

Tips for Submitting Successful Proposals to Obtain Survey Access to NASP Members

1. **Form reasonable expectations regarding the size of the resulting member sample**

As school psychologists, NASP members receive many requests to complete surveys and participate in research. Unfortunately, members rarely have the time to respond to each invitation. As a result, member response rates to survey requests tend to be quite low, with available data indicating only a 20% response rate, on average. It is strongly recommended that applicants (a) temper expectations regarding final sample sizes, while also (b) considering the total number of members they will need to sample to achieve an adequate sample size for their study. Applications that propose and require prohibitively large samples are less likely to be approved.

2. **Conduct power analyses to inform recruitment and sampling plans**

If the applicant is proposing to conduct quantitative analyses, it is strongly recommended that he or she conduct power analyses to identify the number of participants required to detect expected effects as statistically significant. An applicant should also provide a detailed outline of power analyses, including (but not limited to) (a) the statistical test to which the power analysis is specific (e.g., multiple regression); and (b) the desired power level (e.g., .80).

3. **Form reasonable expectations regarding the nature of the resulting member sample**

In addition to considering sample sizes, applicants should acknowledge the nature of the sample they will attain. Since school psychologists receive multiple survey or research requests each year, it is likely they will be selective regarding the surveys they choose to complete. Members often choose to respond to surveys regarding issues and topics about which they are passionate. For example, if a member is particularly interested in academic interventions for English language learners (ELLs), he or she is likely to respond to a survey regarding ELL practices. Survey response may be comparatively lower for other members less interested in this topic. As a result, applicants should acknowledge that their resulting sample may be biased and not representative of typical school psychologists. We commonly receive proposals for research that seeks to identify the prevalence of certain practices among school psychologists. Given the aforementioned potential for biased samples, such efforts are unlikely to yield valid and accurate conclusions.

4. **Found your research questions in theory**

Successful applications will use theory to inform (a) the selection of key variables and the measures that assess them, and (b) hypotheses regarding the expected relationships between these variables. Rather than simply stating the variables that will be assessed, justify why these variables are important and were chosen within this particular context, and comment on the psychometric adequacy of the measures to be employed.

5. **Carefully evaluate the time and effort required for study participation**

Applicants should carefully consider the amount of time and effort required for study participation. Members are unlikely to begin or finish long surveys, particularly when there is limited direct benefit to the participant. This is not to suggest that applicants should sacrifice study quality in the interest of efficiency. Rather, applicants should propose parsimonious procedures that will still yield valid conclusions.

6. **Consider how you will plan to maintain participant confidentiality**

Many applicants intend to protect the anonymity of participant responses by not associating collected data with personally identifying information. Yet, certain study procedures require the collection of such information, such as when researchers collect participant names and email addresses in order to provide participants with research incentives (e.g., gift cards) or certificates of completion. If this is part of your study procedures, please explicitly state how participant confidentiality will be ensured.

7. **Provide a detailed data analytic plan**

Successful applications will include detailed descriptions of how collected data will be subsequently analyzed. Such descriptions will extend beyond the simple identification of the proposed analysis (e.g., structural equation modeling), to include information regarding proposed predictor variables, outcome variables, and covariates, if any. Applicants will clearly demonstrate how the proposed analyses will be used to address each research question. Finally, applicants will ensure that the selected analyses are appropriate and sufficiently rigorous given the expected data.

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