



Charter School Research Collaborative Pilot Study Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Methodological rigor:** Proposals should outline a clear research design. Projects can be either causal or descriptive. For example, causal investigations can examine how particular schools, sectors, governance arrangements, and institutions affect student outcomes. Descriptive questions can aim to fill holes in background knowledge by characterizing, for example, features of school or leadership practice. The Collaborative prioritizes causal over descriptive research.
 - a. Does the proposal clearly explain how the study design will enable the research to answer the proposed questions?
 - b. If answering a question of causal inference, is there a clear and well-justified approach if randomization is not used?
 - c. What are the key threats to the validity of the study? Does the proposal address these?
2. **Policy relevance:** Proposals should answer questions of pressing interest to policymakers and practitioners.
 - a. How can the research findings be used to inform policymaker and/or practitioner decision-making?
 - b. How can the findings from this study be more broadly applied beyond the specific context examined?
3. **Project viability:** Proposals should demonstrate viability regarding data access, timeline, and other potential obstacles.
 - a. Is there a clear and reasonable proposal for securing data access from the research partner? If a data agreement is not already secured, letters of support with a commitment from a data provider or a history of collaboration will bolster the application.
 - b. Is the timeline realistic to complete the proposed study?
 - c. Are there any logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the study (e.g., multiple data use agreements required, sign-off from government officials)?
 - d. Does the proposal outline a clear process for researchers to incorporate their research partners' interests (e.g., through research question generation, dissemination, etc.)?
4. **Research agenda alignment:** Proposals should align with the Collaborative's research agenda. Projects that examine one of the Collaborative's geographic areas of interest (listed below) are preferred, but projects that fall outside these regions will also be considered. All projects should focus on US charter schools.
 - a. Does the proposal align with at least one of the research questions in the Collaborative's research agenda ([see here](#))?
5. **Academic relevance:** Proposals should aim to generate new knowledge that advances the state of research on charter schools and education more broadly.
 - a. What is the academic relevance of this study? How does it build on or complement the existing body of research on the topic?

Geographic priority areas

Though these are regions of interest, projects that align with the research agenda and fall outside these regions will still be considered.

- Baton Rouge, LA
- Camden, NJ
- Colorado state
- Georgia state
- Indianapolis, IN
- Kansas City, MO
- New Orleans, LA
- New York City, NY
- Newark, NJ
- Oakland, CA
- St. Louis, MO
- Stockton, CA
- Tennessee state
- Texas state
- Washington, DC
- Washington state

Review Process

An Executive Committee composed of leading charter school researchers, practitioners, and policymakers will review all proposals. The review process will take two months from the deadline date. The committee will be divided into two subcommittees: a research subcommittee and a policy/practice subcommittee. The committees will be asked to review proposals on the following indicators:

1. Methodological rigor
2. Policy relevance
3. Project viability
4. Research agenda alignment
5. Academic relevance

Each proposal will be peer-reviewed by at least one member of the research subcommittee and one member of the policy/practice subcommittee. The Executive Committee will then meet to discuss the proposals, and final funding decisions will be made by Blueprint's Directors.

Applicants who receive a grant will be subject to the following requirements:

1. IRB approval or exemption before MIT can establish a subaward agreement to setup funding.
2. MIT requires an official acceptance of the proposal and budget by your institution to set up the subaward. Applicants are encouraged to submit the proposal to their office of sponsored programs or contracts department prior to the award decision to avoid delays and ensure that your institute will accept your proposal and proposal budget.
3. Once all materials have been received, it can take up to 60 days to establish the subaward. The award is paid on a cost reimbursable basis, and spending can usually be backdated through the date of the Blueprint award letter or date of IRB approval (whichever comes later). Funds are to be used for the purposes described in the proposal narrative and proposal budget. Significant changes to the project scope, design, or budget must be pre-approved by Blueprint Labs.
4. The terms of the award will be further specified in the award letter and in any subaward established with MIT. Acceptance of funding from Blueprint Labs signals your consent to these requirements. Non-compliance with these requirements could affect your eligibility for future funding from any Blueprint Labs Collaborative.
5. Grantees will typically be required to submit several reports, including a brief annual progress report and a final report, both including financial data.