

GRANTS FOR STATEWIDE, LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

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INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

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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

This is the fifth grant program competition for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS). Pursuant to previous SLDS competitions, grants worth a total of \$515 million have been awarded to 41 States and the District of Columbia for developing their data systems, including \$250 million provided under ARRA and awarded to 20 States in June 2010. In some cases, States have also been able to use funds from other federal programs, such as the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund or Race to the Top, to build these systems. Because the ARRA SLDS grants were two to three times the size of previous SLDS grants and because most of the 20 grantees also received earlier SLDS grants, the 20 ARRA grantees will not be considered for grants under this competition. Their ARRA SLDS grants will still be underway when the grants pursuant to this competition are awarded.

As a condition of receiving State Fiscal Stabilization funds, all States committed to developing and implementing statewide data systems contain the following elements specified in the America COMPETES Act. These elements remain the basic requirements for statewide, longitudinal data systems:

With respect to preschool through grade 12 education and postsecondary education:

- A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system (except as allowed by Federal and State law);
- Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information;
- Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs;
- The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; and
- A State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.

With respect to preschool through grade 12 education:

- Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;
- Information on students not tested, by grade and subject;
- A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; and
- Student-level college readiness test scores.

With respect to postsecondary education:

- Data that provide information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and
- Data that provide other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

States have been engaged in the process of developing these longitudinal data systems for a number of years. In order to maximize progress and ensure that States move their development efforts forward, this competition will provide focused assistance. Eligible State educational agencies will choose which of three grant priorities to address.

III. PURPOSE OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of grants under this program is to enable State educational agencies to design, develop, and implement statewide, longitudinal data systems to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data.

The long-term goal of the program is that all States will create comprehensive P-20W (early learning to workforce) systems to permit the generation and use of accurate and timely data, support analysis and informed decision-making at all levels of the education system, increase the efficiency with which data may be analyzed to support the continuous improvement of education services and deliverables, facilitate research to improve student academic achievement and close achievement gaps, support education accountability systems, and simplify the processes used by State educational agencies to make education data transparent through Federal and public reporting. Grants may be used for design, development, and implementation activities; they may not be used for the ongoing maintenance of data systems.

Supplement not supplant. The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 requires that funds made available under this grant program be used to supplement, and not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing State data systems.

IV. PRIORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

The Institute has established three priorities for this competition. The three priorities are:

- To design, develop, and implement a statewide, longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) data system;
- To develop and link early childhood data with the State's K-12 data system; and
- To develop and link postsecondary and/or workforce data with the State's K-12 data system.

Projects to be carried out with grants awarded pursuant to this competition must include only activities within the selected priority area.

Eligible State educational agencies may submit applications to address **only one** of the three priorities. Applications that address more than one priority will not be considered responsive to this Request for Applications and will not be considered.

Priority 1. K-12 Data System

Grants under this priority may be used to design, develop, and implement a statewide, longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12 data system. Applicants that apply for funds under this priority recognize that a robust K-12 longitudinal data system plays an essential role in improving decision-making among K-12 education stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, parents, researchers, and policy makers. Such comprehensive data systems are designed and implemented for both the collection of timely and accurate data and also for the use of these data in improving reporting, transparency, monitoring, and, ultimately, student achievement. Successful applicants will be able to identify stakeholders/customers, and propose a set of deliverables that address the needs specific to their locality.

If funds are requested under this priority, the system to be developed must have the minimum capacity identified in the following requirements. 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. In addition to providing information that helps to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps among students, a successful data system should address several of the State's other key educational policy questions. The system should provide data and data-use tools 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 involving 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 the means 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 deliverables 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 Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and 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. 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 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. 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, SEA program staff, external researchers, district administrators, and school-level educators. Access must be balanced with the need to protect student privacy and confidentiality consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.
- 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 2. Early Childhood Data

Grants under this priority may be used to develop and link early childhood data with the State's K-12 data system. Applicants that apply for funds under this priority are prepared to develop or enhance the capacity for collecting and using data on early childhood, as an integral step in the P20W pipeline. In order to be successful, applicants should demonstrate that they understand the various sources of such data, which include a diverse group of programs and providers. Furthermore, there is an understanding that unifying these data sets will improve decision making for these providers and programs and also allow for better preparation for the receiving schools and programs.

If funds are requested under this priority, the following child, program, and workforce data elements should be developed as a coordinated early learning data system and linked to the State's K-12 data system:

- A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child to and from the statewide, longitudinal data system, including kindergarten entry assessment data;
- A unique statewide early childhood educator identifier;
- A unique program site identifier;
- Child and family demographic information;
- Early childhood educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information;
- If feasible, program-level data such as structure, quality, discipline, staff retention, staff compensation, and work environment; and
- Child-level program participation and attendance data.

In general, these are the essential data elements identified in the Department's announcement for the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge program.

In addition, the system developed should have the capacity identified in the following requirements. Applications should identify which of the 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. In addition to providing information that helps to improve school readiness, a successful data system should address the State's other key educational policy questions. The system should provide data and data-use tools that can be used in education decision-making at multiple levels, from policy to instruction and services.
- Governance. A successful data system rests upon a governance structure that involves both State and local stakeholders in the system's design and implementation. State and local stakeholders should represent various early childhood programs that serve infants, toddlers, and children through age 5 or kindergarten entry (e.g., Early Head Start, Head Start, State-funded preschool programs, Early Intervention (IDEA Part C), Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B Section 619), child care, home visitation programs, publicly funded preschool programs). Particularly when expanding the data capacity in existing early childhood 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 the means to resolve differences among partners.
- Institutional Support. A successful data system requires institutional support from leadership within and among the State-level agencies that have the responsibility for early childhood programs (i.e., serving infants, toddlers, and young children, birth through age 5 or kindergarten entry) and from relevant stakeholders within and outside the State-level agencies that have the responsibility for early childhood programs. 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 deliverables and objectives.

- Sustainability. Following implementation, a successful data system requires ongoing support from the State-level agencies that have the responsibility for early childhood programs. 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 and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the system should provide efficiencies that reduce the burden of Federal reporting for local programs and service providers.
- Privacy Protection and Data Accessibility. An SLDS must ensure the confidentiality of child data, consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), and 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. A successful data system has the capacity to exchange data between the State-level agencies that have the responsibility for early childhood programs and their local programs, as well as among local programs, or with other appropriate State agencies or educational entities. At a minimum, any early childhood 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 of school readiness, social emotional outcomes, and child growth. 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 early childhood programs, external researchers, local program administrators, and service providers. Access must be balanced with the need to protect child privacy and confidentiality consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.

- 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

data in the State would be expected to provide project direction and assist in the coordination of the grant. Despite the requirement that the State educational agency as defined above be the applicant and the fiscal agent for the grant, the design, development, and subsequent implementation of the grant-funded work must be carried out by the appropriate State agency in partnership with the other participating organizations. This designated state agency must work on behalf of the state's needs and goals for developing comprehensive P20W longitudinal data for improving decision making for all stakeholders

Individual States may also propose to collaborate with other States. Each State educational agency participating in a collaborative should submit its own application for its own activities and funding. If the collaborating States determine that funding for the joint activities cannot be easily and clearly apportioned among them, or that such apportioning would result in inefficiency and higher costs, one State could serve as the fiduciary agent for the joint activities. In that case, funding for the joint activities should be included in the application of the State acting as fiscal agent.

IX. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should budget for travel and accommodations for two senior project staff to attend 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 educational agencies that receive grants must agree to participate in an evaluation to determine the quality of the data in the 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 shall be made available for dissemination, except where such products are proprietary.

X. 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 required 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 Apply site (Grants.gov). 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. <i>Application for Federal Education Assistance (SF 424)</i>	N/A
2. <i>Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424</i>	N/A
3. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Sections A and B</i>	N/A
4. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C, Spreadsheet</i>	No page limit
5. <i>Project Abstract</i>	1 page
6. <i>Project Narrative</i>	40 pages
7. <i>Budget Narrative (Justification)</i>	No page limit
8. <i>Appendix A – Optional Attachments</i>	15 pages
9. <i>Appendix B - Letters of Support</i>	No page limit
10. <i>Appendix C – Résumés of Key Personnel</i>	3 pages for each résumé
11. <i>Appendix D–Acronym List</i>	1 page

1. *Application for Federal Education 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. (Note: ED 524 Section A is for Federal sources of funding being requested in the grant application. ED 524 Section B identifies non-Federal sources such as State funding or foundational funding, which would contribute to the proposed work).

4. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Section C, Spreadsheet*. The application must provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year, for each budget category listed in *Sections A and B* (Federal and non-Federal, respectively).

The budget breakdown by project year and category must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project:

- For each person listed in the Personnel category, include the time commitments, including an indication of the percentage of FTE by project year and corresponding cost.
- For consultants include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs.
- For applications that include contracts for work, 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).
- Itemized costs for equipment purchases, supplies, travel, and other related project costs should also be provided.

- Any other expenses should be itemized by category (Personnel, Fringe, etc.) and unit cost.

The budget must also be organized around the specific deliverables listed in 6. *b) Project Deliverables Related to System Requirements and Implementation*, with a projected cost total for each deliverable. If, for example, an applicant proposes six deliverables for funding, each deliverable must include an estimated total cost. In this example, the total cost for these six deliverables must equal the total requested amount for this application in X.4. *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section A.*

If staffing or equipment will be utilized to support multiple project deliverables, the applicant should either a) divide the costs of the resource among the relevant deliverables, or b) assign the total cost of the resource to one deliverable but provide explanation of how that resource will also be utilized to support other deliverables in X: 7. *Budget Narrative (Justification).*

All information provided for Section C (itemized budget breakdown) should be displayed as a spreadsheet and should directly correspond to the written description provided in section X: 7. *Budget Narrative (Justification).*

A page limit does not apply to this section.

5. *Project Abstract.* The *Project Abstract* must include: (1) The title of the project, (2) the priority addressed by the project, (3a) the State agency or agencies, in addition to the SEA, responsible for direction and implementation of grant activities if the application is submitted under priority 2 or 3, (3b) the collaborating States if the applicant proposes to participate in a multi-state collaboration, (4) a short description of the project, including goals and major activities, and (5) the expected deliverables of the project, especially related to the requirements outlined in section IV. *Priorities and Requirements.* The *Project Abstract* is limited to 1 page.

6. *Project Narrative.* This section provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application. The narrative should tell the story behind the State's current system, describe that current system, and describe the State's vision for the proposed project. The applicant should describe the proposed project and address how the State either meets or proposes to meet the requirements outlined in section IV. *Priorities and Requirements* for the priority under which the application is submitted. The applicant should also address the steps planned for implementation and should detail how the State anticipates the system will be used to support improvement.

The narrative should be set out in five sections – (a) through (e) as described here – to facilitate reviewers' application of the five review criteria described in section XIII. *Review Criteria.*

- (a) Need for Project

Briefly summarize the current status of the State's statewide, longitudinal data system, if one exists or is under development; the required capabilities and key elements to be developed or improved through this grant; and how these capabilities and key elements will support the State's education improvement efforts, goals, and accountability system.

(b) Project Deliverables Related to System Requirements and Implementation

List proposed deliverables (products, features, benchmarks) for each of the requirements that the State will be addressing in work funded under this grant. These deliverables should help address the need and goals of the applicant as identified in (a) Need for Project.

Deliverables must be expressed as products (example: develop web portal), features (example: form governance structure for early childhood data and linking to K12 data), or benchmarks (example: integration of postsecondary and workforce data by 2014) that can be measured at the end of the grant period.

If the State proposes to participate in a multi-state collaboration, clearly identify which deliverables will support the proposed work for a multi-state collaborative.

(c) Timeline for Project Deliverables

Briefly describe how the deliverables of the project will be achieved. Provide a detailed timeline for all relevant subtasks related to each of the proposed deliverables described in X.6(b) *Project Deliverables Related to System Requirements and Implementation*. The applicant may determine the format for the timeline, but the timeline must include all proposed deliverables for the project, a set of supporting events or tasks for each of the proposed deliverables, the party or parties responsible for the events or tasks, and estimated dates (month can be used) for both initiation and completion of each task.

If applicable, describe how activities supported by a grant funded by this competition will be coordinated with activities supported by an existing grant, including a U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant, if applicable. In particular, please make certain to address plans for avoiding duplication.

(d) Project Management and Governance Plan

Indicate where the project is located within the organizational structure of the State educational agency and identify the entities responsible for approval and oversight of project activities. Describe the management protocol that will be exercised in order to achieve the goals of the proposed project on time and within budget. In describing this protocol and the related control activities, refer to the timeline and activities described above.

Briefly describe the governance structure for the proposed project. Identify the organizational units that will have authority regarding the project, that will be

responsible for the project's operation, and that will be responsible for the subsequent operation of the statewide data system. Identify any units or agencies that will work as partners in the project, and describe how the project proposes to include other relevant State and local stakeholders. Describe how such partnerships or other working agreements will be coordinated and funded. Describe partnerships that will support implementation activities (i.e., training and technical assistance for users) and how those will be funded. Specify how the input of all intended users of the system (e.g., educators, early childhood education leaders, State policymakers, etc.) will be obtained and utilized.

Include as *Appendix B* letters of support or other documentation that are evidence of the anticipated participation and coordination by all agencies or institutions that will be partners in the project (e.g., letters of support from postsecondary institution leaders, the Governor, the chief State school officer, etc.).

If a multi-state collaboration is proposed, explain how it will be managed and what steps the State will take to mitigate risk and ensure that the project achieves its intended deliverables.

(e) Staffing

Discuss how the project will be staffed and managed. Describe the specific roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of the individuals involved with the project; this information should complement the information provided in *X.6(d) Project Management and Governance Plan*. This section can refer to the résumés of key personnel included in *Appendix C*, to demonstrate that the proposed staff has needed qualifications, but the section should also provide specific information to describe how the key personnel are qualified to manage and implement the proposed activities.

The *Project Narrative* is limited, with one exception, to the equivalent of 40 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. States proposing participation in a multi-State collaboration are permitted an extra 5 pages which should include a description of the joint activities and functioning of the collaboration. All text in the *Project Narrative* must be single-spaced and at least 12 point font to ensure that reviewers can easily read the application.

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 for this reason.

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

The budget justification should be organized around the specific deliverables listed in *X.6(b) Project Deliverables Related to System Requirements and Implementation*. A projected cost should be shown for each deliverable. If, for example, an applicant proposes six deliverables for funding, each deliverable must include an estimated total cost and budget justification. In this example, the total cost for these six deliverables must equal the total requested amount for this application in *X.4. Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section A*. If staffing or equipment will be utilized to support multiple project deliverables, the applicant should either a) divide the costs of the resource among the relevant deliverables, or b) assign the total cost of the resource to one deliverable but provide explanation of how that resource will also be utilized to support other deliverables.

The *Budget Narrative* must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project. The following descriptions and justifications must correspond to the budget spreadsheet provided in *X.4. Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C*:

- For each person listed in the Personnel category, include brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel and written justification of their time commitments.
- For consultants, include written justification for the number of days of anticipated consultation and other itemized costs.
- For applications that include contracts for work, include written justifications for each contract for each project year and the details of the contract costs. 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).
- Written justifications for the itemized costs for equipment purchases, supplies, travel, and other related project costs should also be provided.
- Brief descriptions of any other expenses itemized by category (Personnel, Fringe, etc.) and unit cost.

A page limit does not apply to this section.

8. Appendix A – Optional Attachments. In *Appendix A* of the proposal, applicants should include any figures, charts, tables, or images that supplement section *X. 6. Project Narrative* (example: illustration of current system, or planned system or system components). *Appendix A* is limited to 15 pages.

9. Appendix B – Evidence of Coordination and Support. In this appendix, applicants should provide letters of support or other documentation that are evidence of the anticipated participation and coordination by all agencies or institutions that will be partners in the project. Such evidence of support can also include key letters of agreement (e.g., memoranda of understanding) 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 that will be required if the application is funded. A page limit does not apply to this section.

10. *Appendix C – Résumés of Key Personnel.* Abbreviated résumés should be provided for the project director and other key personnel. Each résumé is limited to 3 pages 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 *X. 6. Project Narrative.*

11. *Appendix D – Acronym List.* Combined, alphabetical list of all acronyms used in application. *Appendix D* is limited to 1 page.

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

XI. APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND 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. The Institute will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. To ensure a timely submission, do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process.

Each application received on time will be reviewed for completeness and for responsiveness to this request for applications.

XII. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

All applications that are complete and responsive to this request will be evaluated and rated by peer reviewers. 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.

XIII. REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will be expected to evaluate the application on the basis of the following criteria:

- (1) Substantial need for the project. The application clearly describes the status of the State's longitudinal data system and demonstrates that the system lacks one

or more requirements for the priority addressed by the application. It provides a convincing case that the project is necessary to accelerate the State's development and implementation of a longitudinal data system. Failure to meet the goals outlined for the project would seriously threaten or impede significant State progress toward establishment and use of an effective, statewide, longitudinal data system.

- (2) Clear, appropriate, and measurable deliverables. The deliverables of the project are clearly articulated and demonstrate a commitment to creating a robust system that includes the Priority Funding Area-specific requirements, and supports transparency, accountability and improvement. Proposed deliverables relate directly and logically to the stated needs with respect to both data system requirements and implementation. The application clearly describes measurable or observable deliverables that will be accomplished by the end of the grant. These deliverables will represent completion or substantial progress toward completion of the requirements described in section *IV*, as well as appropriate attention to promoting effective use of the system. If the required system capabilities cannot be accomplished during the grant, the application provides a compelling explanation and indicates when each of those capabilities will be accomplished.
- (3) High-quality, logical, and feasible activities and timeline. The project activities are reasonable and well designed to achieve project goals. Proposed collaborations will promote efficiency. The timeline clearly describes work that logically will lead to accomplishment of the proposed deliverables. The work appears feasible in terms of the State's current status as described in section *X. 6 (a) Need for the Project*, and the time and resources available for the project.
- (4) Effective management and governance plan. 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. If applicable, the governance plan describes an active partnership between K-12 and early childhood or higher education agencies and with other agencies and institutions responsible for data to be included in the statewide data system, as well as the involvement of appropriate parties to promote use of the system to support reform and accountability. If an agency other than the SEA is providing project direction (as described in section *VIII*), the management plan demonstrates how the relationship between that agency and the SEA will be managed productively. In addition, the plans describe any new staffing required to provide useful data back to school districts, schools, and teachers.
- (5) Personnel and financial resources. The project personnel have the qualifications and time commitment needed to implement the project within the proposed project period. If personnel will be hired or contracted for the project, the qualifications and duties of these new hires or contractors are clearly described. The proposed budget and budget justification are reasonable in terms of the activities to be carried out and commensurate with the proposed deliverables and goals of the project.

XIV. RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Application Deadline Date and Time: December 15, 2011, 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time
Earliest Anticipated Start Date: May 1, 2012

XV. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

1. Overall merit of the proposal, as determined by the peer review;
2. Responsiveness to the requirements of this Request for Applications;
3. Prior funding under this program and stage of development of State's system;
4. Performance and use of funds under previous Federal awards; and
5. Funding available.

XVI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application in paper format by mail or hand delivery, if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to *XVII. Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement*.

Electronic Submission of Applications

Applications for grants under the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems competition--CFDA number 84.372A -- must be submitted electronically using the Government-wide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov.

Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Applications 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 below, the Institute will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Institute does not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

Applicants should note the following:

- Through Grants.gov, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application.
- You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.
- 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.
- You 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).
- 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, the Institute recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- 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 under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at www.G5.gov.
- Your application will be rejected if you submit it in paper format unless, as described below, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions.
- 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.
- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.
- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a .PDF (Portable Document) format only. If you upload a file type other than a .PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.
- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this request.

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, toll free, 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 elsewhere in this request.

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 *Inquiries* in section XVIII of this request and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. The Institute 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.

XVII. EXCEPTION TO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

The Institute will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement. You qualify for an exception 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;
- and
- 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: Ellie McCutcheon, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., room 600e, Washington, DC 20208. FAX: (202) 219-1466. Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this Request.

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 following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.372A)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4260

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, the Department does 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, the Department 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.

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 4:30:00 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--

- (1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 -- the CFDA number 84.372A; and
- (2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this grant 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.

XVIII. 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

XIX. 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.

XX. 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.