



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

COLORADO EVALUATION
AND ACTION LAB

Request for Proposals: Cross-System, Actionable Research Tailored to Priorities of Governor Polis's Administration

The Colorado Lab believes that smart, strategic partnerships with government have the potential to improve people's lives. The Lab serves as a bridge and translator between government and the research community.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to activate the research community to develop and disseminate cross-system research or evaluation projects that generate actionable information tailored to the priorities of Governor Polis's Administration. The goal of this RFP is to equip government partners with information that can inform cross-system collaboration, policy, and practice.

The Colorado Lab encourages research proposals that take meaningful steps toward a 360-degree view of aspects of these priorities while focusing on the needs of the whole person. Proposals must align with one of Governor Polis's *Bold Four Priorities* and may be tailored to the more specific *Wildly Important Priorities* set by his Cabinet Working Groups.

This RFP is designed for **research teams outside of government** to propose projects. State agencies' staff will be engaged in the review of these proposals to assess actionability and relevance to their priorities.

Research Ideas from Inside State Government have two avenues for Lab support:

- Call for Ideas
- Cabinet-Driven Projects

Bold Four Priorities:

- **Foster an economy that works for everyone**
- **Fulfill every child's potential regardless of zip code**
- **Move electric grid to renewable sources by 2040**
- **Save Coloradans money on healthcare¹ (not part of this RFP)**

¹ This RFP is tailored to the Bold Four Priorities and Cabinet Working Groups under the Governor's Office. The Office of Saving People Money on Health Care is under the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Opportunities for the research community to serve the goals of the Office of Saving People Money on Healthcare are forthcoming. Proposals will not be considered for this RFP under the priority of *Save Coloradans money on healthcare*.

Wildly Important Priorities:

Governor Polis has six cabinet working groups composed of executive leadership from across state agencies, each of which is setting wildly important priorities (WIPs) that are opportunities for cross-agency collaboration. The WIPs that are eligible for round one of this RFP are listed below. Subsequent rounds of this RFP may include additional WIPs and/or the Health Cabinet.

- **Cannabis Cabinet Working Group:** Establish Colorado as a national leader in innovative and balanced cannabis policy through a focus on finance, workforce development, education, research and development, regulatory innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- **Climate & Energy Cabinet Working Group:** Set Colorado on a path to 100% renewable energy for the grid by 2040 and position Colorado as a leader in clean energy economy.
- **Criminal Justice Cabinet:** Incarcerate fewer people by reducing recidivism.
- **Education & Workforce Cabinet Working Group:** Ensure all Coloradans have equitable opportunities for quality, life-long education connected to the future of work.
- **Rural Cabinet Working Group:** Develop a cohesive development plan for rural Colorado.

Cross-System Research:

Responsive proposals will convey how the research or evaluation project takes a cross-system approach by:

- Having clear policy or practice implications for two or more state agencies.
OR
- Requiring information (data) from two or more state agencies to inform policy or practice.
OR
- Focusing on state agency collaboration or coordination with one or more local government partners or the private sector. The value of the research to state government decision-making must be clear.

Cross-system research projects that would not happen but for this opportunity will be prioritized.

Types of Studies:

- Descriptive studies using data that are linked across systems and put the spotlight on opportunities to make progress on a priority.
- Predictive models that can be used routinely by agencies to inform service delivery or other actions relevant to a priority.
- Causal studies of programs or policies implemented by or in partnership with Colorado government agencies aimed at making progress on a priority.
- Mixed methods studies that inform theory of change for priority-relevant programs or policies implemented by or in partnership with Colorado government agencies.

Any of the aforementioned study types may be supplemented by a qualitative component, but that is not a requirement. Purely qualitative studies will not be considered; leveraging administrative data is encouraged.

Where appropriate, projects are encouraged to use the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) for obtaining anonymized cross-system data. **All projects intending to use data from LINC are required to attend the RFP webinar**, scheduled for Monday, May 13, 2019 1 – 2pm MT to learn more about the LINC process.

Project Timelines and Award Range:

We anticipate making Colorado Lab recommendations for funding beginning in September 2019 with the expectation that projects would start between November 2019 and January 2020. All work must be completed by December 31, 2020.

Award Range:

- \$25,000 to \$150,000
- Awards over \$75,000 require a 25% cost-share in addition to funds requested from the Colorado Lab.

All costs must be research or dissemination related (i.e., program implementation is not allowable). No Indirect Costs are Allowed.

Applicant Eligibility:

Colorado institutions of higher education and Colorado-based non-profit, and for-profit research firms that have the ability to conduct actionable research and engage in mutualistic partnerships with government agencies are encouraged to apply. Eligible lead applicants may include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities. Priority will be given to proposals that include representatives from one or more Colorado institutions of higher education on the research team.

This RFP is tailored to the research community. State agencies are encouraged to submit through the Call for Ideas.

Proposals are due by Monday, July 1, 2019 at noon.

Proposals must be submitted via the online submission portal **as one PDF document** and include: (1) coversheet, (2) narrative and reference list, (2a) description of key personnel (2 pages maximum), (2b) budget and budget justification narrative, and (3) key personnel curriculum vitae (4 pages maximum per person).

Cover Sheet (entered directly into the online submission portal):

- Project title
- Priority that is the focus of the proposal

- Length of Project: Number of months (maximum length is 12 months)
- End Users of the Information: Be specific about the government agencies and, if appropriate, offices or divisions within the agencies.
- Abstract (125 words): Purpose of the study, data sources, how this project takes a bold step toward a 360-degree view of the problem/opportunity/priority, and “so what” or why it matters. Write the abstract for the audiences identified as end users of this project.
- Principal Investigator: Name, title, affiliation, email address, and preferred phone number²
- Research Team Members (Optional): Name, title, and affiliation
- Contracting Contact: Name, title, email address, phone number, mailing address

Narrative (5 pages maximum, not including References, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins):

- Project title
- Purpose of the study
- Significance
 - How is the study positioned in the existing literature nationally and in Colorado?
 - How can findings advance or inform cross-system policy and practice in Colorado relevant to one of the Cabinet Working Group’s Wildly Important Priorities?
- Pre-analysis plan
 - Sample and sampling strategy
 - Data sources and specific data elements
 - Outcome measure definitions
 - Analytic approach (e.g., specify the model for causal studies; specify the methodology and coding strategy for qualitative components of the study)
- Rationale for why the method will yield actionable information
- Explain why this project will not happen, but for the Colorado Lab; consider the menu of Lab supports linked [HERE](#)
- Project timeline that includes tasks and deliverables
 - Consider products that are useful to the Government agencies (i.e., peer-reviewed journal article may come later, but highlight what can be provided in a quick-turnaround format to drive action).
- Feasibility
 - Describe the feasibility of this project (e.g., access to data, staff capacity and expertise, prior experience).
 - Describe anticipated barriers to feasibility; the Colorado Lab anticipates being an active partner in addressing feasibility issues for some projects. See menu of supports linked [HERE](#).

² Principal Investigators from the University of Colorado Denver should share the contract template linked [HERE](#) with their legal teams to ensure the language will be acceptable prior to submitting a proposal. To ensure consistency, only project-specific language (e.g., scope of work, deliverables, funding amounts) are negotiable. CSU and UNC have active projects with the relevant contract terms and may not need to review the template in advance.

Detailed Budget (use budget form linked [here](#))

Provide an overall project detail budget, using the budget form provided. No indirect costs allowed. No-cost extensions are not likely to be approved as the research needs to be timely in order to inform work within the Governor's priorities. Dissemination activities must be aligned to informing Colorado policy and practice.

Not allowable costs

- Indirect costs
- Out-of-state travel
- Conference travel for academic meetings; however, in-state convenings with Colorado government partners is allowable
- Major equipment purchases

Linked Information Network of Colorado costs³

- LINC projects are anticipated to cost between \$20-30,000 depending on the number of data sources across and within state agencies.
- To estimate LINC project costs for the proposal, **please schedule a conversation** with Whitney LeBoeuf (whitney.leboeuf@du.edu), Director of Data Integration and Analytics at the Colorado Lab as soon as possible and no later than June 3, 2019.
- State agencies that have signed an Enterprise Memorandum of Understanding to participate in LINC include the Colorado Departments of:
 - Human Services
 - Public Health and Environment
 - Health Care Policy and Financing
 - Labor and Employment
 - Higher Education

Budget Justification Narrative

Provide a budget justification narrative. Format is flexible, but please specify:

- How costs were arrived (e.g., fringe benefit rate, mileage rate, cost of supplies)
- How costs relate to achieving the goals of the project
- Personnel's role on projects
- Source of cost-share

³ Note. The Colorado Lab is currently funding a staff person embedded in the Governor's Office of Information Technology to support LINC and other data infrastructure activities. Thus, the LINC fees for this RFP are what is in addition to the costs the Lab is already covering through non-project-specific investments.

Key Personnel and Curriculum Vitae

- Description of key personnel, role on project, and description of experience collaborating with government partners (2 pages maximum, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins)
- Curriculum vitae for key personnel (4 pages per person maximum, no formatting requirements).

All submission materials must be submitted [HERE](#)

Expectations for Project Teams:

- Commitment to developing or strengthening a mutualistic relationship with government partners.
- Attend an annual networking event with state agency partners in the Denver area.
- Engage in monthly virtual meetings with the Lab to discuss project progress and brainstorm strategies to address barriers (select one representative of the research team to participate).
- Develop a pre-analysis plan prior to receiving outcome data and register causal studies with the Open Science Framework.
- Collaborate with the Colorado Lab and government agencies to develop communication strategies for the results.
- Final reports and presentations are branded as Colorado Lab products that are authored by your research team. Affiliations of research team members will be listed.

Review Process (anticipated to be complete by September 2019)

Step 1: Proposals are pre-screened for responsiveness to RFP

Step 2: Proposals are reviewed by a committee that includes government partners and researchers

For projects that advance beyond step two of the review process, the Colorado Lab will assign a program officer and provide customized, project appropriate support aimed at addressing reviewer feedback such as:

- Conducting a virtual meeting with the research team to share feedback from the phase one review process.
- Supporting refining the scope of projects and methods to ensure relevance to state agencies.
- Connecting academic researchers with government staff to refine the scoped project.
- Supporting the identification of state administrative data appropriate for projects and identifying opportunities to leverage LINC.
- Brainstorming strategies to ensure feasibility of the project.

The research team will have the opportunity to make written revisions to respond to reviewer feedback. In addition, the research team will be asked to identify which Lab supports are needed to successfully complete the project if funded, such as:

- Ensuring the relevance, potential target audience(s), and actionability of results before a project gets underway.
- Facilitating outreach to and convening of potential stakeholders to inform research and obtain buy-in.
- Facilitating development of and accountability to a partnership communications plan.
- Supporting development and registration of a rigorous analysis plan.
- Supporting the identification, integration, security, and accessibility of data appropriate for the project.
- Supporting development of an external communications plan and implementing plan on schedule.
- Co-authoring research products.

Step 3: The review committee reconvenes to make a recommendation for funding.

Proposals are reviewed and prioritized for funding by a review committee that may include Governor Polis' staff, Cabinet members or their designees, and the Colorado Lab. Colorado Lab staff who serve as program officers will not participate in the final review of that project. Funding decisions are anticipated to be staggered. All decisions will be made no later than November 2019 so that projects can start no later than January 2020.

Questions? Contact Dr. Elysia Clemens, Deputy Director of the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, elysia.clemens@du.edu or 303-871-6262.

OTHER OPEN CALLS FOR RESEARCH

THERE IS AN OPEN CALL FOR COLORADO STATE AGENCY STAFF MEMBERS TO SUBMIT CROSS-SYSTEM RESEARCH IDEAS.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE.

THE COLORADO LAB IS OFFERING PLANNING RESEARCH GRANTS DIRECTLY TO EACH CABINET WORKING GROUP TO LEVERAGE THE LINKED INFORMATION NETWORK OF COLORADO.