The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, is conducting the 2011–12 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12). This national study of first time beginning postsecondary students includes the collection of student records data.

BPS:12 data, collected under authority of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. § 9543), will provide information that allows researchers and policy analysts to explore basic issues about postsecondary affordability and about the recipients of student financial assistance.

BPS is unique as the only nationally-representative study of all students (including nontraditional students who delayed postsecondary entry and those in short-term vocational programs) who began postsecondary education for the first time in the same academic year and following them throughout the entire postsecondary education system over a number of years. As a result, BPS provides a much more accurate portrait of these students’ persistence, attainment, and experiences than studies that focus only on the first institution or rely on institution-reported data alone.

**Assistance is needed from institutions to make the results of this study comprehensive, accurate, and timely.**

We are collecting information related to enrollment and financial aid information for students who are sample members in BPS:12.

For assistance with the BPS:12 Student Record Collection, please contact:

**HELP DESK**

- **1-855-500-1441 (toll-free)**
- **PortalHelp@rti.org**

**RTI International**

- Tiffany Mattox, Collection Manager, BPS:12 Student Records
  - 1-919-485-7791
  - tmattox@rti.org

- Kristin Dudley, Director, BPS:12 Student Records
  - 1-855-500-1441
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**National Center for Education Statistics**

- Sean Simone, Project Officer, BPS:12 Student Records
  - 1-202-245-7631
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**Conducted by**

U.S. Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics
Washington, DC
How Will the Study Be Conducted?

BPS:12 data are being collected for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization. The BPS:12 sample includes more than 35,000 students and former students who were sampled for this study as first time beginning postsecondary students in 2011–12. We ask that institution staff provide student record information (e.g., enrollment status and financial aid package received) for BPS:12 participants who attended the institution.

Data are provided through a web interface over the secure NCES Postsecondary Data Portal (PDP) website—either by data entry, uploading electronic data files, or a combination of both. The user friendly PDP has been developed to minimize the burden on institution staff in providing student record data.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232[g]) allows for the release of institution record information to the Secretary of Education or her agent without prior consent of survey members (34 CFR §§ 99.31[a][3] and 99.35). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. § 9573). RTI, as the contractor for NCES, has been given the authority to collect information from institution records under federal law.

Purpose of the Data Collection

The purpose of the BPS student records collection is to address issues concerning the types, sources, and amounts of student aid received across years of attendance. Despite access to federal aid databases, a complete picture of all nonfederal inputs into student financial aid has been lacking in the postsecondary longitudinal studies. Availability of financial aid is important at all points in the postsecondary process (initial access and choice, persistence, transfer and, ultimately, educational attainment). This student records collection will contribute significant data to help complete the picture of financial aid.

Authorization of Data Collection

NCES is required to follow strict procedures to protect personal information in the collection, reporting, and publication of data. All individually identifiable information supplied by individuals or institutions may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose, except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. § 9573).

RTI International is a registered trademark and a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.