

**Questions and Answers  
Better Evidence Project  
Minigrant Funding Cycle, Request for Concept Papers  
October 2020**

**1. Does an applicant have to be in the United States?**

No, applications are welcome from anywhere.

**2. Does an applicant have to be affiliated with an institution?**

No, an organization or institution does not have to be the applicant.

**3. May we submit a concept paper narrative of two sides, which would fit on one piece of paper? Can we submit two pages of proposal narrative, since that would fit on 1 piece of paper?**

No, the concept paper stage of this application is requested to be limited to one side of one piece of paper (11 or 12 font, single spaced).

Accordingly, the narrative should be brief, with only the topline, main points articulated.

Requested elements should cover:

- Research focus, research question and rationale for research including the practitioner, policy, and/or donor relevance of your project and contribution the research will make to better evidence and one of the priority areas
- Short overview of research methodology
- Brief timeline, starting in February 2021, indicating quarterly progress planned, what (if any) preliminary results will be ready to share in September 2021, and completion date in or before January 2022.

Additional pages are requested with:

- Research team CVs or bios highlighting relevant experience

**4. Could the small grants fund doctoral dissertation field research?**

While there are no restrictions on applications from doctoral students, it is unlikely that the *typical* requirements of doctoral research would match the requested focus of this RFP. We want to support short-term research projects that will improve the evidence available to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars in the peacebuilding community. We understand that most doctoral dissertation research projects aim primarily to contribute to the scholarly community. We seek evidence that will be directly useful to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars. However, if your doctoral research directly meets these criteria, we welcome you to apply.

**5. The Request for Concept Papers is quite brief. Is there a longer version beyond what is posted to the Better Evidence Project website?**

No, there is no longer version. There is more information on the overall Better Evidence Project available on the web page of the Better Evidence Project at:

<https://carterschool.gmu.edu/research-impact/programs-and-projects/better-evidence-project>

All guidelines for project submissions are on the posted Request for Concept Papers, with clarifications in this Questions and Answers document.

**6. May we send you a few pages of project concept for feedback before we submit our proposal?**

No, the Better Evidence Project does not have the capacity to respond to requests for feedback on draft project proposals.

**7. Can we submit our proposal in Arabic? Or other languages?**

No, unfortunately at this time the Better Evidence Project is only able to review proposals submitted in English.

**8. May we (a Northern organization) advise several local peacebuilders (in the Global South) on their applications so that they submit more polished applications to you?**

Yes, we welcome all applicants utilizing their many resources to submit the clearest applications possible. Certainly, any applicant would be free to seek advice from colleagues on their draft applications before submitting a final application to BEP.

**9. Would you be open to a proposal from us, despite our not being in the conflict field?**

Applications are asked to include research team CVs or bios highlighting relevant experience. We suggest that these reflect the strengths of the team that are directly relevant to the proposed project. We expect all proposed projects will relate to evidence available to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars in the peacebuilding community, thus strengthening our collective efforts to address the problems of war and violence. Thus, we anticipate the team will include some expertise relevant to these areas. Of course, the peacebuilding community can learn from others, particularly from others that are familiar with the peacebuilding field.

**10. Can a university apply for one of these grants?**

Yes, there is no restriction on type of organization or institution that applies.

**11. Do you require a detailed budget for the minigrants application and if the timeline should be the same as the small grants scheme – of a one-year duration?**

Selected applicants should be prepared to submit a full proposal at the beginning of January 2021. The full proposal will include more detail on the project as well as a complete budget with

indirect costs limited to a maximum of 15% of direct costs. We anticipate minigrant projects of no more than one year.

**12. What are the tax implications of receiving a grant from you?**

We do not advise on tax matters and encourage applicants to consult their local tax authorities. In addition, we want to note that it is possible that George Mason University may consider some portion of some grants to individuals as taxable and may withhold tax depending on the relevant tax treaties. Such considerations will be reviewed by the university tax office before awards are finalized.

**13. Can you specifically elaborate direct and indirect costs of research project so that I can have an idea about budget making and planning?**

Our budget experience includes organizations and institutions that have costs for diverse needs such as lights, air conditioning, office space, insurance for a board of directors, use of a printer, photocopies, general management of the organization, secretarial support for the organization, etc. These indirect costs would be difficult to allocate directly to one specific project, but we are open to up to a maximum of 15% of the direct costs project budget being planned for these kinds of indirect costs that an organization incurs in the course of pursuing its mission. Applicants who do not require indirect costs will not include these in their budget.

**14. Would you be interested to invest in renovating my bed and breakfast in order to increase tourism in my area?**

No, this RFP focuses specifically on improving the evidence available to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars in the peacebuilding community, thus strengthening our collective efforts to address the problems of war and violence.

**15. May I apply as a graduate student for a small grant to fund my doctoral student survey research, or is my advisor required to be the PI?**

While there are no restrictions on applications from doctoral students, it is unlikely that the *typical* requirements of doctoral research would match the requested focus of this RFP. We want to support short-term research projects that will improve the evidence available to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars in the peacebuilding community. We understand that most doctoral dissertation research projects aim primarily to contribute to the scholarly community. We seek evidence that will be directly useful to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars. However, if your doctoral research directly meets these criteria, we welcome you to apply.

**16. May my organization submit more than one application for this RFP?**

No, we request that each organization submit only one application in which that organization is the lead organization. An organization may partner on more than one application, but should be the lead organization on only one application.

**17. What counts as evidence? Can we develop evidence through practical engagement and study of that practical engagement?**

We are open to multiple forms of evidence that will be useful to donors, practitioners, policy makers and scholars in the peacebuilding community.

**18. May we propose to build on our previous work with a next step that will provide more useful evidence for the peacebuilding field?**

Yes, applications may propose short term projects that are part of longer-term initiatives.

**19. Would you please meet with us to help us consider how our work could be a match for the priority areas of the BEP RFP?**

At this stage, we are unavailable for consultations beyond short questions and answers for RFPs. We look forward to developing more partnerships as we grow our capacity at BEP. To learn more about our work, you may write to [bep@gmu.edu](mailto:bep@gmu.edu) to be added to our mailing list. For more general conversations about partnering with the BEP, you may write to Kristina Hook, BEP Executive Director at [khook@gmu.edu](mailto:khook@gmu.edu).

**20. What will be the criteria used in selecting the projects to be awarded funding?**

Drawing from the RFP, the criteria will be:

- Promises evidence **useful** to donors, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars in the peacebuilding community, offering guidance on their efforts to prevent or reduce war and violence.
- Contributes to one of the four priority areas.
- Clarity and importance of research focus, question, and rationale.
- Sound research methodology.
- Team expertise sufficient for proposed project.
- Reasonable timeline
- Reasonable budget

Only projects that conform to the RFP (one-page max for the narrative) will be reviewed.

**21. What will be the format of the quarterly reports required of grantees?**

For these minigrants, we seek to streamline the reporting, requiring a one paragraph update on research progress and research challenges encountered, as well as any research products that may be produced.