Call for Proposals

Division E (Counseling and Human Development) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) invites proposals from advanced doctoral students and early career scholars for a special call of its Seed Grant Program. The purpose of this special call is to address the impact of the dual pandemics on education and learning through supporting advanced doctoral students and early career scholars who engage in research supporting individuals across the lifespan in areas including education, psychological and social-emotional adjustment, and social equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents significant challenges and opportunities to doctoral students and early career scholars, and those whom they serve. The pandemic has exacerbated racial and economic inequities in the US and globally. In the face of these challenges, communities of color have continued to work for and demand social justice. School closures have resulted in an unprecedented shift to digital learning. Although this shift provides new possibilities, it intensifies inequities related to Internet access and contributes to learning loss for students living in poverty and students with special needs. The pandemic is and will have significant impacts on individuals’ socio-emotional and physical well-being and academic learning. These impacts have important implications for educators, counselors, and communities.

In response, Division E is redirecting funds budgeted for the cancelled 2020 AERA Annual Meeting to seed research projects that will support the research of advanced doctoral students and early career scholars that will generate insight into how best to support the families, schools, and/or communities whom they serve. Seed grant projects may vary in focus and methodologies. They can range from pilot studies to research-based activities that address an area of need identified by an educational or community organization/entity with whom the researcher is working. We encourage projects in which researchers partner with an educational or community organization. Partnering organizations/entities may include P-12 schools, higher education institutions, community organizations, and family or social service agencies that have student, learning, mental health, or social equity directed initiatives.

Applications should be submitted to kiefer@usf.edu. The submission deadline is December 10, 2020, 11:59 pm EST.

Monetary Award

Grants will range from $1,250 for research conducted by advanced doctoral students to $4,000 for research conducted by early career scholars to cover direct costs associated with the project. Funds are awarded in one lump sum, to the recipient’s institution; the institution must agree to be responsible for administering the funds and accounting to the IRS. These funds cannot be used to pay indirect costs; funds are only provided for direct costs associated with conducting the research. Funds may be used to pay for research assistant time, technology tools directly related to the research activities, and participant incentives. Funds may not be used for faculty salary, AERA
membership, or AERA Annual Meeting registration. Projects are for a maximum of one year from start date through completion of the project, with a final report due two months after the end date.

Grantees are encouraged to attend the 2021 AERA Annual Meeting. They will be given the opportunity to present their work at the Division E business meeting. Information on funded projects will appear on the Division E website and social media forums and announced in AERA Highlights.

Eligibility

Researchers seeking support must be Division E members at the time of proposal submission and throughout the project. Proposals may be submitted by education researchers in academic settings, research institutions, private and nonprofit organizations, K-12 schools, and government agencies. The applicants must be affiliated with an academic institution, research institution, or other organization that will be responsible for administering the award.

Researchers should be advanced doctoral students (passed comprehensive exam or similar requirement) or early career scholars (one to seven years beyond their doctoral degree). We recognize that the pandemic has intensified the challenges doctoral students and early career scholars face establishing and sustaining their research and careers amid extreme economic and social upheaval.

If the research involves human research participation, applicants must provide documentation of IRB approval prior to proceeding with data collection. If the research is exempt, researchers should provide documentation of the exemption.

Review Criteria for Proposals

The following criteria will be used in reviewing proposals:

- The research activities to be undertaken have the potential to make important contribution to the knowledge base for supporting the families, schools, and/or communities that they serve and/or a material difference as related to the issue investigated;
- The project provides a realistic, feasible research plan and demonstrates required research competence;
- The project provides valuable anticipated findings and expected contributions to current knowledge, future research projects and, as relevant, to the partnering organization.

Application Process

The Selection Committee includes members of the Division E Executive Council, Graduate Student Representatives, and Awards Committee to ensure a range of research interests and expertise. Applicants will be notified January 2021. Applications should be submitted to kiefer@usf.edu with the subject line of the email to state “AERA Division E Proposal.” Applications should include the following:

- A title page with name, address, institution, phone, email, and title of research proposal.
- A 200 word abstract of the research proposal.
- A proposal of no more than three single-spaced pages describing the proposed research and use of the award. The proposal should include the following sections: Statement of the Problem (include the theoretical framework guiding the project), Research Question(s),
Methods and Design, Planned Analyses, and Anticipated Findings and Significance. The title page, abstract, references, and tables (up to 2) and/or figures (up to 2) are not counted toward the three-page limit.

- A 1-page budget outlining expenditures and justification for why the funds are needed.
- A 1-page timeline including the start and end dates of the project.
- A 1–page vita for each author listed, including date of conferral of doctoral degree.
- A letter of support from your institution: For doctoral students, the letter should come from your advisor or dissertation chair. For early career scholars, the letter should come from your department chair (or if in a non-academic position, a letter from your supervisor). Indicate the institution’s capacity to administer the funds (if awarded) and that the grant will not pay any indirect costs. Send letter to kiefer@usf.edu by December 10, 2020.
- If partnering with educational or community organization, a letter from that organization that addresses the need being faced by the organization, and how the organization believes the research activity will help address that need.

Criteria and Obligations
Applications will be evaluated based on the scientific merits of the proposed work inclusive of – the theoretical grounding of the work, how well the project aligns with the review criteria, the soundness of the methods, and implications of the potential findings for research, policy and/or practice. If the above criteria are well met, preference in funding will be given to projects that could not be completed without this support. Awardees will be expected submit a brief one-page progress report midway through their proposed project.

Awardees will submit a final report at the conclusion of their project to Sarah Kiefer, Division E Vice President (kiefer@usf.edu). The report must discuss the research project in terms of progress and what was accomplished and activities with respect to partnerships, if any. Awardees are encouraged to present the project at the 2021 AERA Division E Business Meeting. The Division must be acknowledged in any presentations or publications that result from this funding.