

Letter of Intent to Request Evaluation Set-Aside Funds to Support a Program Evaluation or the Development of Program Performance Measures

Applying for Funds

To request Evaluation Set-Aside (ESA) funding to conduct a program evaluation or develop program performance measures, applicants must provide a Letter of Intent (LOI), using this PDF form to outline the proposed project, prior to submitting an application.

The LOI will be reviewed by the DPCPSI Office of Program Evaluation and Performance (OPEP) for completeness and eligibility for ESA funding (see the section below). If no issues are found, OPEP will forward the LOI to the NIH Evaluation Policy and Oversight Committee (EPOC) to assess the proposed project's potential impact.¹ The EPOC's overall impact rating (high, moderate, or low) will be one of several factors considered by the EPOC Chairperson in making a funding decision. For detailed information about the review process, please see the *Guidance for Requesting NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Funds*.

Please complete the LOI template and submit it to Evaluate@mail.nih.gov by the established deadline.²

Please note:

- ✓ The LOI must be submitted using this PDF form. Do not exceed the page limit stated in Section 4 or attach supporting materials. (Supporting materials may be included in the application.) Any noncompliant LOI will be returned to you for revision.
- ✓ Prior to submission, your LOI must be cleared by a Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Officer of the lead IC or OD Office that will sponsor the proposed project.
- ✓ If you do not submit the required LOI by the posted deadline or if your LOI describes a project ineligible for ESA funding, your LOI will not be reviewed by EPOC and you may not submit an application.

Approximately 6 weeks after the LOI submission deadline, OPEP will notify applicants of the EPOC's overall impact rating for their proposed project. If applicants choose to submit an application to request ESA funding, application forms (including the abstract and budget templates) and submission deadline³ can be found on the OPEP website. Please direct any questions to Evaluate@mail.nih.gov.

NIH and HHS Guidelines for ESA Funding Eligibility

Per NIH guidelines, the following types of projects are eligible for ESA funding:

- Program evaluation (needs assessment, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, or feasibility study to design a process or outcome evaluation)
- Development of program performance measures

¹ For the purpose of the ESA Program, "potential impact" is broadly defined as the likelihood that a proposed project will make useful contributions to an IC, multiple ICs, or NIH as a whole.

² Deadline for submitting LOIs is typically in November of the fiscal year. Actual deadline will be determined annually and posted on the OPEP website.

³ Deadline for submitting applications is typically in February of the fiscal year. Actual deadline will be determined annually and posted on the OPEP website.

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In addition, HHS guidelines specify that the following types of projects are ineligible for ESA funding:

- The evaluation of individual local projects.
- The evaluation of individual 'R&D' experiments and demonstration projects.
- The continuing operation of management information systems or ongoing monitoring systems. (The use of ESA funds to finance the design and development of management information systems is limited to a maximum of two years.)
- The continuing collection of baseline data.
- On-site review and monitoring of local projects. (The development and pilot testing of instruments and procedures for on-site project review and monitoring is eligible for funding, but the operation of ongoing monitoring systems is not.)
- The assessment of prospective policies, where no programs yet exist.

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For OPEP Use Only
Date Submitted:
ESA Reference #:

Section 1: Title and Contact Information

1.1 Title of proposed project.

1.2 IC or OD Office that will assume primary responsibility for the project.

Institute or Center OR OD/

1.3 Name and contact information of the IC or OD Office point-of-contact.⁴

1.4 Name and contact information of the P&E Officer who reviewed the letter of intent.

1.5 Other IC(s), OD Office(s), or organization(s) that are co-sponsoring the project.

Section 2: Type of Proposed Project

2.1 Type of proposed project (check one):

- Program Evaluation
- Development of Program Performance Measures

2.2 If the project is a program evaluation, indicate the type of evaluation planned:

- Needs Assessment Process Evaluation Outcome Evaluation
- Feasibility Study (to design a process or outcome evaluation)

⁴ If multiple individuals are listed, indicate the one who will be designated as the project officer if funding is approved.

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Section 3: Estimated Cost of Proposed Project (Optional)

3.1 Estimated cost of the project. *If known, state the anticipated cost of the project or provide an estimated range of cost (e.g., \$120,000-\$150,000). Note: The development of program performance measures may not exceed \$100,000 per application.*

\$

3.2 Use of ESA funds. *If known, briefly describe (in 3-5 bullet points) how ESA funds will be used to support the project (e.g., survey grant applicants who received funding and those who did not; gather and analyze grantees' publication data). Note: ESA funds may not be used to develop or implement program activities, including those that stem from findings or recommendations of the proposed project.*

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Section 4: Program Summary and Project Overview

Note: Please read the instructions below carefully before completing Section 4.

Section 4 may not exceed two pages. All applicants must:

- 1. Enter all text on the next two pages provided (pages 6-7),**
- 2. Address each of the three elements below, and**
- 3. Include a label/heading (4.1, 4.2, or 4.3) in front of the text that addresses each element.**

4.1 Program Summary. *Briefly describe the program to be evaluated or for which performance measures will be developed. Include the program's organizational location within the IC or NIH; the fiscal year it was established; its approximate size in terms of staff and annual budget. Summarize the program's main goals, functions, and activities. Briefly describe how the program supports the IC or NIH mission – for example, how it advances one or more key IC or NIH priorities, provides cost-savings, enables the IC or NIH to be more efficient or productive, improves transparency and accountability, and/or strengthens the IC or NIH's ability to comply with legislative, regulatory, or administrative requirements.*

4.2 Project Overview. *Briefly describe the purpose and scope of the proposed project. Indicate how it will address knowledge gaps about the program described in the Program Summary, how its findings (or products) will be used and by whom, and how the project will support critical and timely decision making by the IC or NIH.*

4.3 Trans-NIH Relevance. *Briefly discuss how the proposed project and its findings (or products) will or may benefit other ICs or NIH at large.*

Any noncompliant LOI will be returned to the applicant for revision.

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Section 4: Program Summary and Project Overview



Section 4: Program Summary and Project Overview (continued)

