



Association for
Institutional Research

Enhancing knowledge • Expanding networks
Professional Development, Informational Resources & Networking

*Improving Institutional Research in
Postsecondary Educational Institutions*

Grants Program

*Research Grants
Dissertation Fellowships*

*For research grant projects on postsecondary education
supported by the National Center for Education Statistics,
the National Science Foundation and National
Postsecondary Education Cooperative*

*2006 Proposal Guide
Proposal Deadline: January 15, 2006*

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Overview of the AIR Grant Program

Improving Institutional Research in Postsecondary Educational Institutions

In recent years, change in postsecondary education has been driven by a concern for demonstrating the utility of the enterprise and an increasing demand for administering funds for postsecondary education in the best possible way. These administrative demands, along with the accelerated growth in the sophistication and power of information technology, have created a climate where detailed quantitative information is an essential ingredient of decision making.

While many sectors of postsecondary education collect and disseminate such information, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) have at the core of their missions a charge to collect and disseminate this information on a national basis. To fulfill their charge, these agencies collect and maintain databases on a wide variety of postsecondary education sectors and topics: e.g., faculty, doctoral production, science education funding, research expenditures, graduate success in the employment market, etc.

The NCES and the NSF have developed rich data resources. However, the uses of these resources have, for a variety of reasons, lagged behind national-level data collection and organization. Institutions have lacked resources to develop the professional institutional capacity to access and to use the information. Lacking the use of detailed, quantitative national information, state and institutional-level postsecondary leaders have not been able to readily place their planning problems and issues in a national data context.

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR), with support from NCES, NSF, and the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) sponsors a grant program titled: *Improving Institutional Research in Postsecondary Educational Institutions*. The goals of the program are to provide professional development opportunities to doctoral students, institutional researchers, educators and administrators, and to foster the use of the federal databases for institutional research in postsecondary education.

- The program has two major research support components:
 - Dissertation fellowships for doctoral students;
 - Research grants for practitioners and faculty.
- In addition, the program provides approximately fifty all-expense fellowships for AIR's annual Summer Data Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., to study the NCES and NSF databases. Guidelines for this program are found on the AIR Web page at <http://www.airweb.org/datapolicy.html>.

Dissemination of research findings is an integral part of this program, and all participants are expected to present and publish their findings as widely as possible.

There are four goals for the AIR Grant Program:

- To foster the use of federal databases by institutional researchers for postsecondary education decision making;
- To foster the use of the federal databases as a source of information on institutional research in postsecondary education;
- To provide professional development opportunities for institutional researchers; and
- To encourage the application of knowledge across academic disciplines and society at large.

A second source of support from NCES and NSF is the provision of access to the databases through the National Data Resource Center or a similar mechanism.

Grant support is available for one year to assist in the acquisition, analysis and reporting of data from the NCES and NSF data sets. To view a list of the postsecondary education data sets, please refer to **Appendix E**. Guidelines for all components of the Grant Program are available on the AIR Web site.

The Research Grant Program

The research grant program provides grants to Principal Investigators (PIs) to conduct research on postsecondary education using the NCES and NSF national databases or conduct studies that increase the understanding and knowledge of a specific issue area identified by the NPEC Executive Committee as critically important to the postsecondary education community. This year the NPEC focus is *Improving Information for Student Decisions about Postsecondary Education*. Funded projects promise a significant contribution to the national knowledge of the nature and operation of postsecondary education and contribute to the professional development of personnel working in postsecondary education.

Research grant projects must use one or more of the national postsecondary education databases of NCES or NSF AND/OR must focus on the area of student decisions, broadly defined, at all levels of postsecondary education.

Proposals addressing NPEC's focus on issues of student decisions are NOT required to use one of the NCES or NSF databases. These proposals may cover variety of research activities that focus on student decisions, including:

- Data synthesis or meta analysis of research studies that address a specific question regarding student decisions;
- New analyses of data using national, regional, state, or institutional databases;
- Assessments of research and practices that have been initiated in the area of student decisions;
- Models of student decisions that can be supported by research and/or that detail new data collection needs;
- Case studies of activities that focus on student decisions;
- Collections of best practices promoting student decisions; and
- Other creative strategies.

Funds of up to \$30,000 annually are available. Grants are usually made for one year; rarely is a second year of funding awarded. It is expected that work will be conducted at the PI's home institution and that grant funds would cover budget items such as the costs of supplying data, dissemination of project results, travel, and perhaps some salary replacement. As used herein, the term "Principal Investigator" refers to the person submitting a proposal.

Dissemination of the project results is done by the grantee through AIR publications and meetings, NCES and NSF publications, and other scholarly and policy-oriented media. Research grantees are expected to have a completed paper for presentation or publication as part of their final report, are encouraged to disseminate their work as widely as possible, and are required to present project findings at the AIR Annual Forum.

Research Grant Program Description

Proposal Criteria

The research grant proposal will be judged upon, and should present, the objectives, innovative aspects, and significance of the proposed work; suitability of the methods to be employed; qualifications of the PI and the grantee institution; and the effect of the activity on the infrastructure of postsecondary education. A budget providing a detailed description of proposed expenditures is required.

The grant program's preference is to fund promising new investigators researching new topics. The program is not designed to support studies over time. *Unless the proposal is addressing the NPEC program focus topic, funding may not be used for primary data collection. The intent of the broader grant program is to support analyses using the national databases of NCES and NSF.*

Research Proposal Criteria

	<p>The program prefers to fund studies that test models or hypotheses. Exploratory studies may also be selected for funding, but these projects should clearly demonstrate the need for an exploratory study and the outcome of such research for theory and model development.</p> <p>The merits of the proposed project should be clear, and the proposal should be prepared in the manner of a paper submitted for publication. Authors should provide sufficient information for reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the Proposal Criteria. Use of the Proposal Checklist in Appendix B to ensure that a proposal complies with the Grant Proposal Guidelines for organization and formatting.</p> <p>Dissertation Awards</p> <p>The Charles I. Brown and Cameron Fincher Fellowship Awards recognize outstanding dissertation proposals. Charles I. Brown was one of the first members of AIR and Cameron Fincher was a founder of the Association.</p>
<p>Dissertation Fellowship Program Discription</p>	<p>The Dissertation Fellowship Program</p> <p>The dissertation fellowship program provides funds to doctoral students beginning their dissertation. The program supports research on postsecondary education using the NCES and NSF national databases or research studies that increase the understanding and knowledge of student decisions in postsecondary education. Funded fellowship projects promise a significant contribution to the national knowledge of the nature and operation of postsecondary education. Projects must use one or more of the national postsecondary education databases of NCES or NSF AND/OR focus on the area of student decisions, broadly defined, at all levels of postsecondary education. Proposals focusing on issues of student decisions are NOT required to use one of the NCES or NSF databases. These proposals may cover variety of research activities that focus on student decisions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data synthesis or meta analysis of research studies that address a specific question regarding student decisions; • New analyses of data using national, regional, state, or institutional databases; • Assessments of research and practices that have been initiated in the area of student decisions; • Models of student decisions that can be supported by research and/or that detail new data collection needs; • Case studies of activities that focus on student decisions; • Collections of best practices promoting student decisions; and • Other creative strategies. <p>Funds of up to \$15,000 to support one year of activity are available. It is expected that work will be conducted at the doctoral student’s home institution and that fellowship funds cover budget items such as the costs of supplying data, dissemination of project results, travel, and salary support for the doctoral student. As used herein, the term “Principal Investigator” refers to the person submitting a proposal.</p> <p>Doctoral students who have applied for funding from other associations or agencies must disclose this information in their application, including a copy of the proposed budget. AIR reserves the right to withdraw funding in the event that a doctoral student accepts monies from another source for the same work.</p> <p>Dissemination of the project results will be done by the doctoral student through AIR publications and meetings, NCES and NSF publications, and through other</p>

scholarly and policy-oriented media as available. Dissertation Fellows are expected to have a completed paper for presentation or publication as part of their final report, are encouraged to disseminate their work as widely as possible, and are required to present project findings at the AIR Annual Forum.

Proposal Criteria

The dissertation grant proposal will be judged upon, and should present, the objectives, innovative aspects, and significance of the proposed work; suitability of the methods to be employed; qualifications of the PI and the grantee institution; and the effect of the activity on the infrastructure of postsecondary education. A budget providing a detailed description of proposed expenditures is required.

The grant program's preference is to fund promising new investigators researching new topics. The program is not designed to support studies over time. *Unless the proposal is addressing the NPEC program focus topic, funding may not be used for primary data collection. The intent of the broader grant program is to support analyses using the national databases of NCES and NSF.*

The program prefers to fund studies that test models or hypotheses. Exploratory studies may also be selected for funding, but these projects should clearly demonstrate the need for an exploratory study and the outcome of such research for theory and model development.

The merits of the proposed project should be clear, and the proposal should be prepared in the manner of a paper submitted for publication. Authors should provide sufficient information for reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the **Proposal Criteria**. Use of the **Proposal Checklist** in **Appendix B** ensures that a proposal complies with the Grant Proposal Guidelines for organization and formatting.

Dissertation Proposal Criteria

Proposal Submission

Research Grants—Who May Submit

Institutional researchers, faculty, and other higher education professionals usually initiate proposals. In the case of research grants involving release time salary replacement, employing institutions officially submit proposals. Before formal submission, the proposal may be discussed with AIR Grant staff. AIR will accept proposals for doctoral dissertation improvement research grants.

Categories of Research Grant Proposers are:

1. *Affiliated Individuals*: Postsecondary education administrators, professional staff and faculty (including non U.S. citizens) affiliated with a U.S. postsecondary institution or governance agency.
2. *Universities and Colleges*: U.S. universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) acting on behalf of their staff or faculty. Public or private higher education research and/or policy organizations or associations are also eligible institutions.
3. *Foreign Institutions and Organizations*: Cooperative projects involving U.S. and foreign institutions or organizations.
4. *Unaffiliated Individuals*: Unaffiliated individuals shall contact the AIR Grant staff before preparing a proposal for submission. Educators in the U.S. and U.S. citizens may be eligible for support if the individuals are not employed by or affiliated with an institution provided the:
 - proposed project is sufficiently meritorious and otherwise complies with the conditions of the relevant grant program;
 - proposer has demonstrated the capability and has access to any necessary facilities to carry out the project; and

Proposal Submission

- proposer agrees to fiscal arrangements which, in the opinion of the AIR Grant staff, ensure responsible management of funds.

5. *Collaborative Proposals*: Where multiple institutions or individuals are involved in collaborative or joint arrangements, only one institution may submit the proposal. Such Collaborative Proposals shall clearly describe the roles to be played by each institution (specify the managerial and financial arrangements), and explain the advantages of the multi-institutional effort. In some instances, simultaneous submission of related proposals from each institution might be appropriate, resulting in parallel awards.

6. *Federal Agencies*: The AIR Grant Program does not support research or education activities by employees of Federal agencies, or Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), or organizations holding current NCES or NSF research or research support contracts. However, a scientist, engineer, or educator who has a joint appointment with a university and a Federal agency, such as a university and an FFRDC, may submit a proposal through the university. As a bona fide faculty member of the university, the proposer may receive support although the Federal agency may provide salary funding.

For clarification on any of these classifications, please contact the AIR Grant staff.

Dissertation Fellowships—Who May Submit

Doctoral students affiliated with a U.S. postsecondary institution may initiate proposals. A letter of support from the Faculty Dissertation Director is required. Before formal submission, the proposal shall be discussed with AIR Grant staff.

When to Submit

The deadline for proposals is **January 15, 2006**. The Association for Institutional Research will announce the awards made for research grants, dissertation fellowships, and AIR/NPEC focused grants in April; grants commence June 1, 2006.

Where to Submit

Proposals must be submitted via the online proposal submission tool on the AIR Web site (“Grants” section). All proposals shall be prepared in the manner of a paper submitted for publication and **uploaded as a Microsoft Word or PDF file to the AIR Web site using the online submission tool.**

Please follow the directions carefully. Proposals must be date stamped on or before January 15, 2006 (midnight EST). Individuals unable to submit in this manner shall contact the AIR Grant staff for an alternative method

Should you need any assistance with the proposal submission process, please contact the AIR Grant staff at: air@mailer.fsu.edu, or call (850) 644-4470.

In addition, a copy of the Proposal Cover Page signed by the PI(s), an official authorized to commit an institution in business and financial affairs, and the Faculty Dissertation Director, if applicable, is to be mailed to the AIR Grant staff postmarked by the submission deadline. Mail or fax the signed Cover Page to:

GRANT PROGRAM
Association for Institutional Research
P.O. Box 2314
Tallahassee, FL 32316-2314
Fax: (850) 644-8824

Instructions for Grant Proposal Preparation

Conformance with Instructions for Proposal Preparation

All proposals shall conform to the instructions below. Proposers shall give particular attention to proposal length, content, and formatting, including the page limits on the proposal sections, the use of Appendices, and requirement for Biographical Sketches. **Proposals that do not conform to these instructions will not be considered by AIR.**

Format of the Proposal

Proposals must be submitted via the online submission system. The proposal shall be prepared in the manner of a paper submitted for publication and uploaded as a Word or PDF file to the online proposal submission tool. The proposal shall have one-inch margins on all sides and be double spaced in 10-point Times New Roman type or similar serif font. Failure to conform to the formatting instructions (page margins, line spacing, type style, proofreading, grammar and spell check) will result in a return of the proposal.

Sections of the Proposal

Proposals are to be organized using the following sequence. After each Section heading, please indicate if the section (major sections numbered 1-10) is not applicable to the proposed project. Details for each section of the proposal follow the listings below. **Page limits for each section appear in parenthesis after the section heading.**

- 1. Proposal Cover Page** (1 page), including:
 - a. Title of the Project
 - b. Grant Amount Requested
 - c. Database(s) of interest (if applicable)
 - d. Name(s) and title(s) of PI(s) and Authorized Institutional Representative
 - e. Name and title of Faculty Dissertation Director (required for dissertation proposals)
 - f. Mail and E-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers for above individuals
 - g. Signatures of the PI(s), Co-Principal Investigators, Authorized Institutional Representative, and Faculty Dissertation Director for AIR Office copy
- 2. Project Summary** (2 pages)
- 3. Table of Contents** (1 page)
- 4. Project Description** (15 pages maximum) including:
 - a. Statement of problem and variables
 - b. Proposal of work, including NSF and/or NCES database(s) of interest (a list of data sets is in Appendix E)
 - c. Dissemination plan
 - d. Description of policy relevance
 - e. Discussion of innovative aspects of project
 - f. Discussion of audience to whom the project will be important
 - g. Appendices
- 5. References Cited** (pages as needed)
- 6. Biographical Sketches** (5 pages per PI)
- 7. Budget** (3 pages) MAY include:
 - a. Salaries and Wages
 - b. Fringe Benefits
 - c. Travel
 - d. Participant Support

Instructions for Grant Proposal Preparation

e. Other Direct Costs

f. Indirect Costs and Costs Sharing

8. Current and Pending Support (1 page)

9. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources (1 page)

10. Special Information and Supplementary Documentation (as needed).

Dissertation fellowship proposals must include a letter of recommendation from the Faculty Dissertation Director (2 pages). The signed letter shall be mailed or faxed to the AIR office.

Proposals exceeding page maximums will not be reviewed.

Proposal Section Descriptions

1. Proposal Cover Page (1 page)

The title of the project shall be brief, technically valid, comprehensible to a technically literate lay reader, and suitable for use in the public press. AIR may require editing of the title before making an award.

For research grant proposals, one copy of the Proposal Cover Page shall be signed by the PI(s) and the Authorized Institutional Representative, an official authorized to commit the institution in business and financial affairs. The Proposal Cover Page is to be sent to the AIR Grant staff, postmarked by the submission deadline.

For dissertation fellowship proposals, one copy of the Proposal Cover Page must be signed by the Faculty Dissertation Director, the Doctoral Student, and an Authorized Institutional Representative, and sent to the AIR Grant staff by the submission deadline.

2. Project Summary (2 pages)

The proposal shall contain a two-page summary of the proposed activity and be suitable for publication. It shall not be an abstract of the proposal, but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal receives funding. The third-person summary shall include a statement of objectives, methods employed, database and sample size, policy relevance, innovative aspects, audience, and the significance of the proposed activity to the advancement of knowledge. It shall be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader.

3. Table of Contents (1 page)

The Table of Contents reflects the organization of the proposal, as listed in “**Sections of the Proposal.**” Proposers may select any page numbering mechanism for the proposal (e.g., sections may be separately paginated, including both the section and page number on the bottom center of each page, or the entire proposal may be numbered consecutively.)

4. Project Description (15-page maximum)

The proposed project shall be clearly stated in the main body of the proposal and shall include:

- database(s) and variables of interest and the limitations of the data;
- sample size;
- objectives for the period of the proposed project and its expected significance;
- relationships to the longer-term goals of the PI’s research;
- connection to the present state of knowledge in the field, both work in

progress by the PI and work in progress elsewhere (this section shall be concise and focus on the most recent and relevant studies and theories);

- policy relevance;
- innovative aspects; (i.e. new and creative approach to the topic and/or impact on policy); and
- identification of the intended audience.

The description shall outline the general plan of work including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, an adequate description of methods and procedures, a schedule of tasks and deliverables, and if appropriate, plans for preservation, documentation, and sharing of data and other related research products. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget shall be described and documented with a letter from each collaborator, provided as supplementary documentation and included in **Section 10**.

The stated proposed duration for support shall be consistent with the nature and complexity of the proposed activity. Normally, research grants are for one year. Starting date of the grant is June 1, 2006. Should unusual situations, (e.g., a long lead-time for procurement) create problems regarding the proposed effective date, the PI(s) should contact the AIR Grant staff to arrange for a different start date.

The project description shall clearly specify the databases and variables that will be used in the project, including a detailed discussion of the sampling for the project that addresses the size of the sample and the validity and limitations of the data for the analysis. A PI may consult the database codebooks maintained by NCES and NSF for each database (available at their Web sites: (<http://nces.ed.gov> and <http://nsf.gov>, respectively). If using multiple databases or other national sample surveys, the PI should clearly describe how the data sets will be used together.

A detailed dissemination plan is required as part of the Project Description. This section shall include how findings will be disseminated to the institutional research community and other important audiences. Be specific as to conference presentations, submission to journals or other publications, etc. **Budget information must reflect the requirement for grantees to present project findings at the 2006 AIR Annual Forum in New Orleans, LA.**

All information necessary for the evaluation of the proposal shall be contained in Sections 1-10 of the proposal. Appendices shall not be included unless authorized by the AIR Grant staff.

The dissemination plan and appendices, including all visuals such as charts, graphs, maps, photographs and pictorial presentations, **are included** in the 15-page limit for the Project Description.

5. References Cited (pages as needed)

Full references are required. Citations must be formatted using APA Publication guidelines. There is no page limit for this section of the proposal.

6. Biographical Sketches (5 pages per PI)

Biographical sketches are required for all senior personnel (maximum of five pages each.) They shall describe the proposer's quantitative skills, including previous research experience. Training or experience with weighted sample surveys shall specifically be addressed. The biographical sketch shall convey the proposer's ability to carry out the project and benefit professionally from the experience. A combination of narrative and a brief curriculum vita may be appropriate, but the narrative is of primary importance. Dissertation proposals shall include biographical sketches for the doctoral student and the Faculty Dissertation Director.

7. Budget (detailed subsection descriptions provided) (3 pages)

Each proposal shall contain a cumulative budget for the full term of requested AIR support. The proposal may request funds for standard research expenses (excluding specific program guidelines or applicable cost principles) considered necessary to perform the proposed work. Budget presentation, justification and explanation may not exceed three pages. See **Appendix C** for a sample grant budget.

a. Salaries and Wages**Research Grants***i) Policies*

As a general policy, AIR recognizes salaries of staff and faculty constitute appropriate direct costs and may be requested in proportion to the effort devoted to the project.

Research is regarded by AIR as one of the normal functions of institutional research staff and faculty members at institutions of higher education. Compensation for time normally spent on research within the term of appointment is deemed to be included within the staff or faculty member's regular institutional salary. Grant funds may not be used to augment the total salary or rate of salary of staff or faculty members during the period covered by the term of their appointment, or to reimburse staff or faculty members for consulting or other time in addition to regular full-time institutional salary covering the same general period of employment.

Summer salary included in research grant awards for faculty members on academic-year appointments is limited to no more than two-ninths of their regular academic-year salary. This limit includes summer salary received from all AIR and federally-funded grants.

These same principles apply to other types of organizations, such as state postsecondary education institutions and research institutes. Because their employment periods are usually annual, salary shall be shown under "calendar months." For such persons, "summer salary" is normally inappropriate under an AIR grant.

Sometimes an independent institution proposes to employ college or university faculty members on a part-time basis. In such cases, the general intent of the policies above apply, so that an individual's total income will not be augmented in ways that would not be possible under a grant to an academic institution.

ii) Procedures

The names of the PI(s) and other senior personnel and the estimated number of academic-year, summer, or calendar-year person-months for which AIR funding is requested shall be listed. For doctoral and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical, technical, etc., only the total number of persons and total amount of salaries per year in each category is required. Salaries requested must be consistent with the institution's regular practices.

The budget may request funds for support of graduate or undergraduate research assistants to help carry out the proposed research. Compensation classified as salary payments should be requested in the salaries and wages category.

Dissertation Fellowships (Salaries and Wages)*i) Policies*

As a general policy, AIR recognizes that salaries constitute appropriate direct costs and may be requested in proportion to the effort devoted to the project.

Because of the nature of this dissertation support program, salary expenditures are allowable only for the doctoral student proposing the project.

ii) Procedures

For doctoral students, the total amount of salary per year is required. Salaries requested must be consistent with the institution's regular practices.

Confidential Information

Proposers may request that salary data not be used during the review process. AIR will not forward the detailed information to reviewers and will hold it privileged to the extent permitted by law.

The item for senior personnel salaries in the research grant proposal may appear as a single figure and the person-months represented by that amount omitted. If this option is exercised, however, senior personnel salaries and person-months must be itemized in a separate statement, two copies of which shall accompany the proposal. AIR will not forward the detailed information to reviewers and will hold it privileged to the extent permitted by law. The information on senior personnel salaries will be used as the basis for determining the salary amounts shown in the grant budget.

Proposals may also contain patentable information or data, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information. Such information shall be clearly marked in the proposal or included as a separate statement accompanying the proposal and should be appropriately labeled with a legend such as:

"The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (name of proposing institution) requests not be released to persons outside of AIR and the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation."

b. Fringe Benefits

If the grantee's usual accounting practices provide that its contributions to employee benefits (social security, retirement, etc.) be treated as direct costs, AIR research grant funds may be requested to defray such expenses as a direct cost, but only in proportion to salaries and wages requested in the budget.

c. Travel

i) General

Allowance for air travel normally shall not exceed the cost of round-trip, economy air accommodations for a maximum of two trips: **one of the two trips must be to the AIR Forum.**

ii) Domestic Travel

For budget purposes, domestic travel includes travel in the U.S., its possessions, and travel to and from Canada and Mexico. Travel and its relation to the proposed activities shall be specified. Grantees are required to present project findings at the AIR Forum. Funds may be requested for field work, attendance at meetings and conferences, other travel associated with the proposed work, and subsistence. To qualify for support, however, attendance at meetings or conferences must enhance the PI's ability to perform the work, plan extensions of it, or disseminate its results. Consultant travel costs may also be requested.

iii) Foreign Travel

Foreign travel may be covered by AIR grants in some circumstances. Please contact AIR Grant staff if you are contemplating such travel under an AIR award.

d. Participant Support

This budget category refers to costs of transportation, per diem, stipends and other related costs for participants or trainees (but not grant recipients) in connection with conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities and workshops. These costs shall also be justified in the budget justification/explanation section of the proposal.

e. Other Direct Costs

Any costs charged to an AIR grant must be reasonable and directly allocatable to the supported activity. The budget shall identify and itemize other anticipated direct costs not included under the headings above, including materials and supplies, publication costs, computer services and consultant services. Other examples are: space rental at sites away from the grantee institution and service charges. Reference books may be charged to the grant only if they specifically relate to the project.

i) Materials and Supplies

The budget shall indicate, in general terms, the type of expendable materials and supplies required, with their estimated costs. The breakdown shall be more detailed when the cost is substantial.

ii) Publication / Documentation / Dissemination

The budget shall outline funds for the costs of documenting, preparing, publishing or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under the grant. This generally includes the following types of activities: reports, reprints, page charges or other journal costs (except costs for prior or early publication); necessary illustrations; documentation, storage and indexing of data and databases; and development and documentation of software.

iii) Consultant Services

Anticipated consultant services shall be justified and information furnished on each individual's expertise, primary institutional affiliation, normal daily compensation rate, and number of days of expected service. Consultant travel costs and per diem allowances (or meals provided in lieu of per diem) shall be listed separately under travel in the budget. Payment for a consultant's services, exclusive of expenses, may not exceed the consultant's normal rate or the daily maximum rate established annually by NSF, whichever is less.

iv) Computer Services

The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical and educational information, may be requested. A justification/explanation based on the established computer service rates at the proposing institution shall be included. The budget also may request costs, which must be shown to be reasonable, for **leasing** of automated data processing equipment. The **purchase** of computer hardware is not covered by AIR grants.

v) Sub-awards

No significant part of the research or substantive effort under an AIR grant may be contracted or otherwise transferred to another person or institution without prior AIR authorization. The intent to enter into such arrangements shall be disclosed in the proposal submission. At a minimum, the disclosure shall include a clear description of the work to be performed, the basis for selection of the sub-awardee (except for collaborative/joint arrangements) and a separate budget for each sub-award. Collaborative/joint arrangements may include closely related and coordinated activities at another institution; a joint activity by several institutions or a consortia; group proposals from multiple institutions; etc.

f. Indirect Costs and Cost Sharing

Because the awards are designed to directly benefit an institution or agency by improving decision-making capacity, indirect costs shall be assumed by the institution or agency as a contribution and shall not be part of the award.

g. Unallowable Costs

Because of their sensitivity, the following categories of unallowable costs are highlighted. This list is not necessarily inclusive.

i) Entertainment

Costs of entertainment, amusement, diversion and social activities and any costs directly associated with such activities (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities) are unallowable. Expenses of grantee employees who are not on travel status are unallowable. This includes cases where they serve as hosts or otherwise participate at meals that are primarily social occasions involving speakers or consultants. Costs of employees on travel status are limited to those allowed under the governing cost principles for travel expenses.

ii) Meals and Coffee Breaks

No AIR funds may be spent on meals or coffee breaks for intramural meetings of an institution or any of its components, including, but not limited to, laboratories, departments and centers.

iii) Alcoholic Beverages

No AIR funds may be spent on alcoholic beverages.

iv) Computer Equipment

The purchase of computer hardware is not covered by AIR grants.

8. Current and Pending Support (1 page)

All current project support for the PI from whatever source (e.g., Federal, State or local government agencies, private foundations, industrial or other commercial organizations) must be listed. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the PI and other senior personnel shall be included, even if they receive no salary support from the project(s.) The number of person-months per year to be devoted to the projects must be stated, regardless of source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or submitted concurrently to other possible sponsors, including AIR.

If the project now being submitted has been funded previously by a source other than NSF, the information requested in the paragraph above shall be furnished for the last period of funding. If the proposal is also being submitted to other possible sponsors, all of them must be listed. Concurrent submission of a proposal to other institutions will not prejudice its review by AIR.

9. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources (1 page)

Information from the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the institutional resources available to perform the effort proposed. Proposers shall describe only those resources that are directly applicable.

10. Special Information and Supplementary Documentation (pages as needed)

Except for the following situations, Special Information and Supplementary Documentation shall be included in the Project Description. Information in the areas below may be included in **Section 10** and not as a part of the 15-page Project Description limit. This Special Information and Supplementary Documentation Section is not considered an appendix.

- Rationale for performance of all or part of the research project off-campus or away from institutional headquarters.
- Documentation of collaborative arrangements of significance to the proposal through letters of commitment.

Each dissertation fellowship proposal **must include** a letter of recommendation (2 pages maximum) from the Faculty Dissertation Director. The letter shall identify the academic strengths and experience of the doctoral student including the student's experience with national data sets, data collection and analysis, and previous publications and awards. The signed letter shall be faxed or mailed to the AIR office.

In addition, **Section 10** should alert AIR officials to unusual circumstances that require special handling. For example, proprietary or other privileged information in the proposal, matters affecting individual privacy, required intergovernmental review under E.O. 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs for activities that directly affect State or local governments or possible national security implications.

Proposal Processing and Review

Grant Proposal Processing and Review

All proposals received by AIR are carefully reviewed by the AIR Grant staff and assigned for review by experts in the particular field addressed by the proposal. Proposals for both the AIR/NCES/NSF grant and the AIR/NPEC focused grant will be reviewed simultaneously by the same review panel. Thus, proposals that use a NCES or NSF database to study student success will have a greater chance of success. The comments of reviewers are used for recommending final action on proposals. The AIR, NCES and NSF staffs review the recommendations for awards for conformance with AIR, NCES and NSF policies.

Proposal Revisions Made During the Review Process

In the event of a significant development that might materially affect the outcome of the review of a pending proposal, the proposer shall contact AIR to discuss the finding or changed circumstances. Submitting additional information must not be used as a means of circumventing page limits or stated deadlines, but is intended to provide an opportunity to communicate unexpected and significant developments.

Before recommending whether or not AIR should support a particular project, the AIR Executive Director may, subject to certain constraints outlined below, engage in discussions with a proposing PI.

Negotiating budgets generally involves discussing a lower or higher amount of total support for the proposed project. AIR may discuss possible "bottom-line" award amounts with a PI. AIR also may suggest reducing or eliminating costs for specific budget items which are clearly too high or unreasonable for the activities to be undertaken; however, this would not generally include salaries (without corresponding reduction in effort), salary rates, or fringe benefits.

When such discussions result in significant changes in the basic objectives or scope of the project as originally proposed, an appropriate proposal modification (which may include a revised proposal budget) signed by the PI, the Authorized Institutional Representative, and/or the Faculty Dissertation Director must be submitted to AIR.

Award Announcement

Awards announcement is in April for commencement of work on or soon after June 1, 2006. Only the AIR Executive Director may make commitments, obligations

or awards, or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of AIR should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with AIR. A PI or institution that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the AIR Executive Director does so at her/his/its own risk.

Copies of Reviews

Letter of acceptance (or rejection) will be mailed to the PI along with any comments about the proposal. Proposers may also request in writing any other releasable material on their proposal from the AIR Grant staff.

Withdrawals, Declinations and Non-Funded Proposals

A. Withdrawals

A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before a final decision is made. A request for withdrawal must be signed by both the PI and, when necessary, the Authorized Institutional Representative or Faculty Dissertation Director. The AIR Grant staff will send confirmation of withdrawal requests to the PI and Authorized Institutional Representative. If any funding for the proposed project is received from another source or sponsor, the AIR staff must be notified. Should the AIR staff be made aware of the acceptance of a proposal to AIR by another sponsor, a withdrawal confirmation letter to the PI and the Authorized Institutional Representative will be sent absent an official withdrawal request. Copies of withdrawn proposals are not returned to the proposer, however a file copy will be retained.

B. Declinations

A proposal may not be considered for review by the AIR Grant staff when it is inappropriate for AIR funding. In addition, proposals submitted with insufficient lead-time before activity is to begin, not meeting AIR requirements for proposal content, format, etc., or not meeting the announced proposal deadline date requirements will be declined.

C. Non-Funded Proposals

A PI whose proposal for AIR support does not receive funding will receive comments about the proposal from the AIR Grant staff. The decision to fund or not to fund is final; however the PI may request additional information from AIR to assist in revision of the proposal.

Withdrawals, Declinations and Non-Funded Proposals

Grant Administration Highlights

The administration of grants is governed by the actual conditions of the grant. The following information provides the answers to frequently asked grant administration questions.

The grantee institution has primary responsibility for general supervision of all grant activities and for notifying AIR of significant problems relating to misconduct in research or administrative matters. The PI is responsible for the conduct of the research or educational work, the publication of results, and providing technical leadership to the project, whether or not any salary is provided from grant funds.

The PI is encouraged to communicate the progress of the project supported by AIR to the AIR Grant staff, including a required semi-annual progress report.

Grant Administration Highlights

General Requirements

Grants for financial assistance are subject to certain statutory and other general requirements, such as compliance with various federal statutes: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and other laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination; prohibition of misconduct in science and engineering; Drug-Free Workplace requirements; restrictions on lobbying; patent and copyright requirements; cost-sharing; and the use of U.S.-flag carriers for international travel.

Arranging for the use of Restricted Data Sets

While most NCES and NSF data sets are available in public use files, unit-record data files for individuals are available for use only by a PI licensed by the agency to do so. The licensing process requires that the PI and his or her employing institution apply for a license to use specific data for a specific time period, usually no longer than one year.

Many research institutions already have licensing agreements in place, which will accelerate the licensing process. The agencies are usually able to respond to a licensing request in a maximum of two to three weeks. However, because of the length of time it may take to get the institutional agreements required by the licensing process, the AIR Grant staff will assist the successful applicant PI who needs restricted data sets in obtaining the necessary documents from the agency as soon as awards are announced. Licensing agreements cover both the physical security of agency data and the procedures for avoiding disclosure of information on individuals. Detailed information on the licensing process can be found at the NCES and the NSF Web sites. (NCES: <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/rudman/chapter2.asp>; NSF: <http://nsf.gov/sbe/srs/srsdata.htm>.)

Prior Approval Requirements

Prior written authorization from AIR is required for the following: (1) transfer of the project effort; (2) change in objectives or scope; (3) change in PI; (4) a substantial change in PI effort; or (5) reallocation of funds budgeted for participant support.

Transfer of PI

If a PI leaves an institution during the course of a grant, the institution has the prerogative to request termination of the grant. Where a particular PI's expertise and participation are integral to a given project, and the PI's original and new institutions agree, AIR will arrange a transfer of the grant. The AIR Grant staff will assign the remaining unobligated funds to the PI's new institution.

Project Payments

Research grants are paid in two installments with 50% of the award issued June 1, 2006, and the balance paid upon submission of a progress report by December 1. Dissertation fellowships will be paid in full on June 1, 2006. Payments will ordinarily be issued to the PI's home institution for disbursement.

No-Cost Extensions

1. Extension up to 12 months

Grantees may receive a one-time extension on the expiration date of the grant (for up to 12 months with no additional funding.) Additional time beyond the established expiration date is available to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work within the funds already made available. This one-time extension is not available merely for liquidating fund balances. At least 10 days before the expiration date specified in the grant, the grantee shall request an

extension in writing, providing supporting reasons for the extension and the revised completion date. For extensions taken by institutions, no amendment will be issued.

2. Additional Extension

If additional time beyond the extension provided by the grantee is required, and exceptional circumstances warrant, a formal request must be submitted to AIR. Two copies of the request, signed by the PI and an Authorized Institutional Representative, must be received by AIR at least **45 days** before the expiration date of the grant. The request must explain the need for the extension, include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining, and a plan for their use. As indicated above, the fact that unobligated funds remain at the expiration of the grant is not in itself sufficient justification for an extension. The plan must adhere to the previously approved objectives of the project.

An amendment to the grant, issued by AIR, will specify the new expiration date for the no-cost extension. Grantees are cautioned not to make new commitments or incur new expenditures after the expiration date in anticipation of a no-cost extension.

Supplemental Funding

At this time, AIR does not anticipate awarding supplemental funding.

Suspension or Termination of Grants

AIR grants may be suspended or terminated in accordance with the procedures contained in the Grant Conditions. Grants may also be terminated by mutual agreement. Termination by mutual agreement shall not affect any commitment of grant funds that, in the judgment of AIR and the grantee, had become firm before the effective date of the termination.

Reports

1. Progress Reports

Progress reports, due December 1, 2006, shall briefly summarize activity during the report period, identify any significant research developments, describe any problems encountered, and provide current information about other research support, if changed from the information previously submitted. The reports shall also include any other significant information pertinent to the type of project supported by AIR or as specified by the terms and conditions of the grant. See **Appendix D** for an outline.

2. Final Reports

Thirty days after the expiration date of a grant, the PI is required to submit a Final Project Report to the AIR Office, with a copy to the Authorized Institutional Representative. The report shall include a final paper based on the project's findings; a list of current and pending publications based on the project's findings; technical information needed by AIR for program management and for informing the public about the results of the activities it supports; and a financial accounting of the funding expenditures. The report shall also provide information on the gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship and disability status of individuals supported under the grant. Failure to provide final reports will delay AIR review and processing of pending proposals for that PI.

Final expenditure information is provided by most grantees through a financial report (including a signed certification) submitted by the institution's financial officer.

Sharing Findings, Data, and Other Research Products

Because AIR advocates and encourages open scientific communication, there is an expectation that significant findings from supported research and educational

activities will be submitted promptly for publication with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. Further, AIR expects a PI to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of the work. Grantees are encouraged to share software and inventions, once they have secured appropriate protection, and otherwise act to make the innovations they embody widely useful and usable.

In ways appropriate to field and circumstances, AIR will implement these policies, through the proposal review process; through award negotiations and conditions; and through appropriate support and incentives for data cleanup, documentation, dissemination, and storage. Adjustments and, where essential, exceptions may be allowed to safeguard the rights of individuals and subjects, the validity of results, and the integrity of collections, or to accommodate the legitimate interests of investigators.

Acknowledgment of Support and Disclaimer

An acknowledgment of support and a disclaimer must appear in publications of any material, whether copyrighted or not, based on or developed under AIR-supported projects. (See example of acknowledgment below.)

This material is based upon work supported by the Association for Institutional Research, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the National Science Foundation under Association for Institutional Research Grant Number _____ (grantee should enter AIR grant number.)

Except for articles or papers published in scientific, technical or professional journals, the following disclaimer shall be included:

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association for Institutional Research, the National Center for Education Statistics, or the National Science Foundation.

Release of Grantee Proposal Information

A proposal that results in an AIR grant or fellowship becomes a part of the record of the transaction, and will be available to the public, with the exception of information or material that AIR and the grantee mutually agree to be of a privileged nature. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically prohibited from disclosure by statute. (See Section II.C.7.a.(iii).) Such information or material will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, AIR will seek to limit dissemination of such information to its employees and, when necessary for evaluation of the proposal, to outside reviewers.

A proposal that does not result in an AIR grant or fellowship will be retained by AIR for two years but will be released to the public only with the consent of the proposer or to the extent required by law. Portions of proposals resulting in grants that contain descriptions of inventions in which the grantee owns or may own a right, title or interest (including a non-exclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until after a reasonable time has been allowed for filing a patent application. It is AIR policy to notify the grantee of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so that the grantee may advise AIR of such inventions described in the proposal.

Legal Rights to Intellectual Property

AIR allows grantees to retain principal legal rights to intellectual property developed under its grants. This policy provides incentive for development and dissemination of software and publications, but does not reduce the responsibility of researchers and institutions to make results, data and collections available to the research community.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

2006 AIR RESEARCH GRANT/DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL

This is the title of your research project: Be certain to use APA standard publication formatting

Data set of interest:

Grant Amount Requested: \$15,000 (for Dissertation Fellowship Proposal)
Grant Amount Requested: up to \$30,000 (for Research Grant Proposal)

Principal Investigator/Doctoral Student
Name
Title
Institution
Mailing Address
City, ST 00ZIP
Phone: 123.555.0000 Fax:123.555.1111
E-mail: idoresearch@anycollege.edu

Co-Principal Investigator or Faculty Dissertation Director
Name
Title
Mailing Address
City, ST 00ZIP
Phone: 123.555.0000 Fax:123.555.1111
Email: idomoney@anycollege.edu

Authorized Institutional Representative
Name
Title
Mailing Address
City, ST 00ZIP
Phone: 123.555.0000 Fax:123.555.1111
Email: idomoney@anycollege.edu

Principal Investigator _____

Authorized Institutional Representative _____

Other PIs _____

Faculty Dissertation Director (for Dissertation Fellowship proposals only) _____

APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Only complete proposals will be reviewed and processed. To assure that research proposals submitted to AIR are complete, an administrative check should be made before mailing.

- Proposal Cover Page including:
 - Title of Project
 - Grant Amount Requested
 - Database(s) of interest
 - Name(s) of PI(s), Authorized Institutional Representative, Faculty Dissertation Director
 - Mail and E-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers for above individuals
 - All required signatures (PI(s) and Co-PI(s), Authorized Institutional Representative and Faculty Dissertation Director) for AIR Office copy

- Project Summary (2 pages)

- Table of Contents (1 page)

- Project Description (15 pages) including:
 - Statement of problem and variables
 - Proposed plan of work, including database(s) of interest
 - Dissemination plan
 - Description of policy relevance
 - Discussion of innovative aspects of project
 - Discussion of audience to whom the project will be important
 - Appendices

- References Cited (pages as needed)

- Biographical Sketch(es) (5 pages per PI)

- Budget and Budget Justification (3 pages)

- Current and Pending Support (1 page)

- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources (1 page)

- Special Information and Supplementary Documentation (as needed)
 - Letter of recommendation from Faculty Dissertation Director for dissertation proposals (2 pages)

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE BUDGET FORMAT

GRANTPROJECTTITLE:

Personnel		
Principal Investigator:	3-FTE academic year months @ \$2,200/mo	\$6,600
	2-FTE summer months @ \$2,200/mo	\$4,400
Graduate Student:	4.5-FTE academic year months @ \$1,400/mo	\$6,300
	1.5-FTE summer months @ \$1,400/mo	<u>\$2,100</u>
	Total Salaries and Wages	\$19,400
	Fringe Benefits @ 21%	\$4,024
	Travel (AIR Forum, other conferences)	<u>\$2,500</u>
	Total Benefits and Travel	\$ 6,524
Other Direct Costs		
	Materials and Supplies	\$ 150
	Publication Costs/Documentation/Dissemination	\$ 175
	Computer Network time - 3 months @ \$250/mo	<u>\$ 750</u>
	Total Other Direct Costs	\$ 1,075
	TOTALAMOUNT OFAWARD	\$26,999

APPENDIX D: GRANT PROGRESS REPORT

Period Covered By This Report:

Date:

PI Name:

AIR Award Number:

PI Address:

PI Institution:

Project Title:

Please include the following information:

1. Brief summary of progress, including results obtained to date and their relationship to the general goals of the project, an indication of any current problems or favorable or unusual developments, and any other significant information pertaining to the type of project;
2. Information about other current and pending research support if changed from the previous submission;
3. A statement describing any contribution of the project to the area of education and human-resource development, if changed from any previous submission;
4. Any major (more than 10% of the total budget) changes in how the award funding will be spent.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge (1) the statements herein (excluding scientific hypotheses and scientific opinions) are true and complete, and (2) the text and graphics in this report as well as any accompanying publications or other documents, unless otherwise indicated, are the original work of the signatories or individuals working under their supervision. I understand that the willful provision of false information or concealing a material fact in this report or any other communication submitted to AIR is a criminal offense (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001.)

PI Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: List of NCES and NSF Postsecondary Education Data Sets

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

- Baccalaureate and Beyond
- Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study
- High School and Beyond
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
- National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988
- National Household Education Survey
- National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972
- National Postsecondary Student Aid Study
- National Study of Postsecondary Faculty
- Postsecondary Education Quick Information System
- Recent College Graduates Study

Detailed information about NCES data sets can be found on the Internet at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/>.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

- Computer-Aided Science Policy Analysis and Research
- Scientist and Engineer Statistics Data System
- Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering
- Survey of Doctorate Recipients
- Survey of Earned Doctorates
- National Survey of Recent College Graduates
- National Survey of College Graduates
- Survey of Federal Funds for Research and Development
- Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions
- Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges
- Survey of Industrial Research and Development
- Survey of Academic Research Facilities
- Survey of Public Attitudes

Detailed information about NSF data sets can found on the Internet at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/survey.htm>.