Charter School Research Collaborative
Proposal Development Application Guide

Contact Information and Grant Basics will be carried over from the LOI. If you need to update this information, please email chartercollab@mitblueprintlabs.org.

Budget
- Total Budget Requested, USD
  - Maximum budget per grant type
    - Proposal development: $10,000 (direct costs only)
- Detailed Budget
  - [Template – You are required to use this template](#)
  - Allowable expenses
    - Salaries (PI, Co-PI, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Graduate Student, Researcher, Undergraduate Researcher, Other Research Staff, Other Staff)
    - Benefits (PI Benefits, Co-PI Benefits, Researcher Benefits, Other Staff Benefits, Tuition/Fees)
    - Other Collaborator (Independent Consultant, Advisor)
    - Travel (Project Travel, Conference, or Dissemination Travel)
    - Equipment and Software (Equipment, Software)
    - Project Expenses (Supplies, Participant Stipends/Costs, Data, Communication, Transcription)
    - Other (This should only be used for expenses not covered in the choices above)
    - Indirect rate
      - Please budget direct costs only. Indirects will be 10-15%, depending on the final funding sources. If selected to receive funding, we will provide you with the maximum indirect rate to use. Indirect expenses will be added to the total grant received in your final budget. For example, if you submit a $10,000 request and receive an indirect rate of 10%, you will submit a final budget for $11,000.
  - Budget justification for each line-item <u>must</u> be included in the detailed budget.
  - If you are applying in partnership with another organization or researcher, and will make a subaward, <u>we require that the organization receiving the majority of the funding submits the application</u> and houses the subaward at their institution/organization.

Proposal Development Narrative
Proposal development grants are intended to be used for early-stage research activities. Please see [here](#) for additional guidance and example projects.

In a 1-3 page double-spaced PDF, include:
- A description of the project and the project's significance. A brief timeline of key project events and milestones.
- A clear plan to determine whether a full research project would be feasible.
  - How will this proposal be used to assess the feasibility of the project?
- A description of the data needed to complete this project and your plans to secure data access.
- A description of other funding in-hand and pending for this project.
- A description of the relationship with your research partner(s).

- A demonstration of policy relevance and research agenda alignment.

Narrative FAQs
- This narrative may not exceed 3 pages. Your reference list should follow your narrative in the same PDF file and will not count toward the 3-page limit. Footnotes will also not count towards the word limit.
- The text should be double-spaced and in 12-point font. APA style is preferred.
- Tables and other figures can be included in the text of your proposal, where appropriate, provided they are used sparingly. It is important that you describe or explain any tables or figures in the narrative portion of your proposal, which will contribute to your word count. Do not assume that tables and other figures are self-explanatory.

Project Team
A document describing the project team should be uploaded in PDF format and should identify the roles, responsibilities, and relevant expertise of the PI, Co-PI(s), and any supporting researcher(s). In the case where your project includes Co-PIs and other supporting researchers, this document should articulate how the team will work together to complete the research project, highlighting what each team member will contribute to the project. Further, a short description of the relationship between the project team and the research partner may be included if appropriate. This document should not exceed 250 words and should be double-spaced in 12-point font.

Disclosure of connections to the Executive Committee:
The current Executive Committee members are: Josh Angrist (MIT), Carycruz Bueno (Wesleyan University), Sarah Cohodes (University of Michigan), Drew Jacobs (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools), Constance Jones (Noble Schools), Jack Mountjoy (University of Chicago Booth School of Business), Parag Pathak (MIT), and Karega Rausch (National Association of Charter School Authorizers).

Appendix
- **IRB Approval or Exemption Letter (optional file upload)**
    - Proof of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required at the time of proposal submission. If IRB approval is needed for this project based on your research scope and it is chosen for funding, your organization will be responsible for obtaining IRB review and approval in accordance with both your institutional and MIT policies and applicable law. MIT Blueprint Labs may be able to support IRB approval for non-profits without their own IRB. Per MIT policy, for-profits are ineligible to receive MIT IRB support.
- **Other Supporting Documentation (optional file upload)**
    - Use this optional section to upload additional relevant documentation such as letters of collaboration or interview protocols.
- **I agree to follow MIT's conduct and community standards, should I receive and accept a grant. (check box)**
    - Read all policies here.

Proposal Development Criteria

Proposal development grants are intended to be used for early-stage research activities. See here for additional guidance and example projects.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria.

- **Project viability:** Proposals should demonstrate a clear plan to determine whether a pilot or full research project is feasible (e.g., in regard to data access).
- **Policy relevance:** The proposed work should help foster a relationship between the researcher and the research partner. Proposals should answer questions of pressing interest to policymakers and practitioners.
- **Research agenda alignment:** Proposals should align with at least one of the questions in the Collaborative's research agenda (see here). All projects should focus on US charter schools.

Geographic priority areas

Projects that examine one of the Collaborative's geographic areas of interest (see below) are preferred and will be given priority over similarly evaluated projects. However, projects that fall outside these areas of interest that receive high marks on all other criteria will be competitive.

- 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

The Blueprint Labs team will review each letter of inquiry to assess alignment with the Collaborative's priorities and research agenda, as well as project viability. Invited full proposals will be evaluated by the Collaborative's Executive Committee. The Committee is composed of leading charter school researchers, practitioners, and policymakers and will review all full proposals. The review process will take two months from the full application 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. Project viability
2. Policy relevance
3. Research agenda alignment

Each full 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.

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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.