

2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

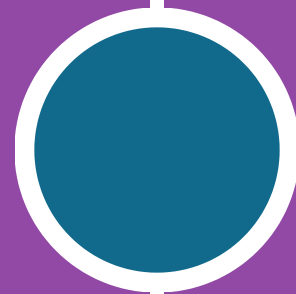
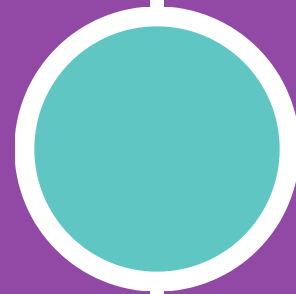
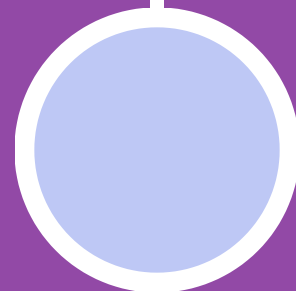
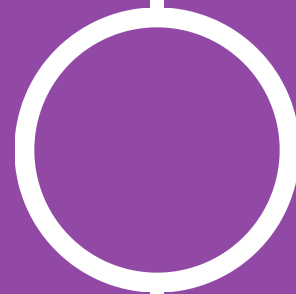
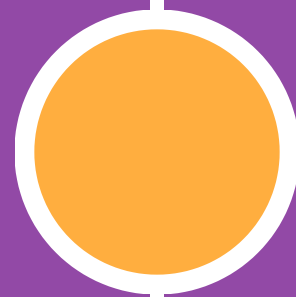


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EdFund envisions evidence-based state funding policies that align with district and student needs. To achieve this vision, we need new research to support the decision-making of policymakers and advocates who advise how \$800 billion is raised and spent for public schools annually.

To cultivate a stronger research base, EdFund will support new projects that answer the most pressing questions about how we fund our schools. The policymakers and advocates we consulted eschew the theoretical debates entertained in academic discourse and instead pose practical questions about school finance policy. These questions pertain to how and what to fund to support public education and require new research that prioritizes context and utility in addition to novelty and rigor.

In 2024, we will award grants of \$10,000-\$100,000, with a goal of disbursing \$700,000 into the field. We are pleased to support new work that we anticipate will advance what the field knows, provide new data or tools, and connect policy to outcomes—all in service of our ultimate objective: to improve the way we fund our public schools.



Research Topics and Scope

EdFund has established a research agenda to guide the support of new, policy-relevant studies. To construct this agenda, we engaged with policymakers and advocates to identify the key unanswered questions in the school finance policy space. The results of these discussions have been organized into broader research areas and sample questions are included to offer guidance on the types of research projects we plan to support. These questions are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the projects that could be pursued within each area; we welcome projects guided by alternate questions within these topics.

Successful applicants will make a case for how their proposed project will advance our knowledge in one or more of the policy issues outlined in the research agenda. The type of projects that are most actionable will vary based on what we do and do not know currently. For some topics, we lack sufficient documentation of current practice, and the field would benefit from a survey of the landscape or the construction of a new dataset that researchers can utilize. For other topics, there exists enough foundational knowledge to pursue questions around the outcomes of policies and programs for students, districts, or states.

Proposed projects should be designed to be completed within a maximum of twenty-four months. We welcome projects that are smaller in scope, including short-term projects completed over a few months, student-led studies, and data collection efforts.

Benefits and Expectations

Awardees will receive financial support for their school finance research project as well as access to additional resources to support their work. Benefits for grant winners include:

- \$10,000-\$100,000 of funding, based on project scope
- Data and policy insights from expert partners
- Assistance with promoting and platforming findings to advocates, policymakers, and journalists
- Membership in a community of practice with twice yearly meetings and other optional events to share and receive policy insights, troubleshoot data or methods issues, and network with other researchers studying school finance
- Curated opportunities to discuss your work and interact with high impact policymakers and journalists
- Assistance in finding additional/ongoing funding opportunities



For those awarded grant funding, a few conditions have been established to ensure projects are aligned with EdFund’s priorities. Grant recipients are expected to commit to the following:

- Participate in quarterly meetings with EdFund to discuss progress toward project objectives
- Produce one or more policy brief(s) to be made public and shared with the policy community
- Cap indirect costs at no more than 10% of proposed budget

Timeline

Please note the following timeline, to which strict adherence is expected.

- Letters of Interest (LOIs) Due: April 25, 2024
- Letters of Interest Results: May 21, 2024
- Full Proposals Due (Upon Invitation): June 12, 2024
- Awards Announced: July 1, 2024

Review Criteria and Process


When reviewing submissions for funding, we will be evaluating proposed research studies against three primary goals for funded projects: advancing school finance policy, advancing research, and expanding and diversifying the field.

The table on the following page lists the features of studies’ objective, design, and project team that we will use as the criteria to determine alignment with these three objectives. It is not necessary for each proposed study to achieve each of the items listed in the table, nor even to make progress towards all three of the larger goals. We welcome proposals for projects that make a contribution to only one or two of these objectives and will consider them favorably if we feel the contribution is sufficiently impactful.



Advance Policy	Advance Research	Expand the Field
Alignment with the 2024-2026 EdFund Research Agenda	Collection of baseline data for a topic that is currently unstudied in the field	Project team inclusion of students, early-career scholars, and/or post-doctoral candidates
Applicability to multiple states based on shared policy contexts (see FundED for reference on funding policies)	Focusing study approaches on the impact of specific school finance policies	Cross-institution and/or cross-disciplinary collaborations
Study designs tailored to meet specific policy needs	Innovative approaches/perspectives	Inclusion of diverse perspectives
Partnerships with policy organizations or advocates	Including analysis of the impact of school funding policies on student, school or community conditions	Unique partnerships

Letters of interest will first be reviewed by EdFund staff, with select LOIs then shared with the EdFund Advisory Board for further evaluation. EdFund staff will collate feedback from our Advisory Board members and identify the LOIs we want to receive greater detail about through the full proposal process. Full proposals will be reviewed by EdFund staff with input from the Advisory Board requested on an as-needed basis. Final funding decisions will be made by EdFund’s executive director and the advisory board chairs.

LOI Specifications 

As the first step in the request for proposal process, we invite applicants to submit a Letter of Interest giving an overview of a proposed study or data collection effort. The LOI should be no more than three pages in length, single-spaced, 12pt font. In order to consider the project for funding, we request LOIs to address the following items:

- Study objective and research questions
- Study design, including data and methods
- Alignment with review criteria
 - How does this study fit into EdFund’s research agenda?
 - How will this study advance policy, advance the research field, and/or expand the research field?



- Brief study timeline
 - Anticipated start date and end dates (twenty-four months maximum)
 - Timing of project deliverables
- Proposed deliverables
 - Must include at least one policy brief, other policy-relevant deliverables are highly encouraged
- High-level budget
 - Total amount of funding requested (maximum \$100,000)
 - What are the primary cost drivers for the proposed project?
 - List of any sub-contractors that will participate in the project work
- Project team bios (does not count against three-page limit)
 - Briefly list each team members' role and responsibilities
 - Each bio should be 250 words maximum

Timeline

In order to be considered, Letters of Interest must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST, April 25, 2024. Submissions should be made via email to rfp@ed-fund.org using the subject line "EdFund LOI submission".

Full Proposal Invitations

Applicants who are selected for further consideration will be invited to submit a full, six-page proposal expanding on the information outlined in their LOI. In these proposals, we will ask for greater detail about the proposed study, including a more developed description of the proposed methods, data, and limitations, as well as a more detailed budget. We expect to fund 50-75% of the projects selected to submit a full proposal.

Greater detail about this process will be shared with applicants invited to submit a full proposal.

Contact

For questions about the RFP process, please contact rfp@ed-fund.org.



Acknowledgements

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Funding will be provided as a subgrant or contract (based on the nature of the project) through EdFund, a 501c(3) organization.

We are grateful for the guidance and support for our work that we receive from our Advisory Board members: Julien Lafortune (co-chair), Josh McGee (co-chair), E. Jason Baron, Barbara Biasi, Saba Bireda, Christopher Candelaria, Jennifer O'Neal Schiess, Katie Roy, and Ericka Weathers. Bios for each are available at ed-fund.org.