

The Spencer Foundation

Investing in
Education Research
that Cultivates
Learning and
Transforms Lives

We believe that education research is integral to improving education, making education systems more equitable, and increasing opportunities to learn across the lifespan.



Core Commitments



Rigorous.

Intellectually ambitious, innovative, and methodologically sound.



Relevant.

Touching on the most pressing questions and opportunities in education.



Equitable.

Representing a diversity of scholars and scholarship contributing to just learning environments grounded in justice.



Transformative.

Reaching beyond academic audiences and leading to lasting improvement in education and learning.



Collaborative.

Engaging expertise and perspectives across disciplinary boundaries, institutions, practitioners, families and communities.

What We Fund

Field-Initiated Research

- Lyle Spencer Grants to Transform Education (\$1M)
- Research Grants on Education (Large and Small) (up to 500k)
- Research-Practice Partnerships (400k)

Training Fellowships

- The National Academy/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship
- The National Academy/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship

Field-Building Activities

- Conference Grant Program (50k)
- Special funding opportunities & initiatives
- Institutional Challenge Grants (with WT Grant)
- Mentor Grants

Three Interrelated Lanes



Diversity

Equity

Belonging

Key Issue:

Funding Research
that Contributes to
Educational Equity

What are our current
programs & strategies?

How does research
conceptualize equity?

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Current Programs

1. Current Programs:
 - A. Lyle Grants
 - B. Large Grants
 - C. Conference Grants
 - D. Small Grants
 - E. Research Practice Partnerships
2. Special RFP's
 - A. COVID Special Grants
 - B. Racial Equity Initiative/
New Racial Equity Grants

Current Strategy: RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE

FY 2021-2022

Spark new forward-looking research on racial equity

- Methodologically innovative, conceptually sophisticated, will make substantial empirical contributions

Deepen capacity for impact of scholarship to support equity

- Capacity-building for scholars
- Collaborations that further translation goals

GOALS

- Commission
- Convene
- Collaborate

STRATEGIES

Categories of Equity Research Focused on Change/Improvement

A) Deficit-based	B) Equity-based	C) Strength-based
Status Quo	Reforming Systems	New Innovations That Reimagine and Transform Systems
How do we help or change individuals, families, or communities so they can participate in and benefit from current systems?	How do we broaden access to current systems and reform them to be more equal?	How do we reimagine systems to amplify and value the strengths of people?

Categories of Equity Research (Not Focused on Change/Improvement)

D) Effects of Inequality	E) Building New Conceptual Knowledge
Measuring Inequality	Insights into foundational issues (but may not get to the how of system s change).
How do we understand the extent and impact of unequal structures?	What do we need to understand or conceptualize in new ways?



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Thank You