

**Research
Grants on
Education:
Small**

**SPENCER
FOUNDATION**

Research Grants on Education: Small

The Small Research Grants Program supports education research projects that will contribute to the improvement of education, broadly conceived, with budgets up to \$50,000 for projects ranging from one to five years. We accept applications three times per year.

This program is “field-initiated” in that proposal submissions are not in response to a specific request for a particular research topic, discipline, design, method, or location. Our goal for this program is to support rigorous, intellectually ambitious and technically sound research that is relevant to the most pressing questions and compelling opportunities in education.

Program Statement

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We recognize that learning occurs across the life course as well as across settings—from the classroom to the workplace, to family and community contexts and even onto the playing field—any of which may, in the right circumstance, provide the basis for rewarding study that makes significant

contributions to the field. We value work that fosters creative and open-minded scholarship, engages in deep inquiry, and examines robust questions related to education. To this end, this program supports proposals from multiple disciplinary and methodological perspectives, both domestically and internationally, from scholars at various stages in their career. We anticipate that proposals will span a wide range of topics and disciplines that innovatively investigate questions central to education, including for example education, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, law, economics, history, or neuroscience, amongst others.

Moreover, we expect and welcome methodological diversity in answering pressing questions; thus, we are open to projects that utilize a wide array of research methods including quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, ethnographies, design-based research, participatory methods, and historical research, to name a few. We are open to projects that might incorporate data from multiple and varied sources, span a sufficient length of time as to achieve a depth of understanding, or work closely with practitioners or community members over the life of the project.

Deadlines

Applications Open

December 3, 2019 at 12:00pm CT

Full Proposal Deadline

March 3, 2020 at 12:00pm CT

Applications Open

April 1, 2020 at 12:00pm CT

Full Proposal Deadline

July 1, 2020 at 12:00pm CT

Applications Open

August 3, 2020 at 12:00pm CT

Full Proposal Deadline

November 3, 2020 at 12:00pm CT

Eligibility and Restrictions

Eligibility

Proposals to the Research Grants on Education program must be for academic research projects that aim to study education. Proposals for activities other than research are not eligible (e.g., program evaluations, professional development, curriculum development, scholarships, capital projects). Additionally, proposals for research studies focused on areas other than education, are not eligible.

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs applying for a Small Research Grant on Education must have an earned doctorate in an academic discipline or professional field, or appropriate experience in an education research-related profession. While graduate students may be part of the research team, they may not be named the PI or Co-PI on the proposal.

The PI must be affiliated with a non-profit organization that is willing to serve as the administering organization if the grant is awarded. The Spencer Foundation does not award grants directly to individuals. Examples include non-profit colleges, universities, school districts, and research facilities, as well as other non-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS.

Proposals are accepted from the U.S. and internationally, however, all proposals must be submitted in English and budgets must be proposed in U.S. Dollars.

Restrictions

Proposed budgets for this program are limited to \$50,000 total and may not include indirect cost charges [per Spencer's policy](#).

Projects proposed may not be longer than 5 years in duration.

PIs and Co-PIs may only hold one active research grant from the Spencer Foundation at a time. (This restriction does not apply to the administering organization; organizations may submit as many proposals as they like as long as they are for different projects and have different research teams.)

PIs and Co-PIs may not submit more than one application for a given deadline in this program.

How to Apply

The application process begins with a full proposal; there is no requirement to submit a letter of intent or intent to apply form. Full proposals for a Small

Research Grant on Education are due by 12:00pm central time on the deadline date.

Full Proposal Guidelines

Small Grant proposals must be submitted through an online application form following the guidelines below.

Step 1 – Registration

Note: This application is configured for the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project to register and submit the form. If someone other than the PI will be completing the online application (e.g., an administrative assistant), the PI should register as described in Step 1 below, then provide their username and password to the person assisting them with the application.

If you (the PI) have never accessed the Spencer Foundation online portal, you must register and create a profile by going

to <https://spencer.smartsimple.us> and clicking the “Register Here” button. Follow the guidelines on the registration page to create your profile.

If you already have an account, log on to update your profile and access the application.

Step 2 - My Profile

After logging in, follow the directions to complete the information requested on the My Profile page and upload your current CV (10 page limit). The My Profile page is your online account with the Spencer Foundation whether you are applying for a grant, reviewing a proposal, or submitting a grantee report.

Note: If you will have Co-PIs on your project, they must also register and complete their profile information if they wish to be included on the application.

Step 3 – Start a Proposal

To fill out the application, go to your Workbench and click the Apply button for the Small Research Grants on Education. Your draft application can be saved and returned to so that you may continue work on it at a later time and can be found on your Draft Proposals list on your Workbench.

Small Grant Proposal Elements

Within the online application, there are detailed guidelines for each section.

Below is an overview of the elements you'll be expected to complete.

Project Personnel- As the person creating the draft application, you will automatically be assigned to the proposal as the Principal Investigator. If there are Co-PIs on the proposal, they can be added to the application in this section. They must first follow Steps 1 and 2 above before being added to the application.

Proposal Summary– Information about the project is requested, such as the project title, start and end dates, the central research question(s), and a 200-word project summary.

Budget and Budget Justification - The budget form is divided into the following categories and each category has a pulldown menu of the line item choices listed in parentheses below:

- Salaries (PI, Co-PI, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Graduate Student, Researcher, Undergraduate Researcher, Other Research Staff, Other Staff)
- Benefits (PI Benefits, Co-PI Benefits, Researcher Benefits, Other Staff Benefits, Tuition/Fees)
- Other Collaborator (Independent Consultant, Advisor)
- Travel (Project Travel, Conference or Dissemination Travel)
- Equipment and Software (Equipment, Software)
- Project Expenses (Supplies, Participant Stipends/Costs, Communication, Transcription)
- Other (This should only be used for expenses not covered in the choices above)
- Subcontracts (Information is pulled from the subcontract budget forms – see below)

Each expense for your project should be added and the budget narrative field should be completed, providing a description of that specific expense. Detailed guidelines are available within the application form.

Subcontracts: If your project will have subcontracts, a separate subcontract budget form will need to be completed for each. The subcontract form has the same categories and line item choices listed above.

Proposal Narrative - You are expected to upload a proposal narrative pdf that includes the following:

A description of the project, the central research question(s), and the project's significance.

A rationale for the project. This includes (a) summary of the relevant literature, the relationship of the proposed research to that literature, and the new knowledge or contribution to the improvement of education expected to result from the proposed research; and (b) a summary of the conceptual framework or theory guiding the project and how the project utilizes or builds on this framework of theory.

A description of the proposed research methods, description of participants, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis the

project will employ. If applicable to the proposed methods, please include (a) information about the proposed sample/case definition and selection procedures; (b) research design, including when appropriate a description of the context of the study; (c) description of key constructs, measures and data sources; (d) procedures for data collection; and (e) procedures for data analysis.

This narrative may not exceed 1800 words and at the conclusion should include the word count in parentheses. Your reference list should follow your narrative in the same pdf file and will not count toward the 1800-word limit.

The text should be double-spaced and in 12-point font. APA style is preferred.

Note: Tables and other figures can be included in the text of your proposal, where appropriate, provided they are used sparingly. The text contained in any tables and figures will not count towards the word limit. However, it is important that you describe or explain any tables or figures in the narrative portion of your proposal, which will contribute to your word count. Do not assume that tables and other figures are self-explanatory.

Project Timeline- A project timeline should be uploaded as a PDF file and should indicate the proposed start and end dates of the project as well as key project events and milestones. The major activities listed in the project timeline should be reflected in the proposal narrative. The project timeline may not exceed 1 page and the text should be in 12-point font. The proposed project duration can be up to 5 years.

Project Team- A document describing the project team should be uploaded in pdf format and should identify the roles, responsibility and knowledge base of the PI, Co-PI(s), and any supporting researcher(s). In the case where your project includes Co-PIs and other supporting researchers, this document should articulate how the team will work together to complete the research project, highlighting what each team member will contribute to the project. Further, a short description of the relationship between the project team and the research site may be included, if appropriate. This document should not exceed 250 words and should be double-spaced in 12-point font. Note: this document will be reviewed along with the CV of the PI and any Co-PIs included on the application.

Optional Appendices A – If you have additional documents focused on scientific instrumentation relevant to the study, for example interview protocols or survey instruments, they can be uploaded in this section of the application as supplemental information.

Optional Appendices B– If you have other supporting document, such as letters of agreement or collaboration, they can be uploaded in this section of the application. Please see the guidelines in the online application for more information about these types of appendices.

A note about IRB Approval: Proof of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required at the time of proposal submission. In the event that IRB approval is needed for this project and it is chosen for funding, the

Administering Organization will be responsible for obtaining IRB review and approval in accordance with its institutional policies and applicable law.

Project Data– Within the online application, we ask you to choose the appropriate options with regard to your research project in the following categories: disciplinary perspective, methodologies, topics, geographical scope, contexts, and participants. This information is helpful in determining the appropriate reviewers for your proposal and for internal evaluations of our grant programs.

Signature from Authorized Representative of the Administering Organization –This section of the application details the steps necessary to obtain the authorized signature for your proposal through the Adobe E-sign process. You are required to provide the Signatory's name, title, and email address; this is normally a administrative or financial person that has the authority to sign the proposal on behalf of your organization. Note: The signature process must be completed by noon on the deadline date. You, as the applicant, are responsible for making sure your proposal is signed by the deadline. Please account for the time it takes your organization's authorized signer to review and sign proposal submissions. We recommend filling in the online application at least a week ahead of the deadline date. The Spencer Foundation is unable to accept late submissions.

Submit

Once you've completed all of the elements listed above, click the Submit button at the bottom of the application page and it will be routed to your Signatory for signature and final submission.

Review Process

The Small Research Grants Program in Education uses a peer review process for all eligible submissions. Each proposal will be reviewed by both external panel reviewers and internal staff. The review process for this program takes approximately 5-6 months from the deadline date.

The review panel for this program is made up of scholars in the field of education research with expertise across many disciplines and methodological areas. Panelists are asked to rate and comment on the following aspects of your proposal:

Significance of the Project: Reviewers will evaluate the centrality of education in the research, the importance of the topic to its field, and the quality of the research question(s) and/or direction of inquiry.

Connection to Research and Theory: Reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the description of how other researchers have treated the same topic and how well the proposal responds to prior work and theory.

Research Design: Reviewers will evaluate the overall quality, sophistication, and appropriateness of the research design as well as its alignment with the research question(s) and/or conceptual framing.

Budget and Timeline: Reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the budget and timeline.

Project Team: Reviewers will comment on the potential of the

investigator(s) to complete the study as described and share the results or other findings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does this program support research in settings other than K-12 and higher education institutions?

A: Yes, Spencer funds research projects that span the life course (i.e., from early childhood to adult learning) as well as those that focus on contexts outside of school.

Q: Do you have a preference for certain research methodologies?

A: No, we are open to whatever qualitative and quantitative methods make sense for answering the questions at hand. Historically, Spencer has supported research across a range of methods and academic disciplines, and we expect this to continue in this program.

Q: Do you have a preference for research teams vs. individual researchers?**A:** No, we do not have a preference. The important thing is to plan the staffing around the aims of the project.

Q: Can a graduate student serve as a Co-PI on a proposal submission?

A: No, the PI and any Co-PIs named on the proposal are expected to have earned doctorate degrees prior to proposal submission. While graduate students may be included in the budget as research assistants, this program is not meant to support student research projects.

Q: Do you accept proposals from outside the United States?

A: Yes, we accept proposals from outside the U.S. Application materials must be submitted in English and project budgets must be in U.S. dollars.

Q: Do you have a preference for regional, national, or international projects?

A: No, we do not have a preference.

Q: What is the expected duration of projects in this program?

A: We leave the duration of the project up to the PI/research team to determine, but limit it to no more than 5 years.

Q: Can my organization submit more than one proposal at a time?

A: Yes, as long as the proposals are for different projects and the research teams are different, it is fine for an organization to submit multiple applications at one time.

Q: If I (the PI or Co-PI) have a current grant through Spencer, can I apply for a new grant?

A: You may not hold more than one active research grant at a time from the Spencer Foundation. You may apply for a new grant while you have an active grant at Spencer if the active grant will end before the anticipated start date of the new project.

Q: If I am turned down, is it possible to revise my proposal and reapply in a later cycle?

A: Spencer does not have a policy against accepting uninvited revised proposals. However, many factors go into the final decision on each proposal, including our limited budget. Even if you receive feedback on your proposal and are able to address all of the reviewer concerns in the submission, we can offer no guarantees as to the likelihood of funding due to the fact that we currently fund less than 10% of the submissions we receive. Please note, resubmissions are considered among all of the other newly submitted proposals and are not given special status or consideration in the review process.

Q: I have an idea for a project and would like feedback. Is it possible to contact someone?

A: If you have reviewed our program statement and application guidelines and still have questions about whether your idea for a research project falls

within this program, feel free to email us at smallgrants@spencer.org for guidance. While we are not able to provide feedback on proposal drafts, we are happy to answer questions by email.

Q: How do I determine my start date and when should I expect payment if my proposal is selected for funding?

A: We recommend proposing a start date that is at least 7 months after the proposal deadline. The review process for this program takes approximately 5-6 months and once notified of the funding decision, it can take an additional 2 months for the official approval process, which entails reviewing the budget, processing award letters, and issuing the grant payment. NOTE: Grant payments are issued on the third week of each month. If Spencer has not received your signed award letters by your start date, your payment will not be issued.

Recent Awardees- August 2018

“Translanguaging as Resistance and Restoration: Languages and Literacies in a Bilingual Community Writing Program”

Stephanie L. Abraham and Kate E. Kedley
Rowan University Foundation, Inc.

“Academic Participation, Campus Climate and Democratic Engagement Among American Muslim College Students”

Arshad Imtiaz Ali
The George Washington University

“Gender Expression, Academic Social Ties, and LGBTQ+ College Student Outcomes”

Irenee Beattie and Nella Van Dyke
University of California, Merced

“Teaching peace in a charged landscape: The democratic potential of peace education during Colombia’s peace process”

Michelle J. Bellino and Julia Paulson
University of Michigan

“Measuring the Bias in Predictive Models of Student Success”

Christopher Brooks and Florian Schaub
University of Michigan

“Investigating potential effects of different sources and types of support on the burnout trajectories of special education teachers serving students with emotional-behavioral disorders”

Nelson Brunsting
Wake Forest University

“Power to the Parents: Local Community Participation in Delhi Schools”

Emmerich Davies
Harvard University

“Development and Implementation of a Writer’s Workshop in Elementary Bilingual Classrooms: Three Years on an Elementary Dual Language Campus”

Tracey Terece Flores and Martha S. Doolittle
The University of Texas at Austin

“Changing Attributions to Improve Persistence of Women in STEM”

Gili Freedman and Melanie C. Green
St. Mary's College of Maryland

“School and Family Approaches to Race and Inequality”

Cari Gillen-O'Neel
Macalester College

“Improving Preservice Teacher Preparation to Address Student Mental Health”

Jennifer Greif Green, Melissa Holt, and Kathleen H. Corriveau
Boston University

“Globalizing American Students: How World History Textbooks Depicted the World, 1945-2010”

Stephen James Jackson

The University of Sioux Falls

“An Intersectional Perspective on the Nature and Development of Critical Consciousness among Adolescents and Young Adults”

Sara K. Johnson and Rachel Hershberg
Tufts University

“Cross-institutional study of ethnic and racial minority students’ readiness and preparedness for postsecondary online learning and the impact on student outcomes”

Tanya Joosten
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

“Making Challenging Text Accessible: Increasing Academic Achievement for Struggling Readers”

Melanie R. Kuhn
Purdue University

“Exclusionary School Discipline and Adult Conviction: An Exploratory Study”

Douglas Lee Lauen and Sarah Crittenden Fuller
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

““That’s Not Me”: Do Nerd-Genius Stereotypes Undermine Underrepresented Youth in pSTEM?”

Campbell Leaper
University of California, Santa Cruz

“Youth Collective Political Expression on Social Media: Communication Within and Across Political Differences”

Ioana Literat and Neta Kligler Vilenchik
Teachers College, Columbia University

“The Impact of Class Absences on Student Achievement in Secondary School”

Jing Liu and Seth Gershenson
Brown University

“Exploring an Unexamined Source of Racial Disparities in School

Discipline: Truancy Policies and Diversion Programs”

Clea Ann McNeely and Kristine Piescher
University of Tennessee Knoxville

“Anti-Racist Improvisational Pedagogy in Elementary School Settings: Challenges and Possibilities”

Erin T. Miller and Samuel Jaye Tanner
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

“Assessing Elementary Students’ Intrapersonal Social and Emotional Learning: Structure, Growth, and Importance for Achievement”

Jelena Obradovic
Stanford University

“When Does Education Promote Democratic and Civic Values? Evidence from Curriculum Reforms in Mexico, 1960-2010”

Agustina S. Paglayan and Francisco Garfias
University of California, San Diego

“Supporting novice teachers of ELLs through the examination of practice (STEP)”

Megan Madigan Peercy
University of Maryland at College Park

“Sensitivity Analysis for Causal Mediation Analysis in the Presence of Unmeasured Pretreatment or Posttreatment Confounding”

Xu Qin and Fan Yang
University of Pittsburgh

“Using Online Professional Development Modules to Support Practice-Based Coaching for Document-Based History Instruction: A Design Experiment”

Abby Reisman
University of Pennsylvania

“How Do Colleges Shape Latino Millennials’ Trajectories to Adulthood?”

Daisy Verduzco Reyes
University of Connecticut

“Understanding Student Aid among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students”

Jenna Sablan

Asian Americans Advancing Justice Los Angeles

“Assessing Chinese-English Dual Language Learners’ Language Comprehension Using a Web-Based Platform”

Li Sheng

University of Delaware

“Parent-Adolescent Conversations about Education and School Engagement: A Study of Mexican-American Parental Academic Socialization”

Marie-Anne Suizzo

The University of Texas at Austin

“Philadelphia Reds: Communist Teachers in the City of Brotherly Love”

Nicholas Toloudis

The College of New Jersey

“Leading while Black (and Female): Exploring Microaggressions in the Lived Experiences of Black, Female School Leaders”

Jennie Weiner and Laura J. Burton

University of Connecticut

“Early Computational Thinking for All: Exploring the Mutually Supportive Nature of Mathematics and Computational Thinking in Fourth-Grade Classrooms”

David Weintrop and Janet Dawn Kim Walkoe

University of Maryland at College Park

“Schools for Democracy: Black Civic Organizations and the Quest for Education, 1890-1954”

Christine Woyshner

Temple University

