GRANTS FOR STATEWIDE, LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS UNDER THE
AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS:  NCES 09-02
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
http://ies.ed.gov/funding/


APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE:  November 19, 2009
THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

I.      REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
The Institute of Education Sciences invites State educational agencies to apply for grants to
design, develop, and implement statewide P-20 longitudinal data systems to capture student data
from preschool to high school, college, and career.


II.     BACKGROUND
The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), signed into law on
February 17, 2009, provides $245 million for investing in statewide, longitudinal data systems
to improve student achievement.  These funds will support grants pursuant to section 208 of the

Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, the Grant Program for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems, but with additional authority to include postsecondary and workforce information. The Institute of Education Sciences held an earlier fiscal year 2009 competition under this program, and awards pursuant to that competition have been made. This announcement and request for applications is for a separate competition for grants to be made with the funds provided by the Recovery Act.

The Recovery Act recognizes the need for longitudinal data to support informed decision-making and continuous improvement at all levels of the education system. In addition to this grant competition, the Recovery Act includes other provisions related to the development and implementation of longitudinal data systems. It requires that States that wish to receive allocations under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund assure, among other things, that they will establish longitudinal data systems that include the elements set out in the America COMPETES Act. In addition, the Recovery Act requires that Race to the Top funds be awarded to States that have made significant progress in establishing such longitudinal data systems and in meeting other performance objectives related to higher standards and better assessments, teacher effectiveness and equity in teacher distribution, and supporting and turning around low-performing schools.

The Department of Education will propose specific data and information requirements for all four reform areas of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, in the form of assurance metrics and descriptors, in a notice for Part II funding. In addition, the Department is developing guidance to assist States in designing and implementing statewide, longitudinal data systems that are consistent with the provisions of the America COMPETES Act and that comply with applicable student privacy requirements, including applicable requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Preliminary guidance in this area will be issued soon and will also apply to grants awarded pursuant to this competition. These grants will assist States in meeting the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund assurance related to data systems, and they may also contribute to States' ability to compete for Race to the Top funds. Data systems that capture student data, thus facilitating the tracking of student progress, and that link student growth and achievement to teachers, link principals to their schools, and link teachers and other educators to their preparation programs will support actions and reporting in all the reform areas.

The Department recognizes that requests for data and information should reflect an integrated and coordinated approach among the various Recovery Act programs, particularly the Stabilization, Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, and Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant programs. Accordingly, the Department will continue to evaluate our requests for data and information under this program in context with other Recovery Act programs.


III.     PURPOSE OF THE GRANT PROGRAM FOR STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS
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 to enable all States to create comprehensive P-20 systems that 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 outcomes, 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.

The grants awarded will support the development and implementation of systems that have the capacity to link individual student data across time and across databases (i.e., are "interoperable"), including the matching of teachers to students, promote the linking of data collected or held by various institutions, agencies, and States, and protect student privacy consistent with applicable privacy protection laws.

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. Expansion and improvement activities should include promoting and facilitating the linking of data across institutions, agencies, and States not only to capture student data and track student progress, but also to inform policy and practice. Linking data from multiple sources will be facilitated by improving system interoperability through the adoption of standardized, extensible markup language (xml) format and/or the data definitions and standards of the National Center for Education Statistics. 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.

Grants are intended to help States accelerate the development of their longitudinal data systems, to support the inclusion of education data from preschool through postsecondary and workforce information, including employment, wage, and earnings data, and to promote linkages with other data systems where such linkages may inform policy and practice. Longitudinal data can be used, among other purposes, to identify early childhood programs that are associated with strong school readiness outcomes for children, assess student progress and learning needs, improve instruction, identify successful instructional programs within the State, and determine priorities for allocating resources. These data also help policymakers and educators devise methods for identifying effective teachers and teaching practices, and strong teacher preparation programs. They can be used to identify programs and pathways that encourage students to stay in school, re-enter school, and enter postsecondary education, and they are a means to determine whether high school graduates have the knowledge and skills to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce without the need for remediation, strengthen the preparation of all students for success after high school, provide accurate information about schools, school staff, and the progress of students, and support accountability and public reporting.

Supplement not supplant. The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 requires that funds made available under the Grant Program for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems be used to supplement, and not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing State data systems. This requirement applies to grants to be awarded pursuant to this competition for Recovery Act funds, as well as to other Statewide, Longitudinal Data System grants.

IV.    STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Any statewide, longitudinal data system to be supported with funds made available pursuant to this competition must meet the requirements described below, which include certain system capabilities, the elements prescribed by the America COMPETES Act, and other requirements.

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

- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The system must enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision-making, including timely reporting to parents, teachers, and school leaders on the achievement of their students.
- The system must ensure the quality and integrity of data contained in the system.
- 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 State Fiscal Stabilization Fund 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 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

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

Depending on the condition of a State's current system, a grant awarded pursuant to this competition may not be of sufficient amount or duration to permit the State to build a system with all of the capabilities and including all of the elements outlined above. The State's application should indicate, however, which capabilities and elements are already included in its existing system, which are being developed or improved with an earlier grant under the Grant Program for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems, which will be developed or improved with a grant awarded pursuant to this competition, and which will be developed or improved with other funds, including other Recovery Act funds, Federal formula or discretionary funds, or State funds. Please refer to section *IX. Appendix C* for details. 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 3-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.

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 for English language learners, 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 also encouraged to work together to adopt or adapt their statewide, longitudinal data systems to meet multiple States' needs.
Systems must be designed to meet the standards and guidelines of the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed/Programs/SLDS/standardsguidelines.asp) to the maximum extent feasible. These resources currently include the NCES Handbooks Online, the schemas of the Schools Interoperability Framework Association and the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council, the National Education Data Model of the National Forum on Education Statistics, the data glossary of NCES' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, and others. Work is currently underway to create comprehensive standards and guidelines for use by States to

promote data quality and interoperability of data systems both within States and across States. The NCES site will be modified, as appropriate, to include up-to-date resources, and States should plan to utilize the common standards and guidelines that are available prior to the award of grants pursuant to this competition. In addition, the Department of Education is developing the guidance mentioned above (see section *III. Purpose of the Grant Program for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems*), which will apply to these grants.

States should include in their applications and plans for developing robust, statewide, longitudinal data systems 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.

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, the 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.

In developing applications for this competition, States are encouraged to consult with key stakeholders such as superintendents, educators, and parents as well as teacher union, business, community, and civil rights leaders. Such consultation would ensure that these stakeholders are aware of the State's current ability to meet the statewide, longitudinal data system requirements, can provide input on the means the State will develop to comply with the requirements, and can prepare to assist the State in implementing those means.

## V.     APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available for this program no later than August 10, 2009, at the Department's E-Application system. Applicants should refer to this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

## VI.     MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award 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

A total of $245 million is available in one-time funding. The Institute estimates that individual grants will range from $2,000,000 to $20,000,000 for the entire grant period. Grants will be awarded for periods not to exceed 3 years. The size of individual grants will depend on the outcomes the State proposes to achieve and the extent of development and improved system capability the State commits to accomplishing with grant funds. The Institute anticipates that the average grant to a single State will be approximately $10,000,000. Additional funds for multi-state collaboration may be awarded based on the proposed plans and anticipated outcomes of the multi-state collaboration.


## 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 eligible. A State educational agency may propose to work jointly with other agencies in the State, such as a higher education agency, preschool, early childhood, or workforce agency, or a school district or group of districts in the State. However, in all cases, the State educational agency, as defined above, must be the applicant and the fiscal agent for the grant.

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.

Accountability and Transparency. The Recovery Act requires accountability and transparency in the use of these funds. A State educational agency that receives Recovery Act funds must report the following information to the Department of Education 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter:

- The total amount of recovery funds received from the Department
- The amount of recovery funds received that were obligated and expended to projects or activities. This reporting will also include unobligated allotment balances to facilitate reconciliations
- A detailed list of all projects or activities for which recovery funds were obligated and expended, including:
  o The name of the project or activity;
  o A description of the project or activity;
  o An evaluation of the completion status of the project or activity;
  o An estimate of the number of jobs created and the number of jobs retained by the project or activity; and
  o For infrastructure investments made by State and local governments, the purpose, total cost, and rationale of the agency for funding the infrastructure investment with funds made available under the Recovery Act, and the name of the person to contact at the agency if there are concerns with the infrastructure investment.
- Detailed information on any subcontracts or subgrants awarded by the recipient to include the data elements required to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-282), allowing aggregate reporting on awards below $25,000 or to individuals, as prescribed by the Director of OMB.

Note that these are requirements that apply to all funding received by State educational agencies under the Recovery Act. Grantees under this competition should anticipate having to report at the end of each quarter on the amount of the grant funds obligated and expended; all activities for which those funds were obligated and expended; the completion status of those activities; the estimated number of jobs created or retained by the project and those activities; and detailed information on any contracts awarded with grant funds. Specific guidance regarding reporting will be contained in the terms and conditions of any grant awarded pursuant to this competition.


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 able to view Internet sites for application review.

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

As noted above under section *V. Applications Available*, all of the required forms and instructions for the forms will be in the application package to be made available through the Department's eApplication system. The application package will also provide specific instructions about where applicants will be able to attach those application sections that must be submitted in .PDF (Portable Document Format).

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

| Section | Page Limit |
|---|---|
| 1. *Application for Federal 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 |
| 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 |

*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.

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

*5. Project Abstract.* The *Project Abstract* is limited to one page and must include: (1) The title of the project, (2) the names of collaborating States if the State proposes to participate in a multi-state collaboration, (3) a short description of the project, including goals and major

activities, and (4) the expected outcomes of the project related to required system elements and implementation of the State's longitudinal data system.

*6. Project Narrative.* This section provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application. In the narrative, the applicant should describe the proposed project and address how the State either meets or proposes to make progress toward incorporating each of the capabilities and requirements outlined in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements.* The applicant should also address implementation and 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. Briefly describe the current capacity in the State to use the data system to support improvement efforts, and the training or technical assistance needs to be addressed through the grant. Describe how the State will use the system to address the requirements of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

In summarizing the current status of the State's system, refer to the capabilities and elements outlined in section *IV. Statewide Longitudinal Data System Requirements*. Indicate whether work on each capability and element has been completed, is in progress and if so, whether an existing grant from the Institute is being used, has been planned but not yet begun, or is not planned. With regard to the seven required capabilities and 12 essential elements, specify for each whether any current resources (especially grants from the Institute and from other Recovery Act programs) are being used for design or development of the element. Display this information in chart format and attach as *Appendix C*.

(b)   Project Outcomes Related to System Requirements and Implementation
List proposed outcomes (products, features, benchmarks) for each of the system requirements (both capabilities and elements) that the State will be addressing in work funded under this grant. A proposed outcome should represent completion or substantial progress toward completion of the requirement and its inclusion in the State's longitudinal data system (example: develop a unique student identifier for all students in the K-12 system).

Outcomes should be expressed as products (example: develop web portal), features (example: design data support application), or benchmarks (example: integration of postsecondary data by 2011) that can be measured at the end of the grant period.

If the State proposes to participate in a multi-state collaboration, describe the goals and outcomes to be achieved through the joint activities.

(c)  Timeline for Project Outcomes

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

Describe how activities supported by a grant pursuant to this competition will be coordinated with activities supported by an existing grant, especially how duplication will be avoided.  (Note that funds under a Recovery Act grant must be separately tracked from funds under another grant, including other Statewide, Longitudinal Data System grants.)

If the State proposes to participate in a multi-state collaboration, describe the collaboration, citing the other States involved, and what role the State will play in the collaboration.  Describe the outcomes for which the State is requesting funding, making clear which outcomes are unique to the State's application and which, if any, would be carried out on behalf of the collaboration.  If the State will act as the fiscal agent for the collaboration, also describe the joint outcomes for which the State will be responsible.  If the joint outcomes are described in another application, i.e., the application of another State that would serve as the fiscal agent, indicate the application.

(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 controls that will be exercised in order to achieve the goals of the proposed project on time and within budget.  In describing these controls, 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 for 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 working 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 teachers and other educators will be obtained and utilized.

Include as *Appendix D* 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 outcomes.

(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 *(d) Project Management and Governance Plan*. This section can refer to the résumés of key personnel included in *Appendix B*, to demonstrate that the proposed staff has needed qualifications, but the section should also describe how the key personnel are qualified to manage and implement the proposed activities.

The *Project Narrative* is limited to the equivalent of 30 pages, where a "page" is 8.5 inches x 11 inches, on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. All text in the *Project Narrative* must be single-spaced and at least 12 point font in order that the reviewers can easily read the applications.

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

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

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

The *Budget Narrative* must provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project. It must include the time commitments, including an indication of the percentage of FTE, and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel. For consultants, the narrative should include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs. A justification for equipment purchase, supplies, travel, and other

related project costs should also be provided in the budget narrative for each project year outlined in *Section C*.  For applications that include contracts for work, applicants should submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each contract for each project year, and the details of the contract costs should be included in the budget narrative.  It is understood that some level of detail may not be provided due to overall timing of the process (i.e., contracts cannot be articulated unless grants have been awarded).  A page limit does not apply to this section.

*8. Appendix A – Optional Attachment*.  In *Appendix A* of the proposal, applicants may include any figures, charts, or tables that supplement section *X. 6. Project Narrative*, as well as key letters of agreement from partners and consultants.  Letters of agreement should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the project that will be required if the application is funded.  *Appendix A* is limited to 15 pages.

*9. Appendix B –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*.

*10. Appendix C – Current Status of State's Longitudinal Data System*.  The chart described in section *X. 6. Project Narrative* should be provided.  The chart should include three columns that:  1) identify each of the seven capabilities and 12 elements that are set out in section *IV. Statewide, Longitudinal Data System Requirements*; 2) describe the current status of each requirement (i.e., whether the requirement has been completed, whether it is currently under development, whether current development is supported with an existing grant from the Institute, and whether it will be developed or improved under a grant awarded pursuant to this competition; and 3) identify any relevant outcomes (from section *X. 6. Project Narrative*) that will address the requirement.

*11. Appendix D – Letters of 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.

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.  E-Application will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application

deadline date.  Therefore, the Department strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process.

Each application that is 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 required capabilities and/or several of the essential elements.  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 goals and appropriate and measurable outcomes.  The goals of the project are clearly articulated and demonstrate a commitment to creating a robust system that includes the seven required capabilities and 12 required elements, and supports transparency, accountability and improvement.  Proposed outcomes relate directly and logically to the stated needs with respect to both data system requirements and implementation.  The application clearly describes measurable or observable outcomes that will be accomplished by the end of the grant.  These outcomes 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 and elements cannot be accomplished during the grant, the application provides a

> compelling explanation and indicates when each of those capabilities and elements will be accomplished.

> (3) <u>High-quality, logical, and feasible activities and timeline</u>. 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 outcomes. 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) <u>Effective management and governance plan</u>. The management plan for the project demonstrates that there will be sufficient administrative oversight and controls to enable the work to proceed on time, as planned, and within budget. The governance plan describes an active partnership between K-12 and higher education agencies and with other agencies and institutions responsible for data 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. In particular, the plans describe any new staffing required to provide useful data back to school districts, schools, and teachers.

> (5) <u>Personnel and financial resources</u>. 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 outcomes and goals of the project.

## XIV. RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Application Deadline Date and Time: November 19, 2009, 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time
Earliest Anticipated Start Date: May 2010

## 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 Department's e-Grants Web site: http://e-grants.ed.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 84.384A must be submitted electronically using E-Application, accessible through the Department's e-Grants Web site at: http://e-grants.ed.gov.

Applications must be received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this RFA.

While completing your electronic application, you will be entering data online that will be saved into a database. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

Please note the following:

• You must complete the electronic submission of your grant application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. E-Application will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Therefore, the Department strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process.
• The hours of operation of the e-Grants Web site are 6:00 a.m. Monday until 7:00 p.m. Wednesday; and 6:00 a.m. Thursday until 8:00 p.m. Sunday, Washington, DC time. Please note that, because of maintenance, the system is unavailable between 8:00 p.m. on Sundays and 6:00 a.m. on Mondays, and between 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and 6:00 a.m. on Thursdays, Washington, DC time. Any modifications to these hours are posted on the e-Grants Web site.
• You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will the Department 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 attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the file type specified in this paragraph or submit a password protected file, the Department will not review that material.
• Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this RFA.
• Prior to submitting your electronic application, you may wish to print a copy of it for your records.
• After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment that will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).
• Within three working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the SF 424 to the Application Control Center after following these steps:
      (1) Print SF 424 from E-Application.
      (2) The applicant's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.

     (3)  Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard-copy signature page of the SF 424.

     (4)  Fax the signed SF 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6272.


• The Department may request that you provide us original signatures on other forms at a later date.


<u>Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of E-Application Unavailability</u>


 If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because E-Application is unavailable, the Department will grant you an extension of one business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery.  The Extension will be granted if--

     (1)  You are a registered user of E-Application and you have initiated an electronic application for this competition; and

     (2)  (a)  E-Application is unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a .m. and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date; or

     (b)  E-Application is unavailable for any period of time between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.


The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension.  To request this extension or to confirm our acknowledgment of any system unavailability, you may contact either the person listed below under Section XVIII of this RFA or (2) the e-Grants help desk at 1-888-336-8930.  If E-Application is unavailable due to technical problems with the system and, therefore, the application deadline is extended, an e-mail will be sent to all registered users who have initiated an E-Application.  Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of E-Application.


## XVII.  EXCEPTION TO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

The Department will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described here, 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.  Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided below.


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 E-Application because—

• You do not have access to the Internet; or

• You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to E-Application;

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 prevents you from using the

Internet to submit your application.  If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.  If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to:  Elizabeth Payer, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, room 602C, Washington, DC  20208.  FAX:  (202) 219-1466. Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

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 84.384A)
>  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 84.384A)
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 84.384A; 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.