STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM GRANTS

CFDA NUMBER: 84.372A
RELEASE DATE: June 26, 2008

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS:
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
http://ies.ed.gov/funding/

APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE: September 25, 2008
THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

I.   REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
The Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites State education agencies (SEAs) to apply for grants to design, develop, and implement statewide longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) data systems. The long term goal of this program is to increase the number and capacity of comprehensive statewide longitudinal data systems, thereby permitting States to generate accurate and timely data to meet reporting requirements; support evidence-based education decision-making; and increase the efficiency and organization of transferring educational data among schools, districts, and states in order to improve student achievement. These grants will support the development of statewide longitudinal systems that link individual student data, promote interoperability across institutions and States, and protect student privacy consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.

The Institute is offering grants to plan, develop, and implement statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and to expand the capabilities of existing SLDS. Among applications of comparable quality, priority shall be given to funding projects in States that have relatively less-developed systems.

II.   BACKGROUND

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and State accountability interests require increasingly detailed data and analyses for education decision-making. Meeting these requirements poses challenges to States that do not have the student-level longitudinal data needed to meet reporting and analytical requirements efficiently. Additionally, States, and the districts that provide them with data, have limited staff resources to address multiple, often simultaneous, requests for data from Federal, State, and other stakeholders. Finally, States and districts often lack the technology to support the varied information and analytic needs of their stakeholders. Statewide longitudinal data systems may be the only efficient means of addressing the growing information needs.

III.   PURPOSES OF THE STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS GRANTS

The purpose of the grant program for statewide, longitudinal data systems is to promote the generation and accurate and timely use of data that are needed to 1) comply with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and other reporting requirements, and 2) facilitate analyses and research to improve student academic achievement and close achievement gaps. This purpose is served by providing assistance to State educational agencies to enable them to design, develop, and implement statewide longitudinal data systems to manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data. Applicants may propose to develop or design an SLDS, expand an existing K-12 student data system, or carry out activities that include both scopes of work.

> The primary purpose of the SLDS grant program is to support States that seek to plan, develop, and implement a statewide longitudinal data system. The Institute anticipates that States will propose such activity if any of the following conditions exist:
> - The State does not have a statewide longitudinal data system that can provide student-level data over time;
> - The State does not have efficient and reliable interoperability between SEA and local education agency (LEA) data systems; or
> - The State cannot meet reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Education's EDFacts system, including a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate consistent with that proposed by the National Governors Association.

> A second purpose of the SLDS grant program is to assist States in expanding existing K-12 statewide data systems. The capacity to examine longitudinal data, which may include such data as postsecondary or workforce information, will enhance the ability of State educational agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of their elementary and secondary education programs. Such expansion may include, but is not limited to, the following goals:

- The State sees a need to expand K-12 longitudinal data systems to include preschool data, teacher data, finance data and any other K-12 data not yet included in its systems;
- The State sees a need to create interoperability with postsecondary data systems or create consolidated P-16 data systems, in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act;
- The State sees a need to import workforce data from other sources to assess the extent to which high school graduates are adequately prepared for work or further education; or
- The State sees a need to improve the capacity to send and receive transcripts of students applying to postsecondary educational institutions and/or moving across State lines.

This RFA refers to activities directed toward the first and second purposes as *foundation activities* and *expansion activities*, respectively.

Priority in funding will be given to states that are seeking funds for foundation activities - to plan, develop, and implement a statewide longitudinal data system.

Supplement not supplant. Funds made available under this grant program are to supplement, and not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing or improving State data systems. The grants are expected to assist SEAs in their efforts to develop statewide longitudinal data systems, but not to supplant State and local funds. That is, the Institute expects grant funding to augment existing State and local funds devoted to this effort.

IV. STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Regardless of whether a State is pursuing foundation or expansion activities, a successful K-12 statewide longitudinal data system must meet a core set of minimum requirements. These requirements will be met differently depending upon the existing data system capabilities and the environment specific to each State; however, the following should be considered common basic requirements.

The system developed must have the minimum capacity identified in the following requirements. Applications should identify which of the follow requirements are in place, and if the requirements are not currently being met, how the requirements will be developed through the project.

Governance and Policy Requirements
- Need and Uses. In addition to providing information that helps to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps among students, a successful data system should address the State's other key educational policy questions. The system should provide data that can be used in education decision-making at multiple levels, from policy to classroom instruction.
- Governance. A successful data system rests upon a governance structure that involves both State and local stakeholders in the system's design and

implementation. Particularly when expanding the data capacity in existing K-12 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 means by which to resolve differences among partners.

- Institutional Support. A successful data system requires institutional support from leadership within the SEA and from relevant stakeholders within and outside the SEA. The support must include authorization to develop and implement the SLDS, as well as the commitment of necessary staff and other resources. If the SLDS is to be expanded to include data from other systems, all involved institutions must agree to a shared vision for outcomes and objectives.

- Sustainability. A successful data system requires ongoing support from the SEA after it has been implemented. At a minimum, the system requires ongoing commitment of staff and other resources for system maintenance, quality control, and user training.

Technical Requirements

- Federal Reporting. A successful data system must be able to meet Federal reporting requirements, including those of the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) EdFacts system; the system should provide efficiencies that reduce the burden of federal reporting for schools and districts.

- Privacy Protection and Data Accessibility. An SLDS must ensure the confidentiality of student 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 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. A successful data system has the capacity to exchange data between the SEA and its LEAs, as well as among LEAs, or with other appropriate State agencies or educational entities.

- Enterprise-wide Architecture. A successful SLDS includes an enterprise-wide data architecture that links records across information systems and data elements across time and that allows for longitudinal analysis of dropout and graduation rates and student achievement growth. The architecture should include at a minimum a system for assigning unique student identifiers, a data dictionary, a data model, and business rules.

V. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications through Grants.gov will be available for this program no later than August 4, 2008, at

http://www.grants.gov. Applicants should refer to this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

VI.   MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award statewide longitudinal data system 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 any useful products or "lessons learned" through these grants. The specific responsibilities of the Institute and the grantee will be outlined in the cooperative agreement.

The duration of the grants will be from two to five years, depending on the scope of work proposed by the applicant.

VII.   FUNDING AVAILABLE

The Institute estimates that grants to seek to plan, develop, and implement a statewide longitudinal data system may range up to $6,000,000. Grants that seek to expand existing K-12 statewide data systems to allow for linkages between the K-12 system and other education-related systems are estimated to range up to $3,000,000.

VIII.   ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

State education agencies are eligible to apply. For this program, State education agencies include the principal education 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. If a State education agency proposes to collaborate with other State education agencies in activities to be carried out with grant funds, each State education agency must submit its own application and is eligible to submit only one application. Collaborative activities should be described in the application of each collaborator. Applicants should note that a grant award to one agency does not guarantee awards to other collaborating agencies, nor does failure of an agency to receive a grant jeopardize the chances of other proposed collaborators.

IX.   SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should budget for travel and accommodations for a two-day meeting each year in Washington, DC, with other grantees and Institute staff to discuss accomplishments, problems encountered and possible solutions/improvements.

State education agencies that receive grants must agree to participate in an evaluation to determine the quality of the data contained in, and imported into, statewide longitudinal data systems, if the Department decides to conduct such an evaluation. The agreement of a State to

participate in such an evaluation would extend to an evaluation conducted after termination of the State's assistance under this program.

In order to leverage the value of work supported through these grants, resulting products and lessons learned should be made available for dissemination, except where such products are proprietary.

X.   SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications for grants under the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems competition – CFDA Number 84.372A – must be submitted electronically unless an applicant qualifies for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section. Applications must be submitted electronically using the Government-wide Grants.gov Apply site at: http://www.grants.gov/. Through this site, applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit it. The electronic application package will be available at Grants.gov no later than August 4, 2008.

Applications must be submitted **by 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time** on the application deadline date through the Grants.gov web site: http://www.grants.gov/

Applicants may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to the Department of Education.

Applications will be rejected if submitted to the Department in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, an applicant qualifies for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement <u>and</u> submits, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that the applicant qualifies for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under C. <u>Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.</u>

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under Section XVII in this RFA. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Applicants may access the electronic grant application for the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems competition at: http://www.grants.gov/. Applicants must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.372, not 84.372A).

   A. Important Requirements for All Submissions

      1.   When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

2. Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, the Department will not consider your application if it is date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When the Department retrieves your application from Grants.gov, the Department will notify you if it is rejecting your application because your application was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

3. The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

4. You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at:
    http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf

5. To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see
    http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (3) becoming authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see
    http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to submit an application successfully via Grants.gov. In addition, you also will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

6. You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

7. You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF

424), Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

8. You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than this file type or submit a password-protected file, the Institute may choose not to review that material.

9. Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described below in Table 1 under Section XI: "Contents and Page Limits of Application."

10. After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

11. We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

B. *Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System*

If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a **Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number** and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described below under D. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under Section XVII: Inquiries Address and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

C. Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement

You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—
> • You do not have access to the Internet; or
> • You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system; <u>and</u>
> • No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.
>
> If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.
>
> Address and mail or fax your statement to: Elizabeth Payer, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, room 602C, Washington, DC 20208. FAX: (202)219-1466.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described here.

D. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

<u>By mail through the U.S. Postal Service</u>:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.372A)
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

or

By mail through a commercial carrier:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center, Stop 4260
Attention: (CFDA Number (84.372A)
7100 Old Landover Road
Landover, MD 20785-1506

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

(1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
(2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
(3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

(1) A private metered postmark.
(2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

E. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.372A)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department—

(a) You must indicate on the envelope and – if not provided by the Department – in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(b) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

XI.   CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION

All applications and proposals must be self-contained within specified page limitations. Internet website addresses may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers will not be able to view Internet sites for application review.

The sections described below (summarized in Table 1), represent the body of applications to be submitted to the Institute and should be organized in the order they appear in the RFA.

As noted above under section *V. Applications Available*, all of the required forms and instructions for the forms will be in the application package to be made available at the Grants.gov web site. The application package will also provide specific instructions about where applicants will be able to attach those application sections that must be submitted in .PDF (Portable Document) format.

Table 1. List of proposal sections and their page limits.

Section	Page Limit
1. *Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)*	N/A
2. *Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424*	N/A
3. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Sections A and B*	N/A
4. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C*	No page limit
5. *Project Abstract*	1 page
6. *Project Narrative*	25 pages
7. *Timeline*	5 pages
8. *Budget Narrative (Justification)*	No page limit
9 *Appendix A – Optional Attachments*	15 pages
10. Appendix B – *Résumés of Key Personnel*	4 pages for each résumé

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424). Applicants must use this form to provide basic information about the applicant and the application.

2. Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424. Applicants must use this form to provide contact information for the Project Director and research on human subjects information, if applicable.

3. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Sections A and B. The application must include a budget for each year of support requested. Applicants must use this form to provide the budget information for each project year.

4. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Section C. The application must provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A and B. For each person listed in the personnel category, include a listing of percent effort for each project year, as well as the cost. Section C should also include a breakdown of the fees to consultants, a listing of each piece of equipment if applicable, itemization of supplies into separate categories, and itemization of travel requests (e.g. meeting travel, etc.) into separate categories. Any other expenses should be itemized by category and unit cost. All information provided should be displayed as a spreadsheet and should directly correspond to written description provided in section *XI: 8. Budget Narrative (Justification).*

5. Project Abstract. The *Project Abstract* is limited to one page and must include: (1) The title of the project, (2) a short description of the project, and (3) the expected outcomes of the project on the State's education data system.

6. Project Narrative. This section provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application. In the narrative, the applicant should describe the proposed project and address how the state proposes to incorporate each of the requirements outlined in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements.*

The narrative must include six sections -- (a) through (f) and a timeline as described here.

(a) Need for the Project
Summarize the status of the State's current statewide data system with respect to the various requirements outlined in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements*, the limitations of the current system, and what would be gained through the work proposed under the grant application. Clearly specify the need to improve the current system.

(b) Objectives for Proposed System
In describing the objectives for the proposed system, the applicant should include the type of work the State is proposing (foundation or expansion activity or both). Briefly describe the status of the State's current and desired data system and identify what the State hopes to accomplish through the project. The objectives should be expressed as outcomes or products that can be measured at the end of the grant period. The section should describe how the project will determine the needs for and uses of the SLDS (if these have not been completely determined).

(c) Project Design
The Project Design section is the narrative that should complement the timeline of plans for developing and implementing the longitudinal data system. Describe how the State will accomplish the proposed objectives. Describe how the project will address the requirements for an SLDS outlined in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements*, identifying requirements that are already in place and those that need to be developed.

Describe the governance structure for the proposed SLDS project. Identify the SEA entities that will have authority for the project, and that will be responsible for the project's operation and the subsequent operation of the statewide data system. Identify any parties who will work as partners in the project, and describe how the project proposes to include other relevant State and local stakeholders. Indicate how the proposed governance plan will address the "Governance" requirement in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements*.

In addition to clearly describing what is proposed under this grant, clarify which technical requirements for establishing a statewide longitudinal data system have been completed, are in the process of being completed, are planned for the future, or are not in the SEA's plan.

(d) Institutional Support
In order to provide evidence for institutional support, describe any resources committed by the State to the development or operation of an SLDS, including current staff assigned to such an effort, and facilities and equipment available to support the project. Describe any evidence of support for the proposed objectives and outcomes for the project, and, if applicable, refer to any supporting materials included in *Appendix B - Optional Attachment*. Describe how the project will address the issue of securing resources to sustain the SLDS after the conclusion of the project. Indicate how the proposed project will address the "Institutional Support" and "Sustainability" requirements in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements*.

(e) Project Management Plan
The project management plan should describe where the project is located within the SEA's organizational structure and identify the entities responsible for approval and oversight of project activities. It should describe the management controls the SEA will exercise in order to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. This text should reflect the timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks presented in the section *XI: 7. Timeline*.

(f) Project Personnel and Resources
In order to provide a structure for how the project will be managed throughout the duration of the grant period, describe the specific roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of the individuals involved with the project; this should complement the information provided in *Project Management Plan*. This section can refer to the

résumés of key personnel to demonstrate that the proposed staff has needed qualifications, but the section should also describe how the key personnel are qualified to manage and implement the proposed activities. Describe the resources, other than those already available from the State and described above, that will be needed to carry out the project.

The *Project Narrative* is limited to the equivalent of 25 pages, where a "page" is 8.5 inches x 11 inches, on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. All text in the *Project Narrative* must be single-spaced and at least 12 point font in order that the reviewers can easily read the applications.

Use only black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. The application must contain only material that reproduces well when photocopied in black and white. Color graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts are discouraged due to this reason.

7. Timeline. Applicants should provide a timeline outlining the events and actions that support each of the proposed outcomes of the system as described in section *5. Project Narrative*. The format for the timeline maybe determined by the applicant, but it should include the proposed outcomes for the project, a set of supporting events for each of the proposed outcomes, and estimated dates for initiation and completion of the events. This section should be limited to 5 pages.

8. The Budget Narrative (Justification). This justification narrative should correspond to the itemized breakdown of project costs that applicants are being asked to provide in a spreadsheet format. See above, *4. Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C.*

   The *Budget Narrative* must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project. It must include the time commitments, including an indication of the percentage of FTE, and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel. For consultants, the narrative should include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs. A justification for equipment purchase, supplies, travel, and other related project costs should also be provided in the budget narrative for each project year outlined in *Section C*. For applications that include contracts for work, applicants should submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each contract for each project year, and the details of the contract costs should be included in the budget narrative. It is understood that some level of detail may not be provided due to overall timing of the process (i.e. contracts cannot be articulated unless grants have been awarded). A page limit does not apply to this section.

9. Appendix A – Optional Attachment. In *Appendix A* of the proposal, applicants may include any figures, charts, or tables that supplement section *XI: 6. Project Narrative*, as well as key letters of agreement from partners and consultants. Letters of agreement should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the

nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the project, which will be required if the application is funded. *Appendix A* is limited to 15 pages.

10. Appendix B –Résumés of Key Personnel. Abbreviated résumés should be provided for the project director and other key personnel. Each résumé is limited to 4pages and should include information sufficient to demonstrate that personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their duties. The résumés must adhere to the margin and format requirements described above in the section XI: *6. Project Narrative* section.

Please note that applicants selected for funding will be required to submit the certifications and assurances noted below before a grant is issued. The electronic application will provide these forms so that applicants can complete and submit them with their applications.
  (a) SF 424B Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
  (b) ED 80-0013 Certification Regarding Lobbying
  (c) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable

XII.   APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this request for applications. Each application that is received on time will be reviewed for completeness and for responsiveness to this request for applications.

XIII.   PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Applications that are complete and responsive to this request will be evaluated for the content, quality, and feasibility of the data system proposed for completion under this grant. A panel of technical experts who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the design, development, implementation, and utilization of statewide longitudinal data systems will conduct reviews in accordance with the review criteria stated below.

Each application will be assigned to at least two primary reviewers, who 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. At the full panel meeting, each application will be presented to the panel by the primary reviewers. After discussion of the application's strengths and weaknesses, each panel member will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score.

XIV.   REVIEW CRITERIA

The goal of this grant program is to assist State education agencies in building or expanding statewide longitudinal K-12 data systems, so that these systems can generate data needed to improve student achievement, reduce achievement gaps between different groups of students, and meet reporting requirements. Reviewers will be expected to assess the following aspects of

an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed project will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal:

    (1)   <u>Need for the project.</u> The proposal clearly presents the need for the project and the benefits it will bring to the State. The project addresses the goals of this RFA and the activities are within the scope of work appropriate to these goals.

    (2)   <u>Clarity of the proposed objectives.</u> The project objectives are clearly stated and relate directly to the stated needs. The proposal clearly states what will have been accomplished by the end of the grant. These accomplishments are expressed as outcomes or products that can be measured for the duration of the grant period.

    (3)   <u>Quality of the project design.</u> The project design sufficiently addresses the components of section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Requirements*. The governance structure for the system is well-designed. The timeline clearly and accurately reflects the outcomes and desired objectives of the proposed scope of work.

    (4)   <u>Institutional support.</u> The infrastructure that will support this project is clearly described and appears adequate; there exists evidence of current agency support. There is a plan for securing resources to maintain the system after the project period ends (or during the project period, if applicable).

    (5)   <u>Quality of the management plan</u>. The management plan for the project demonstrates that there will be sufficient administrative oversight and controls to enable the work to proceed on time, as planned, and within budget.

    (6)   <u>Personnel and resources.</u> The project personnel have the qualifications and time commitment needed to implement the project within the proposed project period. Resources devoted to the project adequately support the proposed activities.

XV.   RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Application Deadline Date and Time: September 25, 2008, 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time
Earliest Anticipated Start Date: March 1, 2009

XVI.   AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

1. Overall technical merit of the proposal, as determined by the peer review;
2. Responsiveness to the requirements of this request;
3. Priority for funding projects in States with relatively less-developed systems;
4. Performance and use of funds under previous Federal awards;
5. Contribution to developing a model of best practice in the design, development, implementation, and application of statewide longitudinal data systems; and
6. Availability of funds.

XVII. INQUIRIES ADDRESS

Dr. Tate Gould
Institute of Education Sciences

National Center for Education Statistics
1990 K Street, NW, Rm. 9023
Washington, DC 20006-5651
Email: Tate.Gould@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 219-7080

XVIII. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

20 U.S.C. 9607 et seq., the "Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002," Title II of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

XIX.   APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

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