

**2018–19 DOL Scholars Program Frequently Asked Questions**

**About the Program**

**Would my research project be considered for funding under the program?**

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) anticipates that funded projects will focus on a wide variety of issues that relate to DOL policies and programs. Accordingly, we are welcoming interested researchers to submit their applications so that we may assess them thoroughly.  However, we can only make a determination after assessing a complete application.

**How does the program work?**

Avar Consulting is administering the program on behalf of the DOL Chief Evaluation Office (CEO). Applicants will submit proposals to Avar Consulting by the deadline of 5:00 p.m. Eastern on 04/06/18, and Avar Consulting will hire program awardees (i.e., Scholars) as subcontractors. The program runs from August 01, 2018 through August 31, 2019.

Scholars will be responsible for periodically submitting update reports and drafts of their papers; participating in phone meetings and one in-person meeting at DOL; and providing a final working paper and, if applicable, public-use data file for posting on the DOL CEO website. As Scholars are subcontractors with Avar Consulting, all communication related to the program will be between the Scholars and Avar Consulting (i.e., Scholars are not to contact DOL directly).

**Can my research be on topics in the context of other countries?**

Yes, we encourage diversity of perspective and topic; however, please be mindful that the topic needs to be relevant to the DOL’s mission and should be applicable to the policy considerations of DOL.

**What are the required deliverables?**

Scholars will be responsible for periodically submitting update reports and drafts of their papers; participating in teleconference meetings and one in-person meeting at DOL; and providing a final working paper, and if applicable, public-use data file for posting on the DOL CEO website. All drafts are subject to being shared internally among the Avar and DOL staff; as well, subject matter experts may review a near-final draft.

**Can I include some qualitative research to supplement my quantitative research?**

Yes, complementing quantitative research with additional qualitative research is allowable under the program. In your application, please describe the qualitative data and how you will systematically capture the qualitative data. Please also include how that data could be included in a public-use data file (e.g., the transcripts could be stripped of PII-DI (Personally Identifiable Information and Direct Identifiers) and posted).

**Can I use original data?**

Yes, analyzing an original data set is allowable under the program; however, please be aware that the study needs to be completed within the given time frame. Also, in your application, please describe the data set to be analyzed and how it could be converted to a public-use data file by the end of the project.

**Do I have to submit a public-use data file?**

No, if your proposed research is limited to qualitative research, submission of a PUF is not required.

**My study is quantitative, but the data cannot be made publicly available. Will I be ineligible if I can’t submit a public-use data file?**

You are still eligible to apply. If some (or all) elements of the data cannot be made publicly available (e.g., due to state or federal regulations), please describe the restrictions in your application. Elements of the data that are not prohibited from public release will need to be submitted as a public-use data file.

**Can I present my research at conferences or publish in journals?**

Throughout the period of the contract, the Department of Labor maintains joint rights to the results and findings produced by the project. Prior to the end of the contract, any dissemination, posting, presenting, or publication of the results and findings produced by the project requires explicit approval of the Department of Labor. At the end of the contract, you hold full rights and sole ownership of the results and findings produced by the project (with the exception that the Department of Labor retains the right to post the final deliverables to its website).

**What is the process for requesting approval for disseminating my research prior to the end of the contract, and under what circumstances would the request be denied?**

To request approval, please submit whatever product is going to be disseminated (e.g., slides, article) and the venue in which it is going to be disseminated (e.g., conference name, journal name) as far in advance as possible. Approval would likely not be granted in situations in which dissemination would prevent the Scholar from fulfilling the terms of the contract; for example, if acceptance of a paper by a journal or conference meant that a version of the paper could then not be posted to DOL's website (which is one of the terms of the contract), then approval would likely not be granted. However, any request for dissemination prior to the end of the contract period will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**Eligibility**

**Do applicants have to be U.S. citizens?**

No, you may apply if you are a U.S. citizen or legally eligible to work and/or study in the U.S.

**Is this program only for junior faculty and new PhDs? What does an advanced degree mean?**

Applicants must have a Master’s degree or higher. The strength of the application—including methodological rigor—and its relevance to DOL’s policies and mission will be the most important factors when awarding grants.

**Are previous DOL Scholars eligible to apply again?**

Only the most recent cohort of DOL Scholars are ineligible for the current year’s funding, meaning that participants in the 2017–18 DOL Scholars Program are ineligible for the 2018–19 program but are welcome to apply for the 2019–20 program.

**Application**

**Does the application have to be prepared by the researcher themselves?**

No. As long as the information being submitted is complete, accurate, and authorized to be shared by the researcher, they may choose to have an assistant or colleague submit the information on their behalf.

**Do the letters of recommendation for the DOL Scholars Program have to follow any specific guidelines?**

One letter of recommendation from a senior researcher who is familiar with the applicant’s research agenda is required. There are no other requirements of this person. The letter of recommendation should be emailed to scholars@avarconsulting.com.

**Is there a limit on the number of applications an applicant can submit?**

No, there isn’t a restriction on the number of applications that an applicant could be affiliated with.

**What documents do I need to submit?**

Applicants must submit the following documents as attachments to scholars@avarconsulting.com:

* Application: the document collects background information; cost estimates and justifications; an abstract (limited to 250 words); and a letter of commitment;
* Technical proposal: the document’s overall length may not exceed 2000 words (excluding exhibits and references) and must contain the following sections:
	+ Introduction;
	+ Background;
	+ Statement of the Problem;
	+ Research Questions;
	+ Methodology (including data set(s) to be analyzed);
	+ Limitations;
	+ Expected Impact.
* Curriculum vitae: the document is not to exceed 5 pages and is to include education history including dates of degrees; current employment situation; employment history; relevant knowledge and experience; publication history; honors, awards, or service.
* Letter of recommendation: the letter must be from a senior researcher who is knowledgeable about the applicant’s research record and potential; the letter should address the applicant’s research accomplishments and capabilities.
* Federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (if available) or other justification of indirect rate; if the applicant’s organization does not have a federally negotiated rate, then the justification for the indirect rate can be included in the cost justification section of the application document.

**Budget**

**Can I use Scholars money to fund a research assistant or team? If yes, how should we report this in the budget estimate?**

Hiring research assistants or funding summer salaries are eligible uses of the grant budget; however all expenditures must be justified in the budget of the application, and will be evaluated as part of the overall application package.

**Can applicants include indirect costs in their budget proposals?**

Any indirect costs must be shown and justified in the budget. **Any applicable indirect costs will be included in the overall funding range of $20,000–$50,000.** If you are using your institution’s federally negotiated indirect rate, please provide a copy of the negotiated indirect rate agreement. If there is no federally negotiated rate, please provide some other form of justification for the proposed indirect rate. Applicants’ use of funds will be reviewed and judged on the reasonableness of budgeted items as part of the overall application package.

**What is not covered by the grant?**

Expenditures in equipment (i.e. computers), software, and conferences are not allowable costs.

**Do travel costs need to be included in the budget?**

Any travel to Washington D.C. for the purposes of presentations at DOL or other Scholars Program events will be reimbursed at the Federal Per Diem rate. All other research travel must be specified in the budget of the application and will be evaluated as part of the overall application package.

*For additional information or questions regarding the application process or the program in general,*

*please contact Avar Consulting at* *scholars@avarconsulting.com**.*