

STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM GRANTS

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INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

<http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

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1. 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 data systems.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS GRANTS PROGRAM

The purpose of this program is to provide grants to SEAs to enable such agencies to design, develop, and implement statewide longitudinal data systems to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data, consistent with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The long term goal of this program is to increase the number of States that maintain statewide longitudinal data systems, in order to assist States in generating and using accurate and timely data to meet reporting requirements; support decision-making at State, district, school, and classroom levels; and facilitate research needed to eliminate achievement gaps and improve learning of all students. These systems will increase efficiency and reduce the burden associated with States reporting to the Federal Government.

3. BACKGROUND

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and State accountability interests require increasingly detailed data and analyses for education decision-making. Meeting these requirements may pose challenges to States, because they may not have the student-level 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 customers. Finally, States and districts often lack the technology that can 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.

In designing and implementing statewide longitudinal data systems, SEAs should:

- (1) Ensure technical quality of data and data systems to maximize the validity, reliability, and accessibility of statewide cross-sectional and longitudinal data;
- (2) Ensure interoperability of statewide data according to the voluntary standards and guidelines of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), described in the STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS section below;
- (3) Promote timely generation of accurate data for local, State, and Federal reporting requirements;
- (4) Promote linkages across States to allow sharing of historical data on individual students, especially when students move between States; and
- (5) Facilitate analysis and rigorous research to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, improve student learning and academic achievement, and close achievement gaps.

In implementing and using these systems, States must ensure that student and staff privacy is protected and that individually identifiable information about students, their achievements, and their families remains confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

Statewide longitudinal data systems developed under this program should make it possible to conduct value-added research¹ that utilizes linked, longitudinal data on students, teachers, and programs/initiatives/interventions. Such research can help the Department of Education, States, districts, and schools identify the most cost effective solutions; lead to eliminating performance

¹ Measuring academic achievement growth of individual students over time, as measured by test scores.

gaps between subgroups of students; and contribute substantially to improving achievement of all students.

4. STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

A. General Guidelines

The Institute is interested in applications that offer the greatest promise in meeting the information needs for data-driven decision-making at State, district, school, classroom, and student levels, and in designing, developing, and implementing statewide longitudinal data systems that excel in serving those needs as well as satisfy Federal, State, and local reporting requirements. The Institute encourages applications that, in addition, propose viable means for:

- Linking student data with data that describe various education inputs, such as teacher data, staff development, tutoring, facilities, extracurricular activities, early childhood experiences, etc.;
- Linking elementary and secondary data with postsecondary data;
- Establishing partnerships among individual States or groups of States for data sharing;
- Providing leadership in effective and efficient compilation, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data for evaluating programs, improving learning of all students, and closing achievement gaps; and
- Using State cooperatives or other arrangements for maximizing the buying power of statewide longitudinal data system grant funds.

Funds made available under this grant program are to supplement, and not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing State data systems. The grants are expected to assist SEAs in their efforts to develop comprehensive statewide longitudinal data systems, but not to supplant available funds, or support the ongoing implementation and use of such systems. That is, the Institute expects grant funding to augment already existing State funds and resources devoted to this effort. To maximize the benefit of this grant, ensure that grant requirements are met, and comply with the “supplement, not supplant” requirement, projects should coordinate the use of State and local resources available for educational data systems with the use of Federal funds under this grant program.

Priority will be given in the consideration of applications to those States that currently have the most limited ability to collect, analyze, and report individual student achievement data. However, States needing to upgrade or expand existing systems, or to develop decision-support capabilities within existing systems, are also eligible to apply.

In addition, applicants should note that grant awards under this program will be in the form of *cooperative agreements*, which allow Federal involvement in the activities undertaken with Federal financial support. The Institute intends to work with grantees to identify best practices in (1) designing, developing, implementing, and utilizing statewide longitudinal data systems, (2) establishing effective partnerships among States and local schools and districts, (3) establishing partnerships between States, and (4) disseminating products and lessons learned. The specific responsibilities of the Federal staff and SEA project staff will be outlined in the cooperative agreement.

B. Requirements

Technical. Grants under this program are intended to help SEAs design, develop, and implement the various components of a well-designed, comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system with the capacity to follow individual students' performance over time, to transmit student information both within and between States, and to provide educators and education researchers with the data needed to improve outcomes for students. A data system with this capacity must, at a minimum, have the required eight system components or attributes listed below. Grants awarded under this program will support States in developing some or all of these components. Additional capabilities can be funded under this program, if the minimum required system components will also be developed or already exist. The Institute expects that data systems developed under this grant will eventually include at a minimum the following required system components:

- I. A unique, permanent student identifier assigned by the State or through a process coordinated by the State;
- II. An enterprise-wide data architecture that:
 - Is based upon analysis of information needs at classroom, school, district, State, and Federal levels;
 - Includes, at a minimum, all data elements required for reporting under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, including all data elements required for the *EDFacts* reporting system;
 - Allows for longitudinal analysis of student achievement growth and program evaluations;
 - Is relational and links records across information systems; and
 - Specifies a data model, data dictionary, business rules, and quality assurance procedures;
- III. Procedures for protecting the security, confidentiality, and integrity of data, which includes ensuring that individually identifiable information about staff and students, their history, and their families remains confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other relevant legislation;
- IV. Automated reporting, with a calendar and reporting formats that ensure timely and accurate data to meet local, State, and Federal reporting requirements, including the commitment and ability to report all *EDFacts* data groups by the completion of the grant;
- V. A data warehouse or comparable means for managing and storing longitudinally linked data and making them accessible to teachers, schools, districts, and researchers;
- VI. Capacity to exchange student data across institutions within the State and with institutions in other States, in conformance with FERPA;
- VII. Secure-access data marts, or comparable means for providing data, reports, and *ad hoc* analyses to inform decision-making of key stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, State and local officials, and possibly students and parents; and
- VIII. Ability to support analyses and research to evaluate the effectiveness of education-related programs and thereby to improve student learning and close achievement gaps.

Governance and policy. There are several governance and policy conditions that are necessary to ensure that the statewide longitudinal data system grants will result in useful and sustainable

information systems. The Institute expects that a State educational agency will establish the following to apply to the statewide longitudinal data system developed with grant funds:

- I. A clearly articulated governance structure, which includes representatives of all key State and local stakeholders, for designing, developing, and implementing the statewide longitudinal data system, and for maintaining and enhancing the system once it is completed;
- II. A communication infrastructure for providing timely information to all key stakeholders about the project's goals, progress, and impact on education management and student learning;
- III. A clearly defined procedure for facilitating rigorous analyses and providing access to system data for policy oriented research, in conformance with FERPA requirements;
- IV. A program for ongoing training of all key users of the data system;
- V. Ongoing, formative and summative evaluation procedures for determining whether the developed system meets reporting and decision-support needs of all of its key stakeholders and for assessing the role of the system in interventions intended to improve student learning and close achievement gaps; and
- VI. A long-term plan for sustaining the system over time, including allocation of the necessary staff, technical, and monetary resources, and training/technical assistance to key users (teachers, principals, and other district and State education agency staff).

The proposed work should use national technical and data standards where these exist and are appropriate. At a minimum, the statewide longitudinal data system to be developed must be capable of meeting the reporting requirements of the Education Data Exchange Network/*EDFacts* (EDEN, <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/sas/pbdmi/eden/workbook.doc>), and other requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Additionally, SEAs are encouraged to use the following voluntary standards and guidelines, established or identified by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), where these are appropriate to the proposed grant:

1. Data element definitions in the NCES data handbooks:
 - a. NCES Handbooks Online, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/handbook/>; and
 - b. Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems: 2003 Edition, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/h2r2/>;
2. Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) standards (http://www.sifinfo.org/tool_kit.asp);
3. Recommendation 7 (Integrating Data Systems) of the U.S. Department of Education's National Educational Technology Plan (<http://www.ed.gov/technology/plan>);
4. Data confidentiality guide of the National Forum on Education (*Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (2004), http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2004330.asp);
5. Technology security standards of the National Forum on Education (*Weaving a Secure Web Around Education: A Guide to Technology Standards and Security* (2003), http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2003381.asp); and
6. *Map of Core Elements for Establishing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System* (Attachment to this RFA).

5. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications through Grants.gov will be available for this program no later than December 22, 2006, at <http://www.grants.gov>. Potential applicants should check this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

6. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award statewide longitudinal data system grants in the form of cooperative agreements for periods up to three years pursuant to this request for applications.

7. FUNDING AVAILABLE

The Institute estimates that awards will range from \$1,000,000 to \$6,000,000 in total funding over the course of the project, which may extend up to three years. The size of the award will depend on the scope of the project. Larger budgets will be considered if a compelling case is made for such support.

8. 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. State education agencies may propose to collaborate in activities to be carried out with grant funds, but a 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.

9. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

State education agencies that receive grants pursuant to this competition must agree to submit an annual EDFacts Submission Plan, report all priority 0 and priority 1 EDFacts Data Elements, in a timely manner via the Education Data Exchange Network, beginning with school year 2006-2007, priority 2 data groups beginning with school year 2007-2008, and priority 3 data groups beginning with school year 2008-2009.

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 of Education 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.

Additionally, applicants should budget for one meeting each year in Washington, DC, with other grantees and Institute staff to discuss accomplishments, problems encountered, and possible solutions/improvements. At least two project representatives should attend the two-day meeting.

10. LETTER OF INTENT

A letter indicating an applicant's intent to submit an application is optional, but encouraged, for each application. The letter of intent form must be submitted electronically by the date listed at the beginning of this document, using the instructions provided at:

<https://ies.constellagroup.com>

The letter of intent should include:

- A descriptive title;
- A brief description of the proposed project;
- The name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the main contact person;
- The name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors;
- An indication of the duration of the proposed project;
- An estimated budget request for each year; and
- A total budget request.

The project description should be single-spaced and should not exceed one page (about 3,500 characters). Although the letter of intent is optional, is not binding, and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application, the information that it contains allows Institute staff to estimate the potential workload to plan the review.

11. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications for grants under the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems competition – CFDA Number 84.372 – 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 Governmentwide 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 December 22, 2006.

Applications must be submitted **by 4:30 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 and 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 Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

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).

Applicants, please note the following:

- 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.
- 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 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 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 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.
- 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.
- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the electronic application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. For important information about submitting applications through Grants.gov, see ***Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants*** at: <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>
- 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) getting 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 successfully an application 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.
- 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 typically included on the following forms: 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. Please note that two of these forms – the SF 424 and the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424 – have replaced the ED 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance).
- 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 specified here in this paragraph, or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.
- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described below under Section 12 (CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION).
- 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).
- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.
- 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 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 “Submission of Paper Applications by Mail”.

If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under Section 18 (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 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.

Applicants should note that extensions referred to 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.

- 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; 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: Kashka Kubzdela, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 9014, Washington, DC 20006-5651; FAX: (202) 502-7475.

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

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:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

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.

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—

(1) 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

(2) 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.

12. CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION

All applications and proposals must be self-contained within specified page limitations. Internet website addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites.

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. Sections *a* (SF 424) through *i* (*Appendix A - Timeline*) are required parts of the proposal, while section *j* (*Appendix B*) is optional. The SF 424 form and ED 524 form – Sections A and B are filled out using the Pure Edge forms provided by Grants.gov. The remaining sections must be organized, attached, and submitted electronically in a series of .PDF files. All page number limitations given in Table 1 must be observed.

As noted above under Section 5 (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
a. <i>Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)</i>	N/A
b. <i>Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424</i>	N/A
c. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Sections A and B</i>	N/A
d. <i>Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Section C</i>	No page limit
e. <i>Project Abstract</i>	1 page
f. <i>Project Narrative</i>	25 pages
g. <i>Résumés of Key Personnel</i>	4 pages for each résumé
h. <i>Appendix A – Timeline</i>	5 pages
i. <i>Budget Narrative</i>	No page limit
j. <i>Appendix B – Optional Attachments</i>	15 pages

* Accompanying figures, charts, tables, diagrams, and letters of agreement may be included in *Appendix B*.

- a. *Application for Federal Education Assistance (SF 424)*. Applicants must use this form to provide basic information about the applicant and the application.
- b. *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.
- c. *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.
- d. *Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Section C*. The instructions for ED 524— Section C are as follows. Section C 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, 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. Section C budget information, provided as a .PDF file, should be a spreadsheet itemizing the listing of project costs and providing detail related to the budget justification. 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. **Instructions about where this Section C budget information (spreadsheet) must be attached will be in the application package to be made available at the Grants.gov web site.**
- e. *Project Abstract*. The *Project Abstract* is limited to one page and must include: (1) The title of the project and (2) a short description of the project.
- f. *Project Narrative*. Incorporating, but not necessarily limited to the requirements outlined in Section 4 (STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS), the *Project Narrative* provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application. Applicants should address in the project narrative each of the criteria that will be used by reviewers to evaluate applications. Suggestions and recommendations on how to address the criteria are presented below:
 - (1) Need for the Project

Summarize the status of the State's current statewide data system with respect to the various requirements (technical, governance and policy) outlined in Section 4 (STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS), limitations of the current system, and what would be gained through work proposed for this grant program. Clearly specify the need to improve the current system.

(2) Project Design

Present a clear description of plans for developing and implementing the statewide longitudinal data system. Describe details of the system components to be addressed through this grant, including, but not necessarily limited to, the elements set out in Section 4 (STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS)². Clearly identify the products that will be developed and how they will be useful even if no further work will be carried out. Describe how the products of this grant will be integrated into the envisioned statewide longitudinal data system.

In addition to clearly describing what is proposed under this grant, clarify which core elements 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. To provide a common framework and aid applicants in identifying and clearly summarizing the various stages of data system design, development, implementation, and application, a *Map of Core Elements for Establishing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System* is provided in the Attachment to this RFA.

Additionally, describe how the content and architecture of the statewide longitudinal data system will address the needs of, and be accomplished in collaboration with, various stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, schools, districts, the State, researchers, universities, the business community, the public, and the Federal government), what impact it is likely to have on them, and how these stakeholders will be assisted in using the system (including plans for training and technical assistance to local education agencies). In addition to describing how the data system will improve local capacity to monitor and improve teaching and student achievement, describe how it will enhance the SEA's reporting accuracy and timeliness, use of data analysis and research for decision-making, and its understanding of educational issues and of effective strategies to address them.

(3) Project Personnel

Present a clear description of the applicant's capacity for developing and implementing the statewide longitudinal data system. Include brief descriptions of the qualifications of key personnel (information on personnel should also be provided in their résumés). For each of the key personnel, describe the roles, responsibilities, and percent of time devoted to the project.

(4) Resources

Provide a description of the resources available to support the project, including facilities, equipment, and staff. Include a description of current or planned work, if any, supported under other funding that this grant would supplement, including timelines for the work. Describe how the SEA will ensure that future work not addressed through

² If known, include identification of the data elements that will be included in the statewide longitudinal data system and indicate which of the required and voluntary national technical and data standards and guidelines (listed in section 4.B of Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements) will be, or have been, used, and how, in the resulting statewide longitudinal data system.

this grant, but needed to implement and sustain a fully functional statewide longitudinal data system, will be supported and carried out.

Applicants are encouraged to address the issue of how they propose to leverage grant money from this program to maximize the outcomes. The Institute encourages collaboration among States to address common problems or to develop shared solutions.

(5) Management Plan

Provide a description of how the SEA plans to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. Describe what procedures will be used for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the quality and operation of the resulting statewide longitudinal data system from the perspectives of different stakeholders (including students, parents, teachers, schools, districts, the State, researchers, universities, the business community, the public, and the Federal Government) and for evaluating the system's effectiveness in improving teaching and student achievement. Provide a clear description of plans for requiring, and collaborating with, districts and/or schools to collect and clean data for the statewide data system. Describe clearly the planned collaborations and agreements established to achieve the objectives of the project, how the collaborating parties will support the project, and how they will use the resulting longitudinal data and analyses for research, decision-making, and improvement of student achievement.

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. Single-space all text in the *Project Narrative*. To ensure that the text is easy for reviewers to read and that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects, applicants must adhere to the type size and format specifications for the entire *Project Narrative*, including footnotes.

The *Project Narrative* must conform to the following four requirements:

1. The height of the letters must not be smaller than 12 point;
2. Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi;
3. There must be no more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch; and
4. Margins, in all directions, must be at least 1 inch.

Applicants should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. Figures, charts, tables, and figure legends may be smaller in size but must be readily legible. The type size used must conform to all four requirements. Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the application; consequently, the use of small type will be grounds for the Institute to return the application without peer review. Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements is also necessary so that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using small type, or providing more text in its application. Note that these requirements

apply to the .PDF file as submitted. As a practical matter, applicants who use a 12 point Times New Roman without compressing, kerning, condensing or other alterations typically meet these requirements.

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.

The 25-page limit for the *Project Narrative* does not apply to the SF 424, Supplemental Information for the SF 424, the ED 524, the *Budget Narrative* (Justification), one-page *Abstract*, *Résumés of Key Personnel*, or the appendices. Reviewers are able to conduct the highest quality review when applications are concise and easy to read, with pages numbered consecutively.

- g. *Résumés of Key Personnel*. Abbreviated résumés should be provided for the project director and other key personnel. Each résumé is limited to 4 pages and should include information sufficient to demonstrate that personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their duties (e.g., Information Technology (IT) certificates and relevant experience). The résumés must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described above in the *Project Narrative* section.
- h. *Appendix A – Timeline*. In *Appendix A* of the proposal, applicants should provide a timeline detailing when each proposed component/stage of data system development and implementation to be addressed through this grant would be initiated and completed. *Appendix A* is limited to 5 pages.
- i. The *Budget Narrative (Justification)* should correspond to the itemized breakdown of project costs that applicants are being asked to provide in a spreadsheet format. See above *c. 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. A page limit does not apply to this section. **Instructions about where the *Budget Narrative* must be attached will be in the application package to be made available at the Grants.gov web site.**

- j. *Appendix B – Optional Attachment*. In *Appendix B* of the proposal, applicants may include any figures, charts, or tables that supplement the *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 B* is limited to 15 pages.

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.

- (1) Assurances-Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- (2) Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- (3) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)

13. APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be received by 4:30 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.

14. 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.

15. REVIEW CRITERIA

The goal of this grant program is to assist State education agencies in building the data system capacity to: generate and use accurate and timely data to meet Federal, State, and local reporting requirements; allow for value-added and other diagnostic and policy-relevant research; engage in data-driven decision-making; and improve student achievement. 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. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in the section on STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS and in the discussion of the *Project Narrative*, in the section on CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION:

- (1) Need for the Project
- (2) Quality of Project Design
- (3) Quality of Project Personnel
- (4) Adequacy of Resources
- (5) Quality of Management Plan

16. RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Letter of Intent Receipt Date: January 18, 2007

Application Deadline Date and Time: March 15, 2007, 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time

Earliest Anticipated Start Date: August 1, 2007

17. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

1. Overall technical merit of the proposal;
2. Responsiveness to the requirements of this request;
3. Performance and use of funds under previous Federal awards;
4. Contribution to developing a model of best practice in the design, development, implementation, and application of statewide longitudinal data systems; and
5. Availability of funds.

18. INQUIRIES ADDRESS

Dr. Kashka Kubzdela

Institute of Education Sciences

National Center for Education Statistics

1990 K Street, NW, Rm. 9014

Washington, DC 20006-5651

Email: Kashka.Kubzdela@ed.gov

Telephone: (202) 502-7411

19. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

20 U.S.C. 9601 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.

20. 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.

21. ATTACHMENT

Map of Core Elements for Establishing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System

1. Analysis of the business needs (multiple reporting and decision support needs) of key stakeholders, including the State, districts, school boards, schools, teachers, parents, students, the public, and other constituents
2. Cataloging current and planned local data collection methods and data structures
3. Designing statewide longitudinal data systems architecture
 - a. Including in data model the business needs of key stakeholders, who participate as data providers and users, and whose needs should determine the data types and items to be maintained in the system, years of data maintained, and data quality achieved (all of which define the breadth and depth of subsequent possible analyses)
 - b. Developing effective data quality assurance system, that contains:
 - i. Data dictionary, with well-defined content and common definitions for data elements³, to assure the same definitions, codes, and periodicity across all schools in the State at data entry points
 - ii. Business rules for data format, acceptable values, missing data options, and logical comparisons to prior data
 - iii. Automated data edit processes to verify data quality and to ensure that rules are met before allowing data into the State's data system
 - iv. Systems and procedures to assure correct utilization of data by the users and providers
 - c. Developing an effective, statewide data model that defines and describes the logical and physical relationships between data items and systems, and system structure that allows efficient data maintenance and retrieval (containing relevant and linked current and historical data)
 - d. Assuring secure access to data and formal reports to protect the confidentiality of individuals, in compliance with FERPA and the statistical reliability of results
 - e. Structured to enable efficient data extraction for time-based analyses
 - f. Allowing modifications and enhancements to the system's data and architecture, including system expansion over time
4. Creating, assigning, and tracking a unique, permanent student identifier assigned at state level
 - a. Allowing the matching of individual student records across databases and years for every student enrolled in preK-12 state education system (using an automatic system creation of IDs or an individual creation through direct online interaction with ID system)
 - b. Allowing for program evaluation (including potential capacity to track students past the 12th grade)
 - c. Allowing for student record transfers among States when students move across state borders (requiring inter-state agreements and compliant with FERPA regulations)
5. Planning and implementing data collection
 - a. From districts and/or schools so that the SEA can incorporate data in the system for all students, classrooms, and schools under the SEA's jurisdiction, including:

³ See Data Definitions in NCES Handbooks Online, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/handbook/> for an example of standards.

- i. Development of collaboration among all parties within the SEA and between the SEA and school districts in data collection, reporting, and dissemination
 - ii. Provisions for the needs of districts that have limited ability to participate in technology systems
 - b. Conducting cost/benefit and sustainability analyses of dynamic vs. static data extraction systems (data entered directly by school personnel into the statewide system, with instantaneous error feedback vs. data files imported from districts on a periodic basis)
 - c. Shortening reporting time and increasing the accuracy of student assessment data (e.g. through technology-based assessments)
6. Implementing statewide longitudinal data system (warehouse)
- a. Development of the system according to the designed architecture
 - b. Testing of the system
 - c. Going live
7. Designing, using, and maintaining business intelligence tools (analytical & reporting)
- a. Streamlining reporting capabilities to local, state, and federal agencies, using pre-defined, automated reports (including for EDEN, NCLB, NCES, and the public)
 - b. Supporting:
 - i. Multiple reporting and analyses needs of different stakeholders
 - ii. High-level longitudinal analyses, required for data-driven decision-making by policymakers, educators, and members of the public
 - c. Providing timely, accurate, and user-friendly dissemination of the needed data, reports, and analyses results to:
 - i. Parents/guardians and students
 - ii. Teachers
 - iii. Schools
 - iv. District administrators
 - v. State officials and administrators
 - vi. Universities/colleges and the business community
 - vii. The public
 - d. Engaging in longitudinal education research to inform policy and decision-making
 - e. Leading the State, districts, and teachers in the development and use of innovative analytical tools and reports to inform policy and decision-making
8. Establishing logistical capacity to create and maintain a statewide longitudinal data system
- a. Developing efficient administrative processes, infrastructure components, and policy commitments for effectively implementing the maintenance of the statewide longitudinal data system, regarding:
 - i. Assuring continued data collection and quality
 - ii. Assuring continued dissemination of data and analyses results
 - iii. Assuring data security and confidentiality, including addressing potential concerns of stakeholders about student privacy in automated systems
 - iv. Assuring continued funding
 - v. Assuring continued adequate human resources
 - vi. Assuring continued enabling legislation
 - vii. Assuring the continued adequacy of hardware, software, and networking capabilities
 - b. Assuring sustainability and effectiveness of the system by:
 - i. Assuring administrative buy-in

- ii. Assuring qualified staff, training, technical, and other resources dedicated to the State's administrative technology over the long term to ensure the system's continued effectiveness (including the commitment and ability of staff to implement, use, and continually develop the data system)
- iii. Developing a strong plan for the SEA and other stakeholders to continually evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the data system and of associated processes, both in their reporting and decision-support functions, and to periodically assess the degree to which they meet agency and other stakeholders' needs
- c. Involving and supporting stakeholders by establishing and/or facilitating the existence of:
 - i. A policy advisory committee that includes representatives from each key stakeholder group
 - ii. A data provider/collection group
 - iii. A data user group
 - iv. An internal agency coordination group to oversee data collection, management, and dissemination
- d. Planning and funding initial and ongoing, efficient and effective training of key state and local data collectors and users, according to their functional needs, on:
 - i. Data Entry, Cleaning, and Transfer
 - ii. Data Extraction
 - iii. Unique Student ID System
 - iv. Business Intelligence Tools and use of data for decision-making