

Research Grants Program

Call for proposals

The Research Grants Program of the Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is intended to support research projects with budgets up to \$20,000 or less that focus on student experiences with the college-workforce transition process. Successful proposals will be consistent with the mission of CCWT, which is to support applied research that ultimately informs policies, programs and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.

Successful proposals will address one or more of the following program strands: work-based learning, career advising, and the job search/hiring process. It is essential that proposals include students as a focal point of the research, such that results provide new insights into students' experiences with college-work transitions.

Topics that are relevant to this Call include (but are certainly not limited to) the following:

- How different forms of work-based learning, including internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, and practicums lead to various student outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, employment, wages);
- How digital badges and other alternative credentials are interpreted and utilized by students and employers;
- The roles of social media and other social networking strategies and online employment databases in how students seek employment opportunities;
- Hiring processes for new graduates, including the role of “cultural matching” and other race, class, gender, and other identity-based screening practices;
- Different models for designing and providing career services at the department or campus level;
- How learning environments and pedagogical strategies can provide students with “21st century skills” that include cognitive and non-cognitive competencies;
- The different socio-economic constraints on how students prepare for careers and make transitions to the labor market;
- How different course-taking patterns and curricula are related to specific competencies and student labor market outcomes;
- Issues related to education–employment alignment (e.g., what sorts of jobs require college degrees; and whether and to what extent such jobs are related to the college graduate major, etc.).
- The experience of under-represented minority, adult learner, or first-generation students with the college-workforce transition process;
- Historical, political and/or socio-cultural analyses of college-workforce transition policies in the United States.

Proposals should focus on traditional post-secondary educational settings (e.g., community and technical colleges, four-year universities) but may concentrate on any industry, occupation, or discipline. Additionally, we encourage proposals that represent a variety of disciplinary and

methodological approaches, and we especially encourage proposals that employ novel conceptual frameworks and/or mixed methods designs. The plan for the research should be based on a maximum 2-year timeline, with a start date after April 2018 and concluding with the delivery of feedback to CCWT. Finally, we especially encourage submissions from institutions that serve populations that are under-represented in the research literature (rural, first-generation, adult learners, etc.).

Review criteria

Proposals will be reviewed with the following criteria in mind. First, proposals that clearly and compellingly describe how the results of the research may critically inform public debate, or may translate into implications for actual policies, programs, and practices related to college-workforce transitions will be rated highly. We also encourage critical approaches but such proposals should articulate specifically how the findings of the research might inform and enhance public and policy debates about the college-workforce transition process. Second, reviewers will be rating proposals based on the significance of the research questions, quality and appropriateness of the research design, adequacy of the budget, and potential of the principal investigator(s) to successfully complete the study.

Proposals will be reviewed by CCWT staff, members of the CCWT Advisory Board and qualified outside reviewers.

The application process

Interested PIs should first submit a pre-proposal Letter of Intent.

Pre-proposal Letter of Intent (LOI).

Researchers should submit a 2 page single-spaced pre-proposal LOI (not including references) that addresses the following areas:

- Proposal title
- Research questions and their significance
- A brief review of the key research literature
- Work plan that includes the proposed research methods, research timeline, and a dissemination plan
- Description of the research background of the PI, Co-PIs, and other key staff

LOIs should be accompanied by a separate document with a pre-proposal budget, with a description and brief justification of the major research expenses and an estimation of the total budget request. CCWT will not pay any indirect costs. The full CVs for the PI and any Co-PIs should be included with the pre-proposal LOI. Submit the above materials as a single correlated PDF document and email to ccwt@wcer.wisc.edu.

Full proposals

Applications considered promising by CCWT staff will be invited to submit a full proposal (1,500 words, not including references) for additional consideration.

LOI Deadline and Grants Cycle

Pre-proposal LOIs for the first round of the CCWT Research Grant Program are due on December 1st 2017 at 5 PM CST. Invitations to submit a full proposal will be issued in January with a due date of March 15, 2018. Notification of funding will be issued in April.

There will be one Call for Proposals per academic year announced in July.

Awardees are required to publish a research and/or policy brief through the Center and, if possible, present their findings during a talk at UW-Madison (travel expenses associated with this presentation will be covered by CCWT outside of the budget for the proposed research).

Eligibility and Restrictions

- Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs must have a research doctorate in any field.
- Investigators must be affiliated with any US-based college, university, or non-profit research center that is willing to serve as the fiscal agent if the grant is awarded.
- We cannot award grants directly to individuals.
- Proposals must be submitted in English and budgets must be proposed in U.S. Dollars.

Please direct any questions about this Research Grants Program to the CCWT Associate Director Matthew Wolfgram (ccwt@wcer.wisc.edu).