

Request for Proposals
Financial Literacy and Financial Behaviors
The Financial Educators Foundation

Disclaimer: This case study for business research methods courses is a fictional request for proposals inspired by real research funded and conducted by similar organizations.

Background: The mission of the Financial Educators Foundation (FEF) is to enhance financial literacy and encourage financial behaviors that lead to long-term financial stability for people in every income and demographic group in the United States.

Objective: While there is existing research measuring financial literacy among the U.S. adult population, there is limited information on factors that positively influence financial literacy and wise financial behaviors. The FEF will fund research projects that identify short-comings in financial literacy in addition to their causes or their consequences. Projects that are funded will ones that can inform specific decisions by our Foundation to achieve our mission and suggest the predicted benefits of such decision.

Awards: The FEF has a budget of \$120,000 to split among several research project applicants. Awards for individual projects will be in the range of \$5,000 to \$50,000. Higher valued awards are expected to have a greater impact.

Format: Research proposals should be 2-4 pages, single-spaced with blocked paragraphs (i.e. space in between paragraphs), and should include section headings, tables, bulleted lists, and/or other writing devices to make the proposal easy to scan and read.

Proposals should clearly communicate the following issues:

- *Objective:* As concisely and specifically as possible, state the objective of your proposed research project.
- *Background and/or literature:* What is already known in the field of your research project, and how does your research project fit into existing knowledge?
- *Methodology:* What methods and/or tools will you use to achieve your objective. Include what information, variables, or characteristics will you collect; what population you will draw information from; what type of analysis will you conduct.
- *Impact:* Answer the following: What knowledge will you create upon completing your research project? What decisions or actions by the FEF will be informed by your research? Be specific.
- *Deliverables:* What will you create as a result of the research project? This may include but not be limited to a report, presentation, database, list of recommendations, etc.
- *Budget:* Provide a detailed budget of expenses. If asking for reimbursement for labor time, include estimates of time commitments and appropriate hourly or salary compensation.

Criteria: Awards will be selected based on the following criteria, given in no particular order:

- *Mission:* The degree to which the project contributes to the mission and current needs of the FEF.
- *Focus:* How specific is the objective and the description of the impact? More focus helps the FEF better understand the nature and value of your contribution. Too narrow a focus may imply lesser value of the project.
- *Consistency:* Does the impact match the objective? Does the methodology match objective?
- *Marginal contribution:* How does the impact fit within and make extensions to existing knowledge?
- *Feasibility and reliability:* How likely are the researchers able to conduct what is described in the methodology and how likely are the researchers able to produce the deliverables they describe? More specific description of the methodology is likely to convince the FEF that the researchers have thought through feasible methods and are knowledgeable of the tools to conduct these methods.
- *Budget:* Is the budget specific and feasible, and how does the total cost compare to the value of the project?

About Us: The Financial Educators Foundation is a non-profit, member financed, foundation dedicated to improving financial literacy and financial practices and behaviors of every American so that they can have a financially secure future. Our member businesses include banks, financial advisers, and other providers of financial services and insurance.

Our organization creates and funds educational programs throughout the nation to teach individuals basic financial literacy, best financial practices, appropriate financial risk taking, and short-term and long-term financial investment planning.