



RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE



Application Deadlines:

Applications Open

September 30, 2025

Pre-Proposal Deadline

November 14, 2025, 12:00 PM Noon (Central time/North America)

Full Proposal (By Invitation) Deadline

March 31, 2026, 12:00 PM Noon (Central time/North America)

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The Research-Practice Partnership (RPP) Grants Program is intended to support education research projects that engage in collaborative and participatory partnerships with project budgets up to \$400,000 and durations of up to three years. We accept preproposals once a year in this program.

We view partnerships as an important approach to knowledge generation and the improvement of education, broadly construed. Over the long term, we anticipate that research conducted by RPPs will result in new insights into the processes, practices, and policies that improve education for learners, educators, families, communities, and institutions where learning and teaching happen (e.g., schools, universities, community centers, parks, museums, other workplaces).

Details about the program and application process can be found below.

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We view partnerships as an important approach to knowledge generation and the improvement of education, broadly construed. Rigorous partnership work is intentionally organized to engage diverse forms of expertise and perspectives, across practitioners, scholars, policymakers, and organizations, as well as disciplines and methods, in knowledge generation around pressing problems of practice and/or policy. Further, RPPs can facilitate the long-term accumulation of knowledge in new ways as researchers and practitioners work together to ask practitioner- and policy-relevant questions on key topics in specific settings over time. Many key problems of practice and policy are historically saturated and require multiple perspectives and long-term engagement if sustainable and systemic change is to occur. Over the long term, we anticipate that research conducted by RPPs will result in new insights into the processes, practices, routines, and policies that improve education for learners, educators, families, communities, and institutions where learning and teaching happen (e.g., schools, universities, community centers, parks, museums, other workplaces).

This grant program is open to existing partnerships between researchers and a broad array of practitioners and policymakers. For example, practice and/or policy partners might work in school districts, county offices of education, state educational organizations, universities, community-based organizations, and other social sectors that significantly impact learners' lives. As such, we define practitioners broadly; they might be policymakers, out-of-school-time providers and other informal educators, K-12 teachers and leaders, or families and other community members. We are open to applications from design-based research teams, networked improvement communities, place-based research alliances, and a wealth of other partnership arrangements.

We expect the partners in the RPPs we fund to have engaged in fruitful long-term collaborations. How this history is evidenced can vary. For example, teams might have a record of accomplishment as demonstrated by in-process or completed research studies, solutions-in-progress, established trusting relationships, or data-sharing agreements, amongst other possibilities. *This grant program is specifically intended to build the capacity of partnerships to make educational change.* Effective governance is a key aspect of successful partnerships, and as such, all proposals should specify their governance structures and how the work is jointly developed, as well as how power is shared, across all partners. As noted, while this grant program is open to all partnership configurations across a range of learning contexts, in addition to PreK-12 school systems, we especially encourage applications from partnerships that include scholars and institutions of higher education, rural geographic locations, and in locations outside of the United States, as well as partnerships that deeply engage community-based organizations and families.

Importantly, we expect that partnerships will foreground issues connected to inequality in education and articulate how their project aims to disrupt the reproduction and deepening of inequities.

Activities that May be Funded

Research is fundamental to every research-practice partnership, and we expect research activities to be the central element of every proposal. In addition to detailing a plan for research, applicants should also prioritize plans for communicating and disseminating key findings and other important partnership activities that have the potential to foster positive educational changes. The following categories of activities are meant to be illustrative, but not exclusive, of activities in addition to the research that could be funded under this program. We expect proposed activities will be highly related to partnership type and context but will also, at their core, have the potential to make a contribution to improved educational practice and/or policy beyond the specific context in which scholars and practitioners are working.

Research Activities

Each proposal should describe new research that would be launched or existing research activities that would be expanded with the grant. Examples might include randomized trials of new curricula, participatory studies with learner and family coresearchers; design-based research focused on teacher classroom practice; policy advocacy or implementation; needs mapping with community partners; or deep descriptive work focused on a range of learner outcomes. We encourage a wide range of research methods and approaches.

Research Infrastructure

Funds may be used for building and sustaining infrastructure needs for the research activities of the partnership. These infrastructure needs may apply to the full range of methodological approaches. Examples may include the development of surveys, assessment tools, and other instruments; the development of co-designed protocols; and the upkeep of data archives and matching systems. Additionally, administrative activities concerning data may be supported by this grant. These may include developing IRB and review protocols, creating standard data definitions, co-designing consent forms, and developing data security and privacy protocols.

Outreach, Communications, and Relationship Building

Activities that strengthen the working relationship between partners and other stakeholders are also a possible component of the projects. Successful research-practice partnerships devote a great deal of time and attention to building and maintaining trust across stakeholder groups and within their partnership. Potential activities may include convening researchers, educators, learners, families, and other participants to co-design a research agenda; hiring a communication specialist and/or developing a strategy for communicating research findings to important constituents; supporting staff in the partner organizations to manage partnership relations; and preparing research reports and other publications to present the work of the partnership to the public.

Capacity Development

Many research-practice partnerships seek to assist the practice partner in developing capacity to use research evidence and data in their daily decision-making. Funds could be used to learn how to better engage others in research, conduct better practice or policy-driven research, or to be better equipped to communicate complex research findings to practitioners, families, communities, or policy makers that were not primary partners.

We also see the importance of developing the next generation of scholars and practitioners who are prepared to collaborate in partnerships to improve practice, policy, and research. We encourage proposals that include funds dedicated to the development of skills and expertise in conducting research in partnership for graduate students and early-career professionals and researchers. While we expect that most proposals will include funds to support graduate students as part of the partnership, proposals could include plans for training and education beyond that. Examples might include the development of a research methods course focused on research partnerships, the production of online training modules, the development of workshops to increase the capacity of researchers and other partners to engage in public scholarship, or the integration of research-practice partnerships in teacher or principal preparation courses.

Eligibility and Restrictions



Deadlines



How to Apply



Frequently Asked Questions



Online Portal



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