

**Research
Grants on
Education:
Large**

**SPENCER
FOUNDATION**

Research Grants on Education: Large

The Large Research Grants on Education Program supports education research projects that will contribute to the improvement of education, broadly conceived, with budgets ranging from \$125,000 to \$500,000 and for durations of one to five years.

This program is “field-initiated” in that proposal submissions are not in response to a specific request for a particular research topic, discipline, design, or method. Our goal for this program is to support rigorous, intellectually ambitious and technically sound research that is relevant to the most pressing questions and compelling opportunities in education.

Program Statement

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We value work that fosters creative and open-minded scholarship, engages in deep inquiry, and examines robust questions related to education. To this end, this program supports proposals with multiple disciplinary and methodological perspectives, both domestically and internationally, and from scholars at various stages in their career. We seek to support scholarship that develops new foundational knowledge that may also have a lasting impact on

policy-making, practice, or educational discourse.

Scholars from all disciplines can submit proposals across of range of educational research topics. We recognize that learning occurs across the life course as well as across settings—from the classroom to the workplace, to family and community contexts and even onto the playing field—any of which may, in the right circumstance, provide the basis for rewarding study that makes significant contributions to the field. We anticipate that proposals will span a wide range of topics and disciplines that innovatively investigate questions central to education, including for example education, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, law, economics, history, or neuroscience, amongst others. Moreover, we expect and welcome methodological diversity in answering pressing questions thus we are open to projects that utilize a wide array of research methods including quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, ethnographies, design-based research, participatory methods, historical research, to name a few.

We are open to projects that might incorporate data from multiple and varied sources, span a sufficient length of time as to achieve a depth of understanding, or work closely with practitioners or community members over the life of the project. Moreover, we welcome proposals submitted by multidisciplinary and multigenerational teams who are positioned to both contribute to the project as well as contribute to the teaching and learning of fellow team members. Finally, we encourage projects that thoughtfully consider the trajectories of their projects findings, implications and potential impacts, including how the knowledge may be shared and utilized across the field, in practice, in policy making, or with the broader public.

Eligibility and Restrictions

Eligibility

Proposals to the Research Grants on Education program must be for

academic research projects that aim to study education. Proposals for activities other than research, or proposals for research studies focused on areas other than education, are not eligible.

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs applying for a Large Research Grant on Education must have an earned doctorate in an academic discipline or professional field, or appropriate experience in an education research-related profession. While graduate students may be part of the research team, they may not be named the PI or Co-PI on the proposal.

The PI must be affiliated with a college, university, school district, non-profit research facility, or non-profit cultural institution that is willing to serve as the administering organization if the grant is awarded. The Spencer Foundation does not award grants directly to individuals.

Proposals are accepted from the U.S. and internationally, however all proposals must be submitted in English and budgets must be proposed in U.S. Dollars.

Restrictions

Large Research Grant budgets should be between \$125,000 and \$500,000, including up to 15% indirect cost charges. We anticipate funding proposals at various levels of this funding range.

Projects proposed may not be longer than 5 years in duration.

PIs and Co-PIs may only hold one active research grant from the Spencer Foundation at a time.

(This restriction does not apply to the administering organization; organizations may submit as many proposals as they like as long as they are for different projects and have different research teams.)

PIs and Co-PIs may not submit more than one application for a given deadline in this program.

How to Apply

Intent to Apply Guidelines

The Intent to Apply form must be submitted through an online application form following the guidelines below before you be given access to the full proposal application.

Note: This application is configured for the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project to register and submit the form. If someone other than the PI will be completing the online application (e.g., an administrative assistant), the PI should register as described in Step 1 below, then provide their username and password to the person assisting them with the application.

Step 1 - Registration

If you (the PI) have never accessed the Spencer Foundation online portal, you must register and create a profile by going to <https://spencer.smartsimple.us> and clicking the “Register Here” button. Follow the guidelines on the registration page to create your profile.

If you already have an account, log on to update your profile and access the Intent to Apply form.

Step 2 - My Profile

After logging in, follow the directions to complete the information requested on the My Profile page and upload your current CV (10 page limit). The My Profile page is your online account with the Spencer Foundation whether you are applying for a grant, reviewing a proposal, or submitting a grantee report.

Step 3 – Intent to Apply Form

To fill out the Intent to Apply form, go to your Workbench and click the Apply button for the Large Research Grants on Education.

Your draft form can be saved and returned to so that you may continue work

on it at a later time if necessary. Your draft form will be available on your Draft Proposals list on your Workbench.

Intent to Apply Form Elements

Within the online form, there are detailed guidelines for each section. Below is an overview of the application elements you'll be expected to complete.

Project Personnel - As the person creating the draft application, you will automatically be assigned to the proposal as the Principal Investigator. If there are Co-PIs on the proposal, you are asked to provide their names and organizations in this section.

Proposal Summary – Information about the project is requested, such as a project title, estimated duration, estimated budget total, and a 200-word project summary.

Project Data – Within the online application, we ask you to choose the appropriate options with regard to your research project in the following categories: disciplinary perspective, methodologies, topics, geographical scope, contexts, and participants. This information is helpful in determining the appropriate reviewers for your Letter of Intent and for internal evaluations of our grant programs.

Submit

Once you've completed the form, click the Submit button at the bottom of the page. You'll now have access to the Full Proposal application form on your Workbench.

Note: You must complete an Intent to Apply for by June 20th if you intend to submit a Full Proposal for the July 17th deadline.

Full Proposal Guidelines

Once your Intent to Apply for has been submitted, you will have access to the Full Proposal application on your Workbench. Within the online application, there are detailed guidelines for each section. Below is an overview of the elements you'll be expected to complete.

Project Personnel – If your project will have Co-PIs, it is necessary for you to connect their profiles to the full proposal. Instruct your Co-PIs to create an account and update their profile following Steps 1 and 2 above. Once they have done so, follow the guidelines in this section for connecting them to the proposal.

Proposal Summary – Information about the project is requested, such as the project title, start and end dates, and a 200-word project summary.

Budget and Budget Justification - The budget form is divided into the following categories and each category has a pulldown menu of the line item choices listed in parentheses below:

- Salaries (PI, Co-PI, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Graduate Student Researcher, Undergraduate Researcher, Other Research Staff, Other Staff)
- Benefits (PI Benefits, Co-PI Benefits, Researcher Benefits, Other Staff Benefits, Tuition/Fees)
- Other Collaborator (Independent Consultant, Advisor)
- Travel (Project Travel, Conference or Dissemination Travel)
- Equipment and Software (Equipment, Software)
- Project Expenses (Supplies, Participant Stipends/Costs, Communication, Transcription)
- Other (This should only be used for expenses not covered in the choices above)
- Subcontracts (Information is pulled from the subcontract budget forms – see below)

Each expense for your project should be added and the budget narrative field should be completed, providing a description of that specific expense. Detailed guidelines are available within the application form.

Subcontracts: If your project will have subcontracts, a separate subcontract budget form will need to be completed for each. The subcontract form has the same categories and line item choices listed above.

Proposal Narrative - You are expected to upload a proposal narrative pdf that includes the following:

- A description of the project, the central research question(s), and the project's significance.
- A rationale for the project. This includes (a) summary of the relevant literature, the relationship of the proposed research to that literature, and the new knowledge or contribution to the improvement of education expected to result from the proposed research; and (b) a summary of the conceptual framework or theory guiding the project and how the project utilizes or builds on this framework of theory.
- A description of the proposed research methods, description of participants, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis the project will employ. If applicable to the proposed methods, please include (a) information about the proposed sample/case definition and selection procedures; (b) research design, including when appropriate a description of the context of the study; (c) description of key constructs, measures and data sources; (d) procedures for data collection; and (e) procedures for data analysis.
- A short description of plans for dissemination of the research findings. While this may include traditional submissions to academic conferences and publications, we also encourage other forms of dissemination that aim to impact policy, practice, or public discourse. We expect scholars to follow the highest ethical and professional standards of their fields. Please consult our [statement of ethics and professional expectations](#).

Your proposal narrative should not contain any identifying information about the research team. It may not exceed 4000 words and at the conclusion, should include the word count in parentheses. Your reference list should follow your narrative in the same pdf file and will not count toward the 4000-word limit. The text should be double-spaced and in 12-point font. APA style is preferred.

Project Timeline - A project timeline should be uploaded in pdf format and should indicate the proposed start and end dates of the project as well as key project events and milestones. The major activities listed in the project timeline should be reflected in the proposal narrative. The project timeline may not exceed 1 page; proposed project duration can be up to 5 years. The project timeline should be blinded.

Project Team – A document describing the project team should be uploaded in pdf format and should identify the roles, responsibility and knowledge base of the PI, Co-PI(s), and any supporting researcher(s). Additionally, it should articulate how the team will work together to complete the research project, highlighting what each team member will contribute to the project. Further a short description of the relationship between the project team and the research site may be included, if appropriate. When applicable, please discuss the learning opportunities team members may experience through their participation in this project. This document should not exceed 800 words and should be double-spaced in 12-point font. Note: this document will be reviewed along with the CV of the PI and any Co-PIs included on the application.

Optional Appendices A – If you have additional documents focused on scientific instrumentation relevant to the study, for example interview protocols or survey instruments, they can be uploaded in this section of the application. These appendices should be blinded.

Optional Appendices B – If you have other supporting documents that are unable to be blinded, such as letters of agreement or collaboration, they can be uploaded in this section of the application. Please see the guidelines in the online application for more information about these types of appendices.

A note about IRB Approval: Proof of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required at the time of proposal submission. In the event that IRB approval is needed for this project and it is chosen for funding, the Administering Organization will be responsible for obtaining IRB review and approval in accordance with its institutional policies and applicable law.

Project Data – Within the form, we ask you to check off the appropriate options with regard to your research project in the following categories: topics, methodologies, disciplinary perspective, contexts, and participants. This information is helpful in determining the appropriate reviewers for your proposal.

Signature from Authorized Representative of the Administering Organization – This section of the application details the steps necessary to obtain the authorized signature for your proposal. You are required to provide

the Signatory's name, title, and email address. Note: You, as the applicant, are responsible for making sure your proposal is signed by the deadline. The Spencer Foundation is unable to accept late submissions.

Submit

Once you've completed all of the elements listed above, click the Submit button at the bottom of the page.

Review Process

The initial step in submitting a proposal for a Large Research Grant on Education is to submit an Intent to Apply form. The Intent to Apply form is required before you can proceed to the second step and submit a full proposal. Intent to Apply forms are due by 2:00pm central time, June 20, 2019. These forms are not evaluated or used to invite full proposals, but instead are intended to provide the foundation with information to better manage the review process of the full proposals.

Once the Intent to Apply form is submitted, applicants will have access to the full proposal application. Full proposals will be due by 2:00pm central time, July 17, 2019. All full proposal submissions are reviewed by external peer reviewers and internal staff. This review process of the full proposals takes approximately 6-7 months with decisions being sent in February 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does this program support research in settings other than K-12 and higher education institutions?

A: Yes, the Foundation funds research projects that span the life course (i.e., from early childhood to adult learning) as well as those that focus on contexts outside of school.

Q: Do you have a preference for certain research methodologies?

A: No, we are open to whatever qualitative and quantitative methods make sense for answering the questions at hand. Historically, the Foundation has supported research across a range of methods and academic disciplines, and we expect this to continue in this program.

Q: I have an idea for a project and would like feedback from a program officer. Is it possible to contact someone?

A: As a matter of course, we do not provide advice or feedback prior to review. However, if you have a question about whether or not your project fits within the funding mission of the Foundation, please email a brief description of it to largegrants@spencer.org.

Q: Do you have a preference for research teams vs. individual researchers?

A: No, we do not have a preference. The important thing is to plan the staffing around the aims of the project.

Q: Can a graduate student serve as a Co-PI on a proposal submission?

A: No, the PI and any Co-PIs named on the proposal are expected to have earned doctorate degrees prior to proposal submission. While graduate students may be included in the budget as research assistants, this program is not meant to support student research projects.

Q: Do you accept proposals from outside the United States?

A: Yes, we accept proposals from outside the U.S. Application materials must be submitted in English and project budgets must be in U.S. dollars.

Q: Do you have a preference for regional, national, or international projects?

A: No, we do not have a preference.

Q: What is the expected duration of projects in this program?

A: We leave the duration of the project up to the PI/research team to determine, but limit it to no more than 5 years.

Q: If I am turned down, is it possible to revise my proposal and reapply in a

later cycle?

A: Spencer does not have a policy against accepting uninvited revised proposals. However, you should know that many factors go into the final decision on each proposal, including our limited budget. Even if you receive feedback on your proposal and are able to address all of the reviewer concerns in the submission, we can offer no guarantees as to the likelihood of funding due to the fact that we currently fund less than 10% of the submissions we receive.

Q: If I have a current grant through Spencer, can I apply for a new grant?

A: You may not hold more than one active research grant at a time from the Spencer Foundation. You may apply for a new grant while you have an active grant at the Spencer Foundation if the active grant will end before the anticipated start date of the new project.
