE, LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

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THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- I. Request for Applications
- II. Background
- III. Purpose of the Grant Program
- IV. Priorities and Requirements
- V. Applications Available
- VI. Mechanism of Support
- VII. Funding Available
- VIII. Eligible Applicants
- IX. Special Requirements
- X. Contents and Page Limits of Application
- XI. Application Processing
- XII. Peer Review Process
- XIII. Review Criteria
- XIV. Receipt and Review Schedule
- XV. Award Decisions
- XVI. Submission Requirements
- XVII. Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement
- XVIII. Inquiries Address
- XIX. Program Authority
- XX. Applicable Regulations

I. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites State educational agencies (SEAs) to apply for grants to assist them in developing and implementing statewide, longitudinal data systems. Applicants may apply for funds to carry out projects to address one of three priorities: 1) to design, develop, and implement a statewide, longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) data system; 2) to develop and link early childhood data with the State's K-12 data system; or 3) to develop and link postsecondary and/or workforce data with the State's K-12 data system. State educational agencies that received Statewide, Longitudinal Data System grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 are not eligible to apply for grants under this competition.

II. BACKGROUND

- Data Use Deliverables. The system must include deliverables to meet end-user needs (to inform decision-making and evaluate policies and programs) such as reporting and analysis tools. Design of these deliverables must be informed by early and sustained engagement of representatives from user groups to ensure the system will meet their information needs and continuously improve to meet evolving needs.
- Training on Use of Data Tools and Products. The system should include a professional development program to prepare end-users to effectively use the data products.
- Professional Development on Data Use. The system should include a professional development program to help end-users effectively interpret and apply the data to inform decision-making and improve practices.
- Evaluation of Data Products, Training, and Professional Development. The system should include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the data use deliverables, and training and professional development programs.
- Partnerships with Research Community. The State must have a policy in place for the processing of requests for data for research purposes and for communicating the scope of data available for analysis. The State should establish partnerships with internal and/or external research groups to assist with answering questions that can inform policy and practice. The State should actively disseminate research and analysis findings to the public while ensuring confidentiality of individual student data.
- Sustainability Plan. The system must include a plan for sustaining the deliverables and training beyond the life of the grant.

Priority 3. Postsecondary and/or Workforce Data

Grants under this priority may be used to develop and link postsecondary and/or workforce data to the State's K-12 data system. Applicants that apply for funds under this priority will be able to demonstrate partnerships with State agencies and other entities that coordinate data from various postsecondary institutions and systems (community colleges, technical colleges, adult education programs, career and technical education (CTE), public 4-year institutions, not-for-profit colleges and universities, for-profit colleges and universities) and/or data from State workforce agencies.

If funds are requested under this priority, applicants must ensure that, at a minimum, the postsecondary data required by the America COMPETES Act elements will be developed and linked to the State's K-12 data system. States are encouraged to develop their own postsecondary data and not simply purchase this data from an organization external to the agencies partnering under this application..

Applications should identify which of the following requirements are in place, and if the requirements are not currently being met, describe how the requirements will be developed through the project.

Governance and Policy Requirements:

- Need and Uses. A successful data system should address the State's key postsecondary education and workforce development policy questions. The system should provide data and data-use tools that can be used in education decision-making at multiple levels, including the state, system, institutional, and student/consumer level.

- Governance. A successful data system includes a clearly-articulated governance structure consisting of representatives from key postsecondary and/or workforce organizations, including postsecondary institutions themselves, adult education providers, CTE programs, and grantees of the U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) program, if applicable. The governance structure must have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities to manage the collection, maintenance, and sharing of postsecondary and/or workforce data with the K-12 State educational agency, and the use of those data. Particularly when expanding the data capacity in existing postsecondary and/or workforce data systems to include other educational data, an SLDS must identify the entities responsible for the operation of the statewide data system and should include a common understanding of data ownership, data management, and data confidentiality and access, as well as the means to resolve differences among partners.
- Institutional Support. A successful data system requires institutional support from relevant stakeholders within and outside the State postsecondary education governing organization or agency and State workforce agencies. The support must include authorization to develop and implement connections across the K-12 SLDS and postsecondary and workforce systems as well as the commitment of necessary staff and other resources, including institutional support from the agency providing a State WDQI grant, if applicable.
- Sustainability. Following implementation, a successful data system requires ongoing support from the institutions and agencies that are a part of it. At a minimum, the system requires ongoing commitment of staff and other resources for system maintenance, quality control, and user training.

Technical Requirements:

- Privacy Protection and Data Accessibility. An SLDS must ensure the confidentiality of individual data, consistent with the requirements of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other State laws or regulations concerning the confidentiality of individual records. The system should also include public documentation that clearly articulates what data will be accessible, to which users, and for what purposes.
- Data Quality. A successful data system must ensure the integrity, security, and quality of data. It should include an ongoing plan for training those entering or using the data, as well as procedures for monitoring the accuracy of information.
- Interoperability. The system should use a common set of data elements with common data standards to allow interoperability and comparability of data among programs such as the Common Education Data Standards (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/ceds/>), as available and applicable. Other examples include the IPEDS data definitions, when applicable, the national/Federal coding systems, when applicable, such as Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. At a minimum, any postsecondary data system(s) and/or workforce data system(s) developed under this grant must be linked to the State's K-12 SLDS, with a mechanism established for ongoing data exchange.
- Enterprise-wide Architecture. A successful SLDS includes an enterprise-wide data architecture that links records across information systems and data elements across time and allows for longitudinal analysis. The architecture should include at a minimum a

system for assigning unique student identifiers, a data dictionary, a data model, and business rules. The system must make data dictionaries publicly available.

Data Use Requirements:

- Secure Access to Useful Data for Key Stakeholder Groups. Appropriate and secure access to data must be provided to key stakeholder groups including policymakers, program staff from the state level agencies that have the responsibility for postsecondary and/or workforce programs, institution-level staff, and external researchers. Access must be balanced with the need to protect privacy and confidentiality consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.
- Data Use Deliverables. The system must include deliverables to meet end-user needs (to inform decisionmaking and evaluate policies and programs) such as reporting and analysis tools. Design of these deliverables must be informed by early and sustained engagement of representatives from user groups to ensure the system will meet their information needs and continuously improve to meet evolving needs. Below are listed some examples of the kinds of information that would be useful.
 - *K12 Feedback*. A successful system is capable of providing feedback reports to K-12, such as high school feedback reports, to inform secondary institutions on the success of their former students in postsecondary education and/or the workforce, with the intent of improving services to better prepare current and future students for long-term success.
 - *Consumer Information*. A successful data system is capable of generating useful consumer information to assist current and future postsecondary students and their parents make informed choices about enrolling in postsecondary institutions. Consumer information may include information at the instructional program (CIP) and institutional level on college costs (tuition and fees, financial aid, education debt); student success (persistence, transfer, completion, time- and credits- to-degree); and outcomes (job placement, earnings). A method for making these consumer data available (by institution and/or program) to the public should be considered, such as a consumer information website.
 - *Postsecondary Feedback*. Possible postsecondary feedback reports include system transfer and completion reports on students who leave their institutions before graduating to transfer to another institution or enter the workforce; community college feedback reports on students who transfer and the performance of transfer students in their new institutions; and job placement reports to provide institutions feedback on graduates entry into the workforce as well as on the fields in which graduates are employed and their earnings.
- Training on Use of Data Tools and Products. The system should include a professional development program to prepare end-users to effectively use the data use products.
- Professional Development on Data Use. The system should include a professional development program to help end-users effectively interpret and apply the data to inform decisionmaking and improve practices.
- Evaluation of Data Products, Training, and Professional Development. The system should include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the data use deliverables, and training and professional development programs.

- Partnerships with Research Community. The State must have a policy in place for the processing of requests for data for research purposes and for communicating the scope of data available for analysis. The State should establish partnerships with internal and/or external research groups to assist in answering questions that can inform policy and practice. The State should and actively disseminate research and analysis findings to the public while ensuring confidentiality of individual student data.
- Sustainability Plan. The system must include a plan for sustaining the deliverables and training beyond the life of the grant.

V. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available for this program no later than September 26, 2011, at the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). Applicants should refer to this site for information about the electronic submission procedures to be followed and the required software.

VI. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

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

VII. FUNDING AVAILABLE

The Institute estimates that individual grants will range from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 for the entire grant period. Grants will be awarded for a period of 3 years. The size of individual grants will depend on the deliverables the State proposes to achieve and the extent of development and improved system capability the State commits to accomplishing with grant funds.

The Institute will award grants of no more than \$5 million for Priority 1 and grants of no more than \$4 million for Priorities 2 and 3.

VIII. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Only State educational agencies are eligible to apply. By law, for this program, the State educational agency is the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of elementary schools and secondary schools. The State educational agencies of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are included. However, for this competition only, applications will not be considered from the 20 State educational agencies that received SLDS grants in June 2010 from funds appropriated under the ARRA.

A State educational agency must propose to work jointly and collaboratively with other agencies in the State whose participation is necessary and essential to addressing the priority to which the SEA is applying. For example, if a State submits an application for Priority 3 (postsecondary and/or workforce data), the agency or agencies responsible for postsecondary and/or workforce