Title: Small Research Grants in the Areas of Inquiry
Sponsor: Spencer Foundation

Abstract: The Small Research Grants program is intended to support education research projects with small budgets. In keeping with the Spencer Foundation's mission, this program aims to fund academic work that will contribute to the improvement of education, broadly conceived. Historically, the work the Spencer Foundation has funded through these grants has spanned a range of topics and disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, economics, history, and anthropology, and they employ a wide range of research methods. The following examples of recently funded small grants illustrate the diversity of what the Spencer Foundation supports:

- an experimental study of how college students use visual representations in solving math problems
- a study exploring the process of racial and rural identity formation among African American high-school students who attend de facto segregated schools in the rural South
- a mixed-methods study focusing on the different types of knowledge novice and experienced teachers draw on in teaching for reading comprehension

The majority of small grant proposals that are funded by the Foundation are "field-initiated" in the sense that they are not submitted in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP). In the past, the Foundation has requested that proposals within the Small Grants program be submitted within one of the areas of inquiry listed below. The Foundation does not use this information in the review process, but captures it in the application to better understand the variety of research that is proposed. The areas are broadly organized as follows:

Field-Initiated: Proposals in this area are those that fall under the Spencer Foundation's general mission of funding research on education, but don't appear to fit in one of the areas mentioned below. Although the areas below are broad, there are many projects that don't have a strong focus in any of them; those should be tagged with Field-Initiated as the research area in the online application.

The Relation between Education and Social Opportunity: This area would include projects that seek to shed light on the role education can play in reducing economic and social inequalities -- as well as, sometimes, reinforcing them -- and to find ways to more fully realize education's potential to promote more equal opportunity. Proposals where the primary aim is to examine the ways in which differences in social and educational experiences (such as quality and character of schooling or the number of years in school) translate into differences including employment, earnings, and civic and academic outcomes would be included in this area.

Teaching, Learning, and Instructional Resources: Studies in this area would be those that will lead to better understanding and improvements in the intellectual, material, and organizational resources that contribute to successful teaching and learning. They may investigate questions that are grounded directly in teaching practice, as well as research about important aspects of child and adult learning processes and contexts that hold promise for guiding informed policymaking.

The New Civics: This area represents the broader Foundation belief that cultivating knowledge and new ideas about civic education will ultimately improve students' lives and enrich society. The designation "new" refers to an expanded understanding of civic education and its relationship to civic action. Thus, proposals with this focus would deepen our understanding of influences on civic action, attend to social inequalities in civic education, and have the potential to shape future research and practice in these fields.

Organizational Learning in Schools, School Systems, and Higher Education Systems: Research in this area would contribute to strengthening the capacity of schools and education systems to operate as learning organizations. Because the capacity and motivation for organizational learning depend as well on the larger institutional structures within which schools and systems operate, research on, among other things, the roles of school boards, governments and unions; the role of markets and competition in the funding of schools; and the perceptions, concerns, and opportunities for voice among parents and the broader public would fall under this area.

Purposes and Values of Education: Proposals in this area would be interested in advancing analytical, historical, and empirical work that probes effectively and creatively into deeply challenging and permanently important issues which can contribute toward social decision-making that moves education along constructive paths.

Deadline: November 1, 2017
Title: Strategic Initiatives: New Civics – Small Grants
Sponsor: Spencer Foundation

Abstract: The New Civics initiative is embedded within the broader foundation belief that cultivating knowledge and new ideas about education will ultimately improve students’ lives and enrich society. The designation "new" refers to an expanded understanding of civic education and its relationship to civic action. Ultimately, the foundation sees civic education not simply as a grounding in historical and procedural knowledge of systems of government, but, more broadly, as education, whether in schools or elsewhere, that develops skills, knowledge, and dispositions that lead to informed and reasoned civic action. With this expanded understanding, the foundation aims to support research that deepens the understanding of educational and other influences on civic action, that attends to social inequalities in civic education and civic action, and that has the potential to shape future research and practice in these fields. And the foundation aims to create occasions for scholars' learning, inquiry, and exchange - to strengthen the research community and its connections to educational policy and practice. The New Civics initiative invites research proposals that ask critical questions about how education can more effectively contribute to the civic development of young people. As a start, the foundation asks what experiences, environments, and contexts help young people, from all walks of life, develop the habits, skills, understandings, and dispositions that encourage informed participation in civic affairs. In so doing the foundation seeks to connect to a tradition of civic education inside schools, both to reassert its legitimacy as a primary aim of public schooling, and to reimagine what civic education might include. Yet civic development also occurs outside classrooms and schools, and the foundation underscores its interest in research about civic action and learning in those contexts as well. The ultimate aim is to contribute to educational improvement by supporting high-quality research studies that can lead to better-designed, more effective programs, policies, practices, and settings that prepare young people to act and to do so in informed and reasoned ways. Research priorities, while framed broadly enough to encompass a range of approaches and research questions, ultimately come down to understanding factors that promote the learning emphasized in The New Civics, as well as factors that discourage that learning.

Three sets of influences on civic learning and action are of interest:
1. Powerful motivations and psychological influences
2. Enabling learning experiences and environments
3. Societal or group norms, political processes or events, historical and cultural trends, and other contextual influences

The scope of research that contributes to this agenda is broad. The foundation is interested in populations ranging in age from young children to early adulthood, in formal and informal educational settings and contexts (including 'new media' and the like), and in work that explores the implications for civic action of differing national political systems and cultures and of the globalization of citizenship, national identity, and agency. The portfolio will benefit from the perspectives of many disciplines and from diverse methodologies and perspectives. The foundation encourages research that is theoretically well-grounded and that allows for consideration of alternative explanations and of multiple possible pathways to civic learning and civic action.

Deadline: November 1, 2017

Title: Envisioning the Next Generation of Student Support
Sponsor: Lumina Foundation for Education

Abstract: Lumina Foundation is interested in discovering innovative solutions, or a set of solutions, available to students that will better support their pathways to college. In an age when technology touches just about every aspect of our society and is transforming how we communicate, work, socialize, and learn, this program asks the college access community to consider how technology-infused models may better enable effective practices, programs, and services to dramatically increase their positive impact on student outcomes.

Due Date: Letter of Inquiry – Continuous
Title: **Education Grants**  
**Sponsor:** Corning Incorporated Foundation  
**Abstract:** The Foundation has a longstanding commitment to improving the quality of life in communities where the company has a corporate presence. The Foundation supports community-based strategic initiatives that benefit the greatest number of people over the longest period of time. It strives to leverage its impact through a strategy of shared social responsibility with other "investors" rather than acting as a single major donor. The Foundation places a primary focus on education because it provides a deep and sustainable benefit for the entire community. Improving student performance, especially in science and technology, creates a lifetime of opportunity for both learners and employers.  
**Due Date:** Letter of Inquiry may be submitted at any time.

Title: **Educated Kids Grant**  
**Sponsor:** W. K. Kellogg Foundation  
**Abstract:** To ensure that all children get the development and education they need as a foundation for independence and success, the foundation seeks opportunities to invest in early child development (ages zero to eight), leading to reading proficiency by third grade, high school graduation, and pathways to meaningful employment. All children need the support of parents and community to assure their healthy development and education. The foundation is partnering with organizations working on early childhood education, with a commitment to whole child development, educational advocacy, family literacy, innovative educational practices, policy reform and lifelong learning. The foundation focuses on communities where children and families are most in need of high quality early intervention to achieve success by third grade and maintain it beyond. The foundation's approach is both bottom-up and top-down. The foundation seeks opportunities to increase its strategic presence by investing in national organizations and their networks. At state and local levels, the foundation simultaneously explores approaches to helping children and families in ways supported by their local communities. The foundation's strategies and programs in this funding area are as follows: 1. Whole Child Development - Support comprehensive and integrated approaches to healthy child development that strengthen the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, cultural and civic development of young children. 2. Family Literacy - Give the knowledge, skills, tools and environmental support that parents, guardians, extended family members and caregivers need to successfully navigate systems and advocate on behalf of individual children's development and well-being. 3. Educational Advocacy - Support parents, students, educators and others in their efforts to change the formal educational system in ways that help children succeed in school and life.  
**Due Date:** Rolling Deadline