School Integration and Equity 2.0: Tools and Strategies Grant Competition

Resources

- [Recorded Q&A Session](#)
- [Guidance for Research Practice Partnerships](#)

FAQs

Eligibility

1. **Which individuals or organizations are eligible to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP)?**
   a. Applicants must be based in the U.S. or its territories. Submissions from teams that include both U.S. and international members are eligible, but the lead applicant must be based in the U.S.
   b. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are either institutes of higher education, public entities (inclusive of public school districts and Regional Education Laboratories), or nonprofits that are tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations. Other types of nonprofit and for-profit organizations are also eligible to apply.

2. **Can one person be listed on multiple proposals?**
   a. Yes, a single person may be named on multiple proposals.

3. **What methodologies are eligible for this competition?**
   a. All rigorous methodologies are eligible—qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods.

Scope and Selection Criteria

4. **Must projects focus on prek-12 public schools?**
   a. Yes. Projects must focus on U.S. public and public charter schools serving preK-12 students, though projects that focus on any segment of these grade levels is acceptable (e.g., only prek).

5. **Are you open to projects outside of the educational sector (e.g., housing, criminal justice, etc.)?**
   a. Yes. We value intersectional approaches, as long as your project is attempting to mitigate the harmful effects of segregation and promote integration in U.S. preK-12 public schools.

6. **Do proposals need to focus on Black or Latinx populations to be considered responsive? Is there a minimum racial density threshold a community must have to be considered a potential partner? For example, should the community be comprised of at least 5% non-white or more than one race?**
   a. No, proposals are not required to focus on Black or Latinx populations to be considered responsive and there is no minimum racial density threshold. Proposals that focus on within-school segregation by socioeconomic status, gender identity, race, disability status, and/or other characteristics are responsive. However, racial composition will be part of the holistic assessment that reviewers consider when deciding which LOIs to advance.

7. **Does scale matter? For example, would it be better to work with 5 states in a region (which might be more feasible) or work with a larger group of 15 states across the U.S. (which may reach more people)?**
   a. No. There is no preference for regional or state-based projects vs. those that work across the U.S.

8. **Will a particular section be weighed more heavily than another (e.g., concept vs. technical assistance plan or engagement plan)?**
   a. No. At the LOI stage, reviewers will evaluate letters holistically, reading for alignment with the request for proposals. If teams are invited to submit a full proposal, reviewers will score each submission based on the selection criteria and weighting described in the RFP on pages 10-12.

9. **Do I have to build a new tool or model to be competitive?**
   a. No. We welcome ideas that span research, technical assistance, and tool and/or strategy development. Your team could, for example, create a new tool, scale an existing tool, or provide implementation or evaluation support of an existing tool. Or your team may submit another idea that falls within scope for this RFP.
   b. Projects may also apply to extend the scope of existing projects or research.

10. **Is there a preference for research or technical assistance projects?**
    a. No, there is no preference between research and technical assistance projects. Projects may even be joint research and technical assistance projects. When selecting your project type on the LOI application, please check all that apply.

11. **How is technical assistance being defined for the purposes of this RFP?**
    a. Technical assistance (TA) is the process of providing targeted support to an organization (e.g., local education agency) or a community with a development need or problem. For purposes of this RFP, technical assistance may be broadly defined and can encompass a wide range of activities including building upon the insights of advanced methodologies or existing tools. Or funded projects may build and scale new tools and strategies or assist with the implementation of initiatives aimed at redressing segregation and promoting integration in America's schools.

12. **Are there specific types of outcomes of interest, for example, structural focus vs. individual focus, that are preferred for this RFP?**
    a. We welcome both types of outcomes for this RFP, though projects aiming to address structural challenges associated with integration may be more closely aligned to our priorities.

13. **Should the project plan show how outcomes will be measured?**
    a. Yes, to the extent possible the project plan should show how outcomes will be measured. We recommend you review the full proposal section of the RFP to get a glimpse at the kinds of criteria reviewers will use to score your application(s).

14. **Do you fund exploratory projects? What's the scope of what you're looking for?**
    a. While we don't preference exploratory projects, if the project otherwise meets the criteria stated in the RFP, then it's eligible for consideration.

15. **Is it possible to include a competitive process within the proposal to identify districts interested in utilizing tools and technical assistance to support integration, or would those districts need to be identified prior to submission?**
    a. Although awards under this grant competition can include time and budget for developing or deepening partner relations, those projects that have existing partnerships (or some indicator of interest from potential partners) may fare better for the purposes of this RFP. Again, partnerships are not required under this RFP.

16. **How is community defined for the purposes of this RFP?**
    a. We encourage you to define community in the context of your study. For example, community could be people living in the same geographic location or people with shared lived experience.

Project Costs and Budget

17. **Is a full budget needed at the LOI stage?**
    a. Yes. LOIs must include a brief budget breakdown, including overhead expenses. Estimated project costs should not exceed $1.5 million. When estimating your budget, please keep in mind that AIR allows indirect/overhead costs at a rate not to exceed 15%. Awards made to AIR project teams will adhere to existing AIR indirect rates.

18. **Can the estimated requested funding amount provided in the LOI change at the proposal stage?**
    a. Yes, it is understandable that proposed funding request may change between the LOI and full proposal stage, due to various reasons (e.g., based on reviewer feedback, new understandings, or developments in the project needs). A full budget will be requested from project teams invited to submit a full proposal.

19. **Can we bid subcontractors, subject matter experts, or consultants if there is an area of need where the project team does not have the expertise?**
    a. Yes.

20. **Are we permitted to bid state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) as subcontractors?**
    a. Yes, LEAs and SEAs can be bid as subcontractors. The AIR Equity Initiative emphasizes the importance of adequately compensating partners (including students and community members) for their contributions where appropriate.

21. **Would external partners be handled as subcontractors in terms of the budget, nondisclosure agreement (NDA), etc.?**
    a. Yes, external partners would be treated as subcontractors. Mutual NDAs are required.

22. **Do partner organizations need to contribute funds to the project?**
    a. Partner organizations are **not** required to cost share. The AIR Equity Initiative will fund the entire effort. A portion of the award can be used to compensate partners for their time carrying out the work. Alternatively, partners are also welcome to contribute in-kind time.

23. If a partner would like to contribute funds to the effort, can I still apply for this LOI?
   a. Most likely. If the proposed work extends an effort that already has some funding in place but funds from the AIR Equity Initiative would address a distinct set of knowledge needs, capacity building or tools, or if the partner would like to share costs, you are still welcome to submit an LOI. If funding is already or likely to be available for the specific project you are proposing, then it would not be appropriate to submit an LOI, as we aim to support work in underfunded areas.

Partners

24. Are partnerships required? Do you have to partner with a school or school district?
   a. No.

25. Could AIR be the partner for a technical assistance project?
   a. Yes.

26. Is there an avenue to match school districts who want to partner with interested researchers?
   a. Please reach out to EdEquity@air.org to discuss.

27. Do we need to get letters of support from external partners? What do I do if my external partners are unable to offer letters of support? How can they be included in the proposal without letters?
   a. If you will be working with external partners or communities, letters of support are encouraged at the LOI phase. Letters of support will be required if you are invited to submit a full proposal.
   b. For partners who are not permitted to offer a letter of commitment or support due to the nature of their position or role, we encourage you to describe your sustained working relationship together and/or ways they will be engaged in the project (e.g., as advisors).

28. Do partnerships make your application more competitive?
   a. It depends on the type of project. For example, if you propose working in the community but lack plans to engage community partners, that might hinder a reviewers' ability to determine project feasibility. If, for example, you propose working independently to develop a digital tool using existing data, that would not necessarily make your application more or less competitive.

Process

29. Is there a limit to how many responses you expect to review during the LOI phase?
   a. No, there is no limit. All LOIs submitted by the deadline will be reviewed.

30. Approximately how many projects may be funded?
   a. The AIR Equity Initiative intends to make 3 to 6 awards for a total of $3.5 million under this RFP.

31. When is the submission deadline for the Letter of Inquiry and how do I submit my LOI?
   a. The deadline to submit your LOI is 11:59PM ET on March 1, 2024. Any materials received after the deadline will not be reviewed. All LOIs must be submitted through our application portal.

32. **Who should I contact with questions about the LOI?**
    a. You may reach out to the AIR Equity Initiative team at EdEquity@air.org with your questions. The last day to submit questions to the AIR Equity Initiative for response is February 20, 2024.
    b. If you have technical issues using Submittable, please reference Submittable's Help Guide or reach out to Submittable Tech Support.

Other

33. **Is there an expectation to publish results in peer-reviewed publications?**
    a. No. However, plans for conducting engagement and dissemination related to project findings should be considered and articulated in the LOI and (in greater detail) at the full proposal stage.

34. **Who are the members of the review committee?**
    a. Letters of inquiry will be reviewed internally to ensure alignment with the AIR Equity Initiative's funding priorities. The AIR Equity Initiative team is best positioned at this phase to determine which LOIs will advance to the full proposal phase.
    b. Full proposals will be reviewed by external experts in educational equity and school integration.

35. **Is there a way to see previously funded projects?**
    a. Yes, please see the AIR Equity Initiative's 2021-22 annual report and see the list of funded projects below.

AIR Equity Initiative Funded Education Equity Projects

Addressing Inequity by Improving Evaluation Design: Benchmark Effect Sizes and Design Parameters for Planning Cluster Randomized Trials to Detect Moderator Effects
Project Lead: Qi Zhang
Funding Amount: $563,682

ASSETS: Advancing Equity in Arizona through a Linguistic, Artistic and Culturally Relevant Integration Strategy
Project Lead: M. Beatriz Arias
Funding Amount: $10,000

Bridge Programs' Promise for Ensuring Equity in Access to Opportunity
Project Lead: Neha Nanda
Funding Amount: $599,994

Bridges Collaborative Capacity-Building Grant
Project Lead: Stefan Lallinger, The Century Foundation
Funding Amount: $75,000

Bridges Collaborative Continuous Improvement Study
Project Lead: Megan Sambolt
Funding Amount: $2,999,911

Brown's Promise: Learning Labs
Project Lead: Ary Amerikaner, Brown's Promise
Funding Amount: $25,000

Campus Without Walls: An Innovative Approach to Implementing Massachusetts' Equity Plan
Project Leads: Jingtong Pan and Catherine Bitter
Funding Amount: $1,758,828

CARES: Exploring the Impact of ¡Éxito! on Increasing the Diversity of Equity-Focused Doctoral Education
Project Lead: Graciela Castillo
Funding Amount: $599,920

Contemporary Approaches to Gifted and Talented Education: From Hindering to Fostering Educational Equity
Project Lead: Scott Peters
Funding Amount: $33,000

COVID-19 and Equity in Education (CEE) DataHub
Project Leads: Cong Ye and Trent Sharp

COVID-19 and Equity in Education (CEE) Initiative: Longitudinal Deep Dive
Project Leads: Michael Garet and Susan Therriault
Funding Amount: $500,000

COVID-19 and Equity in Education Community of Researchers
Project Lead: Sushmita Subedi

Do Social and Emotional Learning, Programming, and Strategies Work for All Students? A Participatory Evidence Synthesis
Project Leads: Joshua R. Polanin and Sarah Peko-Spicer

Funding Amount: $1,049,586

Elevating Youth Voices to Understand the Gaps in Coordination Between School Services and Community-Based Organizations
Project Lead: Jameela Conway-Turner
Funding Amount: $599,077

[Finding Robust Equity Solutions: Documenting and Addressing the Advanced Course Access Inequity Issue](#)
Project Leads: Angelia Herrera and Shuqiong (Linda) Lin
Funding Amount: $549,985

[Improving Attendance Policies Through the Equitable Attendance Policy Partnership (EAPP)](#)
Project Leads: Kathy Terry and Jenny Scala
Funding Amount: $1,210,018

[Improving Pandemic Recovery Efforts in Education Agencies](#)
Project Leads: Dan Goldhaber and Elise Dizon-Ross
Funding Amount: $2,200,000

[Indigenous Student Identification Project](#)
Project Lead: Nara Nayar
Funding Amount: $2,750,000

[Integration and Immersion: The Potential of Two-Way Dual Language Immersion Programs to Foster Integration](#)
Project Lead: Jennifer Ayscue, North Carolina State University
Funding Amount: $35,436

[Leveraging Title II of ESSA and Redressing the Post-Brown Decimation of the Black Educator Workforce in the South to Support School Integration and Educator Diversity](#)
Project Lead: Gina Chirichigno, National Coalition on School Diversity
Funding Amount: $74,500

[National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER)](#)
Project Lead: Dan Goldhaber
Funding Amount: $2,200,000

[School Integration Approach(es) Beyond the White Gaze: Centering Black, Latin*, APIDA, and Indigenous Youth](#)
Project Lead: Nathaniel D. Stewart
Funding Amount: $44,000

[The Influence of COVID-19 on Racial Inequities in Academic Outcomes and Enrollment in California](#)
Project Lead: Tiffany Jones, Colorado State University
Funding Amount: $21,995

Using Pedagogical Alignment to Enhance Educators' Adoption of Culturally Responsive Practices
Project Lead: Laura Brady
Funding Amount: $417,822