

Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems: Request for Applications

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The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) previously held a fiscal year 2009 competition as part of the [Statewide Longitudinal Data System \(SLDS\) Grant Program](#), and grant awards have been made. This is a second announcement and request for applications (RFA) for grants to be made with the funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Preliminary guidance will be issued soon and will apply to grants awarded pursuant to this competition. Grants will not be made available to support ongoing maintenance of data systems, but they may be used to expand and/or improve existing systems and to support system implementation.

Purpose

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.

Goal

To enable all states to create comprehensive systems that:

- Permit the generation and use of accurate and timely data.
- Support 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 outcomes.
- Facilitate research to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps.
- Support education accountability systems and public reporting.

Funding

Grants will range from \$2 million to \$20 million for the entire project period, not to exceed three years.

Use of Funds

- Statewide data systems that, in addition to PK–12 data, also include postsecondary and workforce information.
- The development and implementation of PK–20 systems that have the capacity to link individual student data across time and across databases, including matching teachers to students.
- The promotion of interoperability for easy matching and linking of data across institutions, agencies, and states.
- The protection of student privacy consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.

- The acceleration of the development of state data systems, to include not only data related to K–12 education, but also data on preschool and postsecondary education and workforce information (including employment, wage, and earnings data).
- The promotion of linkages with other data systems where such linkages may inform education policy and practice.
- Implementation activities should include, among other things, training, technical assistance, analyses, and feedback reporting to promote effective use of data by teachers, administrators, and other appropriate personnel to monitor progress and make changes to improve student achievement.

Applications

In developing applications for this competition, states are encouraged to consult with key stakeholders such as superintendents, educators, and parents as well as teachers union, business, community, and civil rights leaders. States should include in their applications and plans:

- Concrete strategies and steps to ensure that the data will be used to support continuous improvement, especially instructional improvement, and informed decision making by school and district leaders, as well as by state officials.
- Which capabilities and elements in [Section IV of the Request for Applications](#):
 - Are already included in its existing system.
 - Are being developed or improved with an earlier grant under the Grant Program for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems.
 - Will be developed or improved with a grant awarded pursuant to this competition.
 - Will be developed or improved with other funds, including other ARRA funds, federal formula or discretionary funds, or state funds.

If the state cannot fully achieve each of these capabilities and fully implement each of these elements in its statewide, longitudinal data system by the end of the three-year grant period, the state must outline in its application its plan for accomplishing each requirement, including the date by which each will be realized and the projected sources of funding.

Table 1. List of Proposal Sections and Their Page Limits

Section	Page Limit
1. Application for Federal Education Assistance (SF 424)	N/A
2. Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424	N/A
3. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)— Sections A and B	N/A
4. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)— Section C	No page limit
5. Project Abstract	1 page

Section	Page Limit
6. Project Narrative	30 pages
7. Budget Narrative (Justification)	No page limit
8. Appendix A—Optional Attachments	15 pages
9. Appendix B—Résumés of Key Personnel	3 pages for each résumé
10. Appendix C—Current Status of State’s Longitudinal Data System	4 pages
11. Appendix D—Letters of Support	No page limit

Review Criteria

- Substantial need for the project
- Clear goals and appropriate and measurable outcomes
- High-quality, logical, and feasible activities and timeline
- Effective management and governance plan
- Personnel and financial resources

Award Decisions

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

- Overall merit of the proposal, as determined by the peer review
- Responsiveness to the requirements of this RFA
- Prior funding under this program and stage of development of state’s system
- Performance and use of funds under previous federal awards
- Funding available

Performance Measures

To evaluate the overall success of the program, IES will consider two performance measures:

1. Operation of a statewide, longitudinal (PK–20) data system that has achieved each of the seven required system capabilities set out in the RFA, and how many states have achieved each capability.
2. Systems that include each of the 12 elements required by the RFA, and based on this information, how many states have included each element in their systems. The 12 required data system elements are those prescribed by the [America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science \(COMPETES\) Act](#).
 - States will be reporting on the implementation of these elements in the context of reporting for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), and these state reports will be one source of data for the second measure.

Reporting

- In the annual performance reports, states are expected to report on the status of achieving each of the required data system capabilities and on the inclusion of each of the required data system elements.
- In the final performance report, states are expected to report on whether they have achieved each of the capabilities and whether they have included each of the elements in their operational data systems.
- IES also will collect information about states' progress with these requirements via monitoring during the course of the grant.

Required Data System Capabilities

A statewide, longitudinal data system developed with funding obtained pursuant to this grant competition must have the following seven capabilities:

1. The system must enable states to examine student progress and outcomes over time, including students' preparation to meet the demands of postsecondary education, the 21st century workforce, and the Armed Forces. Such a system must include data at the individual student level from preschool through postsecondary education and into the workforce (e.g., employment, wage, and earnings information).
2. The system must facilitate and enable the exchange of data among agencies and institutions within the state and between states so that data may be used to inform policy and practice. Such a system would support interoperability by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions to ensure linkage and connectivity among the various levels and types of data.
3. The system must link student data with teachers; i.e., it must enable the matching of teachers and students so that a given student may be matched with the particular teachers primarily responsible for providing instruction in various subjects.
4. The system must enable the matching of teachers with information about their certification and teacher preparation programs, including the institutions at which teachers received their training.
5. The system must enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision making, including timely reporting to parents, teachers, and school leaders about the achievement of their students.
6. The system must ensure the quality and integrity of data contained in the system.
7. The system must provide the state with the ability to meet reporting requirements of the Department, especially reporting progress on the metrics established for the SFSF and the reporting requirements included in the *EDFacts* data collection and reporting system.

Required Data System Elements

A data system developed with funding obtained pursuant to this grant competition must include at least these 12 elements prescribed by the America COMPETES Act:

With respect to PK–12 education and postsecondary education:

1. 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)
2. Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information
3. Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete PK–16 education programs
4. The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems
5. A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability

With respect to PK–12 education:

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

With respect to postsecondary education:

11. 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
12. Data that provide other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education

In addition to the capabilities and system elements, there are additional “encouragements” articulated:

- States are encouraged to include additional information in their longitudinal data systems, provided all of the required capabilities and elements have been or are being addressed.
- States are encouraged to include or integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, human resources, finance, health, postsecondary, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of allowing important questions related to policy or practice to be asked and answered.
- States are encouraged to work together to adopt or adapt their statewide, longitudinal data systems to meet multiple states’ needs.

- States are encouraged to pursue the seamless integration of district systems with the state system and to leverage available resources by establishing partnerships with other states and among institutions and agencies within the state that hold data to be included in the statewide, longitudinal data system.
- States are encouraged to develop partnerships with state workforce agencies and the workforce investment system to build a data system that can provide information to inform complex policy questions that cut across education, workforce, and economic development contexts.
- States are encouraged to develop partnerships with external research organizations and must include in their applications and plans strategies for providing researchers access to state data for evaluations of policies and programs within the state, with appropriate safeguards to protect student confidentiality.