

IRP Extramural Small Grants 2020: Youth Employment
Application Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CDT **November 15, 2019**

Release Date: 10/02/2019

ABOUT GRANT

The **Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP)** at the University of Wisconsin–Madison seeks to fund research on youth employment, a key area of interest identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). Proposals are invited from Ph.D.-holding scholars at all career stages, from postdoctoral fellows to senior faculty, and from all disciplines who are interested in pursuing policy-relevant research and working with ASPE to maximize the policy impact of their work.

IRP has established this small grants program to support timely secondary analyses of existing data to address emerging policy-relevant research questions and to provide seed funding for preliminary and pilot work that will likely lead to high-impact research. Researchers will participate in partnership consultations with IRP and ASPE throughout the grant cycle and will be asked to consider integrating this feedback into their projects and ongoing research.

ABOUT IRP

IRP is a center for interdisciplinary research into the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality and the impact of related policies and programs in the United States. As the National Poverty Research Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, IRP coordinates the **U.S. Collaborative of Poverty Centers (CPC)** in an integrated set of activities with the ultimate goal of improving the effectiveness of public policies to reduce poverty and inequality and their impacts on the well-being of the American people.

2020 FOCAL THEME: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Although recent data show that employment and earnings are increasing, too many Americans still struggle to achieve economic stability for themselves and their families. To promote economic mobility and continue to strengthen our economy, it is critical to improve labor force participation and ensure that youth grow up to have employment and careers that allow them to provide for themselves and their families. Recently, there has been a decrease in the number of youths who are “disconnected” (meaning they are neither working nor in school) from 14.7 percent in 2010 to 11.5 percent in 2019. However, there are approximately 4.6 million young people in America between the ages of 16 and 24 years old—about one in nine teenagers and young adults—who are considered disconnected. These young people are often defined as “opportunity youth.” They often do not have access to the critical resources and experiences gained from education and early employment opportunities. They face multiple challenges in developing the knowledge and skills to successfully transition into self-sufficient adulthood.

Opportunity youth are more likely to experience adverse life circumstances and have higher rates of health disparities and incarceration. Many such youths have experienced disconnection due to a variety of

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reasons such as dropping out of high school, incarceration, and challenges such as speaking English as a second language or becoming a teen parent. There are also societal costs for disconnection including lost taxes (on lost earnings) and costs for systems (child welfare, social services, juvenile and criminal justice, and health care). These young people are also often underrepresented in and disengaged from traditional civic life.

IRP seeks to support research that informs policies and programs that aim to understand and improve employment outcomes for youths from low-income families and opportunity youth. There is particular interest in the role of human services programs administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Projects may utilize a variety of analytic methods and may focus on a specific policy, program, or intervention (e.g., Child Support Enforcement, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Welfare, Responsible Fatherhood Programs, Health Profession Opportunity Grants, services funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, comprehensive/wraparound service models), or on broader social and economic factors (e.g., overall labor market changes; leveraging data in support of research and analysis; operational issues in the disconnected service systems opportunity youth need to access; stigma). However, projects must be designed to generate potential policy and/or programmatic implications for opportunity youth programs at the federal, state, or local level. Research questions of particular interest include:

1. What attitudes and values do young people have about employment, including entrepreneurship, skilled trades, and manufacturing? Have these attitudes and values about employment changed over time for youth? How are these attitudes and values similar or different for youths from low-income households and opportunity youth compared to other youths? What role do parents play?
2. What are effective strategies and promising practices for connecting youths from low-income households and opportunity youth to work and career pathways?
3. What are the characteristics of different subgroups of youths and how do they relate to education and employment outcomes? (e.g., harder to serve vs. easier to serve; chronically disconnected vs. short-term disconnected; rural vs. urban and suburban; youths from low-income households vs. opportunity youth; young parents vs. nonparents).
4. What are the patterns of disconnection over time for youths from low-income households and opportunity youth in terms of cycling in and out of disconnection to school and work?
5. What are the health, mental health, and substance abuse experiences of youths from low-income households and opportunity youth compared to other youths and how are they related to education and employment outcomes?

TERMS

ELIGIBILITY

The Principal Investigator must hold a doctorate or the highest degree appropriate for their discipline at the time of application. Individuals not associated with a university (domestic or foreign) and foreign entities are ineligible for awards made under this announcement. University of Wisconsin–Madison faculty and postdoctoral fellows are ineligible for funding.

CONTRACT PERIOD

The grant contract period will be from **January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020.**

FUNDING

Grants may not exceed \$25,000. This amount includes indirect costs at the applicant's institution, if required (see Item 4 under Application Instructions below).

COMMITMENT

Receipt of a grant from IRP will require a commitment to:

- Within the **first 6 weeks** of the grant period, participate (either in person or via video conferencing) in a meeting with IRP, ASPE, and HHS representatives to discuss the project and how to maximize its policy relevance.
- Submit brief quarterly progress reports (≤ 150 words) of work accomplished during the preceding three months on **April 1, 2020 (on activity from January through March), and July 1, 2020 (from April through June)** to irpapply@wisc.edu.
- Submit a draft paper for review and comments to irpapply@wisc.edu by **October 1, 2020**.
- During **October 2020**, participate (either in person or via video conferencing) in a meeting with IRP, ASPE and HHS representatives to provide an update on project progress and discuss how to maximize its policy relevance.
- Submit a revised draft by **December 31, 2020**, to irpapply@wisc.edu.
- **During January 2021**, participate (either in person or via video conferencing) in a meeting with IRP, ASPE, and HHS representatives to discuss project findings and discuss how to maximize its policy relevance.
- Present the paper at a seminar, workshop, or other mutually agreed upon public event sponsored by IRP.
- Agree to have the work summarized in an IRP publication (*Focus; Fast Focus*), webinar, and/or podcast.
- Submit a final paper for academic publication no later than **September 1, 2021** and alert IRP of the submission by sending an e-mail to irpapply@wisc.edu with the name of the journal.

All travel related to project conversations reference above and all travel related to presentations requested by IRP or ASPE will be funded by IRP directly; applicants do not need to include this travel in their budgets. IRP will coordinate meetings visits with ASPE and principal investigators.

All publications associated with the grant should acknowledge the support of IRP and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE).

AWARD INFORMATION

IRP anticipates funding four to eight projects, with total funding (including direct and indirect costs) ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 each. Support is subject to the availability of funds. Nothing in this description of applications should be construed as committing IRP to dividing available funds among all qualified applicants.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit application at: https://irpwisc.formstack.com/forms/external_small_grants

Fax submissions will not be accepted. Proposal receipt will be acknowledged.

The application must contain as a single PDF file the following components in the order as listed:

1. A cover sheet giving the title of the proposed research, applicant's name, date of Ph.D., and institutional affiliation with full address and telephone number, e-mail address, and home address.
2. A one-page (double-spaced) abstract, describing research objectives, data, and methods.
3. Description of the applicant's proposed research, not to exceed eight double-spaced pages in 12-point type with one-inch margins all around, exclusive of references or appendixes. The proposal should carefully describe the issue(s) to be examined, hypotheses to be evaluated, methodology proposed, data sources to be used (including whether the data sources are already available to the PIs and how and in what timeframe those data sources will be acquired if not already available), and anticipated results of the research, including their potential implications for public policy.
4. An itemized budget showing (as relevant) the researcher's time, research assistant's time, travel costs, computer services, supplies, and indirect costs if required. Note that the awards will be issued in two increments corresponding to the IRP parent award. As such, the itemized budget should be presented in two periods: from January 1, 2020, to September 29, 2020, and from September 30, 2020, to December 31, 2020. (*Note also that the University of Wisconsin–Madison is not collecting indirect costs on these sub-awards from the prime grant; applicants are encouraged to request that their home institution forego or charge minimal indirect costs.*)
5. Curriculum vitae for all investigators.
6. A letter from the office of research and sponsored programs of the applicant's institution confirming administrative approval of the proposal.
7. A timely plan for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption for human subjects research (typically, secondary data analysis is eligible for exemption approval; consult your institution's IRB office). The University of Wisconsin will not execute subcontracts without documentation of IRB exemption or approval.

SELECTION CRITERIA

IRP will evaluate proposals in collaboration with affiliated scholars and ASPE staff. Award notifications will be made on or near **January 1, 2020**. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the topic to IRP's focal theme of youth employment (as discussed above).
2. The potential usefulness of the proposed research for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the development and implementation of public policy, especially programs and policies related to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Clarity of stated objectives, methods, and anticipated results.
4. The appropriateness and soundness of the research design, including choice of data, methods of analysis, and other procedures.
5. Demonstrated ability of research to be conducted in the timeframe established in this grant particularly in regards to the availability of data required to conduct described analysis.
6. The reasonableness of estimated cost and time commitments in relation to anticipated results.

7. The qualifications and experience of personnel, including demonstrated familiarity with the literature and data to be used.

CONTACTS

All inquiries, including questions on the application process, budget, and research issues, should be directed to: irpapply@ssc.wisc.edu.

TIMELINE

Proposal release	October 1, 2019
Deadline for proposal receipt	November 15, 2019
Notification of award	On or near January 1, 2020
Contract begins	January 1, 2020
Meeting with IRP and ASPE	January/early February 2020
Quarterly progress reports due	April 1, 2020; July 1, 2020
Complete initial draft paper due	October 1, 2020
Meeting with IRP and ASPE	October 2020
Revised draft paper due	December 31, 2020
Contract ends	December 31, 2020
Meeting with IRP and ASPE	January 2021
Paper submitted for publication and IRP alerted to journal by	September 1, 2021