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USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE RESEARCH GRANTS

EXTERNAL REVIEW TEMPLATE FOR RESEARCHERS

(Revised September 2019)

*Reviews are to be entered in the online review form in Easygrants. You may use this template to write your review offline first, and then copy and paste your comments online.*

**Applicant:**

**Conflicts of Interest**

If you perceive a conflict of interest with a proposal, please let us know immediately. Conflicts may arise if you:

* would be advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of the award
* are employed at or otherwise affiliated with the same institution as the investigator
* are a close colleague of the investigator
* have published with the investigator in the past five years
* have been a primary mentor for the investigator in the past ten years (e.g., mentor for postdoctoral fellowship or dissertation committee member)
* are currently being considered for Foundation funding
* are a project team member, consultant, advisor or mentor on the application

**Reviewer Guidance**

The most useful reviews are both critical and constructive. Your comments – except for the “bottom line” recommendation – will be shared anonymously with the investigator(s), and the full review will be shared with our Senior Program Team and, if requested, Board members.

Reviews help the Senior Program Team make determinations about the merits of proposed research, including:

* the potential contribution to the field
* the strength of the research design and methods
* and the promise of the study for improving the use of research evidence.

Reviews also help applicants revise their proposals, whether or not they are funded by the Foundation. Please share your assessment of both the strengths and weaknesses of the research. Please elaborate on particular concerns that you identify, explain why they matter, and offer constructive suggestions for strengthening the research.

**FIT WITH FOUNDATION INTERESTS**

1. Comment on the proposal’s fit with the Foundation’s interest in improving the use of research evidence. We support research to do any of the following:

1. identify, create, and test the structural and social conditions that foster more routine and constructive uses of existing research evidence;
2. identify, create, and test the incentives, structures, and relationships that facilitate the production of new research evidence that responds to decision makers’ needs; ***or***
3. investigate whether and under what conditions using high-quality research improves decision making and youth outcomes

Drawing on your expertise, please explain how the proposed research is or is not a fit with at least *one* of the Foundation’s interests.

2. Please explain whether and how the research questions and/or hypotheses are clear and compelling.

**RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND ANALYSES**

\**In-depth assessments of research design, methods, and analyses are extremely valuable to our grantmaking process. We appreciate your careful attention to these questions, as reviews do not always fully identify and describe concerns.*

3. Please identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and sampling plan. In doing so, please assess the appropriateness of the design to answer the questions asked and its feasibility.

4. Please identify the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection plan, including the data collection tools (i.e., interview or observation protocols, coding schemes, measures, etc.), the plans to field those tools, and the feasibility of the plan for maximizing response rates and gaining access to sites and respondent.

5. Please assess the sophistication and rigor of the analysis plan. Describe the appropriateness of the proposed analysis and whether the team demonstrates an understanding of the strengths and limits of various analytic techniques. If the applicant proposes mixed methods work, comment on the strength of the plan to integrate data from various methods.

6. If the applicant proposes measurement development work, comment on (i) the importance of the construct, (ii) the utility of the measure for the field, (iii) the rigor of the measurement work, and (iv) the team’s measurement expertise.

7. Do you have other comments on the significance or rigor of the proposed work?

**THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION**

8. Please explain how the proposed research would or would not significantly build on existing empirical and theoretical literature on the use of research evidence. Would it advance the field in significant ways?

9. Please comment on whether the policy or practice issue(s) are sensible ones to study. Address whether there is a compelling rationale that research evidence plays any role (i.e. conceptual, instrumental, political, etc.) in those policy or practice issues.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

10. Is the budget appropriate? Does it reflect a cost-effective use of the Foundation’s limited resources? Describe any concerns.

11. Is the project team adequately staffed to successfully carry out the project? If not, what staffing or expertise is needed? (Please note that the Foundation discourages large advisory committees. Each proposed advisor should serve a specific and significant need.)

**“BOTTOM LINE” RECOMMENDATION (not shared with applicant)**

The Foundation’s long-term aims are to understand how to improve the production and use of research evidence in policy and practice. No single study can fulfill these goals, but we want to support projects that will significantly contribute to achieving them.

Please offer a clear recommendation regarding whether the Foundation should fund this project. Consider the questions or hypotheses addressed, quality of the proposed work, and likely contribution to our long-term goals. Please offer a decision that corresponds with your overall evaluation of the project.

* Why or why not is this project worth funding?
* Please explain any contingencies you think the Foundation should consider in making a decision (i.e. we should fund if the proposal is altered in specific ways; we should fund as a lower priority, etc.).