

Call and Guidelines for Proposals
Education Research Service Projects (ERSP)
American Educational Research Association
Submission Deadline: December 15, 2015

***Submissions must be sent to edresearch@aera.net as an e-mail attachment
no later than 11:59pm Eastern Time on Tuesday, December 15, 2015.***

The American Educational Research Association invites proposals for the Education Research Service Projects (ERSP) program. This initiative aims to encourage education researchers to offer their professional expertise on a pro bono basis to educational organizations, institutions, or identifiable community groups in areas where research can matter. The ERSP program welcomes applications from education researchers who seek to provide research skills, knowledge, methods, and related services to educational entities that have specifically identified and expressed a need for such assistance.

The ambition of the ERSP program is to connect education research with educational needs prevalent in local communities. It is built on the premise that education research experts have a professional responsibility to serve and that AERA, as a research association, has a responsibility to encourage research scientists and scholars to take seriously this commitment. In contrast to the intermittent disasters or crises that might call attention nationally or internationally to a role for education research expertise, Education Research Service Projects aim to engender a culture of service that responds to deep and significant needs whether or not they receive high-profile public attention.

ERSP awards may be used only to defray the direct costs associated with research service, allowing education researchers to contribute their time and expertise and thereby to serve the public good. ERSP awards are not intended to include advocacy activity on behalf of the research entity.

Scope of Projects

ERSP projects may vary in the form, scope, and nature of the research expertise being provided. The type of activity undertaken must reflect the needs of the educational entity being served and the goals articulated by that group. ERSP initiatives could include conducting research or needs assessments about an issue affecting priorities within an educational organization or setting; establishing, analyzing, or examining an entity's recordkeeping or database to enhance service delivery; designing, developing, or implementing an evaluation study of a newly instituted or planned set of organizational changes; undertaking surveys or focus groups to help with strategic planning; or providing research literature syntheses or briefings on a topic centrally relevant to the educational activities of the educational body.

ERSP projects are directed to providing research expertise to nonprofit organizations, institutions, or agencies in a community or communities with a mission that includes the education of individuals or groups at any level of education and in formal or informal settings or contexts of learning. Projects may be situated in one locale or in more than one setting,

including outside the United States, as long as the issue can be addressed through research or technical research expertise and can feasibly be done within the parameters of this initiative.

ERSP projects are intended to be driven by the needs and goals of the educational entity and the likelihood that those needs could be met through the research services of a research expert. General enrichment activities that might benefit those in educational organizations or entities, such as providing research reading lists, giving lectures related to research, or offering workshops, are outside the scope of this initiative. Issues that are local and yet sufficiently salient to be of broader significance will be given priority so that the lessons learned or products produced in one setting may be applied in other, similar circumstances.

Grants

Grants will range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to cover direct costs associated with the project. AERA does not provide overhead support or indirect costs to institutions or other entities assisting in administering the award. Education researchers are expected to volunteer their time and expertise for this research service activity. Funds can be used to defray research assistant expenses as may be necessary for ERSP projects. Awards will be administered through the researcher's institution. Projects will typically be one year in duration from initiation of the activity through completion and reporting, even if much of the research or technical assistance happens during a more compressed period.

Education researcher grantees are encouraged to attend the AERA Annual Meeting to present their completed projects as part of a featured structured poster session. Grantees may also be asked to participate in fora or briefings to provide testimony on issues relevant to their ERSP projects and expertise. Information on funded projects will appear on the AERA website as part of the Association's public communications featuring the ERSP initiative. The website will serve as the source and repository of information about ERSP projects, both to disseminate information about the work and to encourage others to pursue such projects in their own pro bono service.

Application Process

The Selection Committee for ERSP Projects consists of six members of AERA Council and the cognizant AERA Program Director. Applicants typically will be notified four months after the submission, with projects to begin any time after May 1.

Eligibility

Proposals are encouraged from education researchers in academic settings, research institutions, private and nonprofit organizations, and government. Those seeking support for ERSP projects must be AERA members at the time of submission and throughout the project to remain active grantees. Proposals may be submitted by a collaborative team as long as all collaborating applicants are members of AERA.

The applicant(s) must be affiliated with an academic institution, research institution, or other organization that will be responsible for administering the award. Joint proposals from cooperating institutions are acceptable.

Education researchers submitting proposals must have a track record of expertise in the areas where they intend to provide research support or expert services. Since ERSPs are pro bono service activities, funding may not be used for salary or for travel beyond that related to project expenditures.

If the research involves human research participants, applicants must provide documentation of Institutional Review Board approval prior to proceeding with the phases of the project where such review and approval are required. If the research is exempt, the documentation of exemption should be provided prior to finalizing an award.

Review Criteria for ERSP Proposals

The following criteria will be used in reviewing proposals:

- The ERSP project focuses on a significant educational issue faced by an educational organization or entity where education research activity or expertise can make a material difference to the entity.
- The ERSP project provides a realistic, feasible research plan and demonstrates the research expertise and competence essential to making a contribution to the educational organization or entity.
- The ERSP project shows a deep understanding of the educational issues and how the research guidance or expertise used in the proposed context could be of potential relevance and applicability to other educational entities in other settings.
- The ERSP project makes clear its service ambitions; that is, that it is motivated by the needs of the educational organization and entity and that the project reflects a partnership based on shared expectations.
- The ERSP project sets forth anticipated outcomes and products, as well as a reporting plan, that engender confidence that valuable work will be accomplished and utilized.

Application Process

Applications should be submitted to edresearch@aera.net and include the following:

- ERSP Cover Page (full name, institution, project title, complete address, preferred phone number, work phone number, e-mail address, voluntary background information).
- A 200–300 word abstract of the ERSP project.
- A proposal narrative not to exceed 3 single-spaced pages (excluding the references and any essential appendices), which includes but is not limited to:

- Need: A description of the intended project, setting forth the educational need or issue, the goal(s) of the research project, and how the project will be carried out to address that need.
 - Entity: A description of the educational organization, institution, community group, or agency to which the research service or expertise will be provided.
 - Outcome: A description of the expected contributions, including the impact, use, or sustainability of the research service being provided. If specific products will result, describe how they will be used and disseminated. If the project will lead to or leverage additional support to the entity to continue the research activity, please note that as well.
 - Schedule: A project time schedule that specifically addresses how and at what stages the educational organization or entity will use the research to carry out its goals.
- Budget request, specifying the direct costs to be incurred. Allowable categories include all direct research expenses, including travel reimbursement to organizational site(s); reimbursement of travel for focus group participants; research assistants; costs for software for use at the site of the educational entity; data collection (videotapes, web-survey preparation), preparation, and coding; and so forth. Technology costs should only be included if the technology is a critical component of the proposed project. Funds are not intended to be used by researchers to attend the AERA Annual Meeting.
 - A letter from the educational organization or entity, including a description of the organization's goals, funding, and its reasons for seeking research expertise and assistance. The letter should specifically address (a) the need being faced or handled by the educational entity and (b) how the entity believes that the research activity or expertise can be of help or benefit.
 - A 1-page vita that covers expertise, including publications, relevant to the ERSP project.

Reporting Requirements

A final report of the ERSP project, including any products and deliverables provided to the educational organization or entity and any background papers or presentations, must be submitted to the ERSP Program, AERA Central Office, at edresearch@aera.net within three months after the project completion date. The report should explicitly address tangible outcomes and dissemination activities. The report should also be accompanied by a brief statement from the educational entity as to how the education research project may have assisted, altered, or added to addressing its needs.

The report and related materials will be made available for AERA dissemination on the AERA website, published as a report, located in the AERA online paper repository, or distributed by other means that may be deemed appropriate by the Association. Also, as noted above, the education researcher is encouraged to present the ERSP project at a featured structured poster session at the AERA Annual Meeting and to pursue other activities consonant with implementing a dissemination plan aligned with the project and the goals and interests of the educational entity.