The Analytics for Equity Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

The _Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018_ aims to improve federal agencies' abilities to generate and use evidence for decision-making and enhanced mission success. To this end, the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act requires agencies to post _Learning Agendas_, which capture key research questions that agencies hope to answer in service of their priorities, and Annual Evaluation Plans, which describe an agency's annual plans for research and program evaluation. The 2021 _Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government_ (E.O. 13985) outlines steps to be taken by the Federal Government to "pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all" and promote the equitable delivery of government benefit to all Americans.

The Analytics for Equity Initiative builds on the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act and E.O.13985 by creating a new way to support social, economic, and behavioral sciences research that leverages federal data assets (ensuring privacy is protected and data are secure) and scientific advances in researching equity-related topics for greater public benefit. Led by the National Science Foundation and in partnership with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and other federal agencies, the Initiative links interested researchers directly with federal agencies seeking to answer research questions captured in their Learning Agendas in five equity- related research themes. The goal of this effort is to advance knowledge that may benefit agencies across Federal Government and promote efforts to advance equity (in addition to effectiveness and efficiency) in government investments.

SUMMARY

The Initiative seeks to answer research questions in thematic areas aligned with the Learning Agendas of agency partners. These thematic areas may include the following:

1 Equity of access to STEM Research and Education Opportunities (Agency Partner: NSF)

2 Environmental Stressors and Equity (Agency Partner: EPA)

3 Equity in service delivery and supports including childcare, food security, or economic support (Agency Partner: HHS ASPE)

4 Health Equity in the Wake of Climate Change (Agency Partner: HHS CDC)

5 Equity considerations for Workplace Safety and Workers (Agency Partner: DOL)

The *Initiative* will be solicitated and awarded in two phases.

- In Phase 1, funded researchers are expected to familiarize themselves with agency needs, to find and engage relevant data assets, to conduct initial exploratory analyses, and to develop larger-scale research agendas. Proposed budgets for Phase 1 projects may not exceed $75,000 and NSF plans to invest up to $1.0 million in Phase 1 contracts in FY 2022.

- In Phase 2, funded researchers conduct larger scale research and analyses and develop research papers, evidence-based reports, memos, and policy papers discussing the potential implications of research findings on federal programs. Participation in Phase 1 is not required for participation in Phase 2, nor does it guarantee Phase 2 funding.

PHASE 1:

Initial Research Planning Activities

Phase 1 contracts create opportunities for a diverse range of interested researchers to familiarize themselves with agency needs, to find and engage relevant data assets, to conduct initial exploratory analyses, and to develop larger-scale research agendas suitable for Phase 2. At the end of Phase 1, research teams will deliver a complete research plan for activities that could be completed under a Phase 2 contract. Proposed budgets for Phase 1 projects may not exceed $75,000.

PHASE 2:

High Impact Research

Phase 2 awards provide teams with resources to conduct larger scale research and analyses and develop research papers, evidence-based reports, memos, and policy position papers discussing the potential implications of research findings on federal programs. Phase 2 awards also will involve extensive agency/researcher collaboration. These may include discussion forums for researchers and agency policy experts for each thematic area, as well as regular conference calls between researchers and agency Learning Agenda experts to ensure effective collaboration and consensus on the direction of the research.

NSF is committed to research that derives expertise from and provides broad benefits to everyone. The Initiative places a very strong emphasis on broadening participation by encouraging proposals from minority-serving institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institutions, and Native-American-serving nontribal Institutions, see also U.S. Department of Education), and other organizations.

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For more information, please contact NSF at *eac@nsf.gov* with subject line Analytics for Equity Initiative.