SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH TRAINING GRANTS

CFDA NUMBER: 84.324

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS NUMBER: IES-NCSER-2008-02

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
http://ies.ed.gov

LETTER OF INTENT RECEIPT DATE: **September 6, 2007**

APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE: **November 1, 2007**

THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites applications for its Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Grant Program. For this competition, the Institute will consider only applications that

meet the requirements outlined below under the section on Requirements for Applications Submitted to the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POSTDOCTORAL SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM

The Institute's objectives in creating the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program are twofold: First, IES is interested in supporting the training and field research experience of postdoctoral fellows who are interested in conducting applied research in special education. Second, IES is committed to the development and support of postdoctoral fellows who have the capacity to become leaders in conceptualizing, developing, and conducting a new generation of methodologically rigorous and educationally relevant scientific research that will provide solutions to the pressing practical problems and challenges facing special education, early childhood special education, and related services in the United States.

3. BACKGROUND

The passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and subsequent reauthorizations (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004) have as their primary and instrumental focus improving the educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Despite tremendous progress in improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities in the last 30 years, students with disabilities continue to fare much worse than their peers without disabilities, achieving lower rates of success on both in-school (e.g., achievement) and post-school outcomes (e.g., employment) (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). Improving outcomes for students with disabilities will require a serious and sustained commitment to building and maintaining a scientific and educationally relevant research base by developing a well-trained cadre of researchers who have the capacity to conduct methodologically rigorous research in special education.

Research Capacity in Special Education: Currently there are significant capacity issues within the education research community in general, and the special education research community in particular. For example, according to a survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, only 7 percent of doctorate recipients in the field of Education cite research and development as their primary postdoctoral activity (Hoffer et al., 2003). Moreover, concern has been raised about the shortage of well-trained doctoral-level researchers available to conduct the high-quality research necessary to improving services and outcomes for students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). For example, of the approximately 25,000 members of the American Education Research Association (AERA), only 400 members (1%) belong to a special interest group focusing on special education research.

Quality of Special Education Research: Research in special education, like research in general education, does not rest on a solid research base (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2002; National Research Council 1999, 2000, 2002). Many of the questions raised by practitioners and policy makers require answers to questions of what works in special education, for whom and under what classroom, schooling, and instructional conditions. Determining what works requires posing causal questions that are best answered by research using causal designs (e.g., randomized controlled trials, well-designed

quasi-experimental designs, or single subject designs). However, it appears that the special education research community has not employed group causal designs regularly or systematically to address causal research questions. For example, a search of 5 major special education peer-reviewed journals (i.e., *Journal of Special Education*, *Exceptional Children*, *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, and *School Psychology Review*) revealed that only 5.46% of the published studies tested a reading or math intervention using a group design, and only 4.22% used randomized designs (Seethaler & Fuchs, 2005). Naturally, single subject research designs notwithstanding, special education research provides unique challenges to researchers, because to employ a randomized trail for some disabilities (e.g., low-incidence disabilities), can pose enormous challenges for recruiting and selecting participants and implementing such a design. Further development of alternate research designs to randomized controlled trials (e.g., quantitative synthesis of single-subject research, regression discontinuity, propensity score matching) are still needed.

a. Examples of Needed Research Capacity. IES is interested in supporting the preparation of researchers who are capable of: (a) conducting rigorous research and evaluation studies, (b) developing new research-based products and approaches that are grounded in the science of learning and responsive to the needs and conditions of students with disabilities, and (c) designing valid and reliable assessments for students with disabilities. Examples of research needed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Statistics and Methodology: The needs of education policy and practice are served not only by research that directly addresses pressing practical problems but also by research that raises questions and generates hypotheses that can eventually lead to new applications or refinements of existing interventions, programs, and approaches (National Research Council, 2002). Frequently, hypothesis-generating research relies on complex statistical methods that can tease out potential causal influences in large, correlational datasets. A concentration of students and faculty with statistical training in the design and analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental studies, single-subject designs, as well as survey, observational, and longitudinal data analyses that are grounded in special education content and problems is needed.

2. Development of teaching materials and curricula: Special education is defined in IDEA as "specially designed instruction …to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability " (P.L. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2657). Thus, special education researchers must be prepared to design and conduct research that examines specially designed instruction for the full range of children with disabilities, across the range of content and skill domains (e.g., reading, mathematics, science), and for the full continuum of growth and development from infants and toddlers through young adulthood. This expansive focus, coupled with a general trend of more inclusive educational policies, sets the stage for a new generation of teaching materials and curricula that take advantage of expanding knowledge of how people learn and how that learning applies to the development of multiple pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners in classrooms, including students with disabilities (e.g., universal design). The design, testing, and implementation of new teaching methods that improve school readiness skills of young children with disabilities and access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities will require researchers who are well trained in child development, cognition, learning, motivation, the design of instruction, and content domains (e.g., reading, mathematics, science). Moreover, these researchers must also be prepared to grapple with the challenges of extending laboratory-derived knowledge of these topics to teaching and learning in complex, real-world environments with real children who face real and serious learning

and teaching challenges. Researchers who can straddle the worlds of cognitive science and education/special education practice are needed.

3. Development of Intervention Research: Answering "what works" questions that inform practitioners about effective interventions requires research that addresses the full range of children with disabilities, under the full-range of instructional and schooling conditions at critical developmental and transitional time periods in general and special education. Although there has been much progress in developing promising interventions for students with disabilities, the complexity of student characteristics within and across disability category, and the diversity of placement settings and services requires a continued and sustained focus on the development of academic and/or behavior interventions targeting students across the full spectrum of disability categories (Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, and Harris, 2005).

4. Development of Assessment Research: The standards and accountability movement as represented by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and IDEA has generated an immediate and pressing demand for researchers who are trained in the design, implementation, analysis, and use of assessment tools to evaluate the results of instruction and to support the management of schools and districts. There is a particular need for researchers who can address questions of how assessments for accountability can best be designed and used to capture and represent proficiency and growth for children with disabilities. Individuals with skills in psychometrics are needed throughout the education sector, from federal statistics agencies to state education agencies, from test developers to local school district implementers. This need is clearly evident in that no more than 15 Psychology doctoral degrees in psychometrics have been awarded in a given year since 1992, and a 10-year low of two were awarded in 2001 (APA Research Office, 2004).

IES is interested in increasing the supply of scientists and researchers in special education who are prepared to conduct rigorous research and evaluation studies, analyze data using state-of-the-art design methodology and statistical methods, develop new products and approaches that are grounded in a science of learning, and design valid and reliable assessment measures. Thus, this RFA will fund postdoctoral fellows who are engaged with academic mentors conducting research in the education sciences with an emphasis in special education. Grants will be awarded to faculty members from disciplines and fields such as special education, education, psychology, political science, economics, statistics, sociology, and human development within qualified institutions of higher education that will provide intensive training in special education research and statistics. Postdoctoral students will be supported for two years, and will be expected to conduct research on education topics that directly address practical questions and pressing problems in the education of students with disabilities.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE POSTDOCTORAL SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM

Applications submitted to the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program should include the components listed below. Please note that the Institute will not accept applications from current recipients of Institute Postdoctoral Training grants with start dates before the end of their current award (e.g., if a PI has an FY 2004 Postdoctoral award with an end date of July 30, 2008, a proposal for a new FY 2008 Postdoctoral award must have a start date between August 1, 2008 and September 15, 2008.)

a. Training Director. A Training Director will be the head of the training fellowship and is expected to be the primary mentor for the fellows' research and training activities. The Training Director will have overall responsibility for the administration of the award and interactions with the Institute.

The Training Director must be the Principal or Co-Principal Investigator on one or more education research projects, currently supported by the Institute or other funding sources, that are appropriate for postdoctoral level research training. Applicants must identify the ongoing grant-supported education research of the Training Director.

b. Plan for recruiting U.S. postdoctoral fellows. Applicants must include a plan for recruiting U.S. postdoctoral fellows, including outreach efforts to encourage applications from members of underrepresented minorities and persons with disabilities. Training Directors are encouraged to consider recruiting fellowship candidates from disciplines other than their own.

Postdoctoral fellowship candidates must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Postdoctoral fellowship candidates must have received their doctorate prior to beginning the fellowship. The Institute must approve postdoctoral fellowship candidates who have received postdoctoral support through other federal training programs before candidates are offered a fellowship. The Institute must approve postdoctoral fellowship candidates who received support through one of the Institute's predoctoral training grant programs. The Institute must approve postdoctoral fellows who have an existing relationship with the Training Director (e.g., dissertation advisor) before candidates are offered a fellowship.

c. Plan for training postdoctoral fellows. The Institute's primary focus is on training postdoctoral fellows to **gain the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct the types of research the Institute funds**. The applicant must include a plan for training postdoctoral fellows to conduct rigorous education research that will directly impact students with disabilities. Applicants should clearly describe in their training plan how the training relates to research programs of the National Center for Special Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences. Research programs of the Institute are organized by topic area (e.g., reading, writing, and language development, mathematics and science, early childhood intervention) and by research goal (e.g., Identification, Development, Efficacy & Replication, Scale-Up Evaluations, or Measurement). Fellows should gain the breadth of skills and understanding necessary to conduct rigorous applied research in education and develop the capacity to independently carry out such research, including applying for grant funding and submitting results for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

The applicant must include a plan for training postdoctoral fellows to conduct rigorous education research. Fellows should: (a) gain the breadth of skills and understanding necessary to conduct rigorous applied research in education, and (b) develop the capacity to independently carry out such research, including applying for grant funding and submitting results for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

The length of the postdoctoral fellowship will typically be two to three years.
Applicants should clearly specify the role that the fellows will play in the Training Director's education research projects, and how these and other training activities will produce independent researchers capable of developing their own education research programs, seeking grant support, and presenting the results of their research in peer-reviewed forums such as professional conferences and journals. **From**

the Institute's view, a postdoctoral training program would be successful if it produced education researchers who are able to submit competitive applications to the Institute's research competitions. Applicants should demonstrate their capacity to provide such training by describing their current research projects and the relation of these projects to the Institute's research priorities. Applicants should consider how potential fellows would gain experience and training in the design and implementation of rigorous education research methods and statistical analyses. As appropriate, fellows may audit courses and engage in other training activities that enhance their knowledge and professional skills (e.g., auditing courses in areas not covered in their doctoral training, receiving training in the administration and scoring of assessment measures).

Fellows' research and training activities must address practical questions in education. It is anticipated that fellows will submit findings from their postdoctoral research activities to peer reviewed forums such as professional conferences and journals. Fellows will attend and present at professional conferences. Fellows are encouraged to work with the Training Director to seek independent grant support for their own research from the Institute or other sources.

d. Stipend support, travel, and additional costs. The stipend amount for each fellow is $50,000 per year (12 months) for up to 3 years. Fellows must make satisfactory progress in their research activities in order to remain eligible for fellowship funds. The fellowship must include fringe benefits (e.g., health insurance and normal fees) at the level afforded to other employees of the applicant institution who are at a similar level and class as the postdoctoral fellows, with the Institute's contribution not to exceed $10,500 per year per fellow. There are no funds for tuition costs; fellows are expected to audit any courses that are part of their training. Thus the total stipend plus fringe benefits per fellow per year to be supported through Institute funds is $60,500.

Funds should be requested to support both Training Director and fellows' travel for one two-day meeting each year in Washington, DC. Funds may be requested up to $12,000 per year per fellow to defray the costs of recruiting fellows (e.g., advertisements, travel of applicants necessary for interviews), costs of research by fellows (local travel to research sites, materials, personal computer), and fellow registration and travel expenses to attend professional conferences. Applicants should note that there are no funds for faculty research or salaries through this program. Funds for facility renovation and maintenance are not allowed.

Applicants may request funds to take advantage of training opportunities and resources available through other entities (e.g., methodological or specialized statistical training institutes) that complement the training the postdoctoral fellows receive at the applicant's institution.

e. Awards. The maximum length of the grant is 4 years. Applicants may request funds for up to 4 fellows. The amount of the award will depend on the number of fellows to be supported on stipends and the length of the fellowships (i.e., 2 or 3 years). The Institute anticipates making awards of approximately $160,000 per year for 4 years. In no case should a request exceed $200,000 per year. The amounts above assume that four fellows will be supported for 2 years each, but applicants are free to request support for fewer fellows to be supported for 2 or 3 years each.

5. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available for this research training fellowship no later than **April 30, 2007**, from the following web site:

http://www.Grants.gov

The application form approved for use in the competitions specified in this RFA is the government-wide SF424 Research and Related (R&R) Form (OMB Number 4040-0001).

6. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award grants for periods up to 4 years pursuant to this request for applications.

7. FUNDING AVAILABLE

Awards will typically be about $160,000 (total cost = direct + indirect cost) per year for 4 years. In no case should a request exceed $200,000 (total cost) per year. In no case should a request exceed $200,000 (total cost) per year.

Although the plans of the Institute include this training program, awards pursuant to this request for applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of a sufficient number of meritorious applications. The number of programs funded depends upon the number of high quality applications submitted.

8. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Academic institutions in the United States and its territories that grant doctoral degrees in fields relevant to education may submit proposals under this competition. The proposed Training Director must be the Principal or Co-Principal Investigator on one or more education research grants currently supported by the Institute or other funding source.

9. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Education Training Grant recipients who have not successfully recruited the number of fellows for whom they requested funding will have their continuation funding adjusted as a result.

Research associated with this training fellowship must be relevant to U.S. special education. Fellowship recipients are expected to publish or otherwise make publicly available the results of the work supported through this training fellowship.

Postdoctoral fellowship recipients and Training Directors must attend one two-day meeting each year in Washington, DC, with other grantees and Institute staff.

U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate

agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. For the purposes of this competition, a modified total direct cost base is defined as total direct costs less stipends, tuition and related fees, and capital expenditures of $5,000 or more.

10. LETTER OF INTENT

A letter indicating a potential applicant's intent to submit an application is optional, but encouraged, for each application. The letter of intent form must be submitted electronically by the date listed at the beginning of this document, using the instructions provided at: https://ies.constellagroup.com.

The letter of intent should include: (a) a descriptive title; (b) a brief description of the current research projects that the fellows would be part of (about 3,500 characters including spaces, which is approximately one page, single-spaced); and (c) the name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Training Director. The letter of intent should indicate the duration of the proposed project and provide an estimated budget request by year, and a total budget request.

Although the letter of intent is optional, is not binding, and does not enter into the review of subsequent applications, the information that it contains allows Institute staff to estimate the potential workload to plan the review.

11. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted **electronically by 4:30 p.m. Washington, DC time** on the application deadline date, using the ED standard forms and the instructions provided at the following web site:

http://www.Grants.gov

Potential applicants should check this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

12. CONTENTS OF APPLICATION

All applications and proposals for Institute funding must be contained within specified page limits. Internet Web site addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites.

All of the instructions and requirements regarding (a) submission of the application, (b) application page limits, (c) acceptable format, and (d) necessary attachments (.PDF files) will be provided in the **Application Instructions** document for this competition to be found under the "For Applicants -- Apply for Grants" link of Grants.gov. Also, all of the required forms will be provided in the **Application Package** that accompanies the Application Instructions.

You must search for the downloadable Application Instructions and Application Package for each competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.324, not 84.324B). For this competition, make sure that you download the "Special Education Research Training" Application Instructions and Application Package.

In this section, the Institute provides instructions for applications to the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program regarding the content of the (a) project summary/abstract, (b) project narrative, (c) bibliography and references cited, (d) biographical sketches of key project personnel, (e) narrative budget justification, (f) subaward budgets, (g) Appendix A, and (h) additional forms, including Protection of Human Research Subjects, if applicable.

a. ***Project summary/abstract.*** For Postdoctoral Research Training applications, the project summary/abstract will be submitted as a .PDF attachment, is limited to 1 single-spaced page, and must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in the project narrative section.

The project summary/abstract should include (1) The title of the research training fellowship; (2) name and institutional affiliation of the Training Director; (3) number of fellows to be recruited and length of fellowship; (4) brief description of education research currently conducted by the proposed Training Director and opportunities for fellows to be involved in education research; and (5) brief description of the proposed training fellowship, highlighting its key research and educational features.

b. ***Training program narrative.*** The project narrative will be submitted as a .PDF attachment. Incorporating the requirements outlined under Section 4 (Requirements for Applications to the Postdoctoral Special Education Training Program), the *training program narrative* provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the proposal and should include the following sections (i through iv) in the order listed below.

The postdoctoral training narrative is limited to **15 single-spaced pages.** This 15-page limit does not include any of the SF 424 forms, the one-page summary/abstract, the appendices, research on human subjects information, bibliography and references cited, biographical sketches of senior/key personnel, narrative budget justification, sub award budget information or certifications and assurances. **Reviewers are able to conduct the highest quality review when applications are concise and easy to read, with pages numbered consecutively**.

For the purposes of applications submitted under this RFA, a "page" is 8.5 in. x 11 in., on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Text must be single spaced in the narrative. To ensure that the text is easy for reviewers to read and that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects, applicants must adhere to the type size and format specifications for the entire narrative including footnotes**. It is very important that applicants review carefully the "Application Format Requirements" outlined in *Fiscal Year 2008 Application Package Highlights***, which will be part of the application instructions, available on http://www.Grants.gov by April 30, 2007.

(i) *Significance.* Applicants should describe the overall goals and anticipated impact of the proposed postdoctoral research training fellowship on preparing junior scholars to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct the types of research the Institute funds. Applicants should discuss potential career development opportunities to be provided to fellowship recipients.

(ii) *Fellowship Plan.* Applicants must discuss how the proposed training fellowship will address the issues raised in this request for applications (e.g., describe ongoing lines of education research being conducted by the proposed Training Director and how fellows will play an active role in these research activities). Applicants should clearly describe how the training plan relates to research programs of the Institute of Education Sciences, both in terms of topical focus and methodological training opportunities. Applicants should list concrete strategies for advertising the training fellowship and recruiting fellows and the approximate number of fellows to be admitted to the training fellowship. Applicants should address how recruitment procedures will encourage the participation of underrepresented minorities.

(iii) *Personnel*. Applicants should describe the qualifications of key personnel, including the Training Director, specifying their proposed role in the training fellowship (information on personnel should also be provided in their curriculum vitae) and elaborating how the key personnel's research expertise reflect the content and methodological foci of the Institute.

Applicants should include information on previous postdoctoral fellows who have been trained and/or supported by the Training Director and other faculty who will be mentoring the potential postdoctoral fellows (e.g., number of postdoctoral fellows in past 5 years, average length of the fellowship, current positions of previous fellows). Information on previous postdoctoral fellows may be listed in tabular format in Appendix A.

If specific individuals have been identified to whom fellowships would be offered their curriculum vitae should be included in the application.

(iv) *Resources.* Applicants should provide a description of the resources available to support the training fellowship at the participating institution, including field settings (e.g., schools, software development labs) with which the Training Director has a relationship that could support fellows' research projects.

c. ***Bibliography and references cited***. This section will be submitted as a .PDF attachment. Please include complete citations, including titles and all authors, for literature cited in the research narrative.

d. ***Biographical sketches of senior/key personnel.*** This section will be submitted as a .PDF attachment. Abbreviated curriculum vitae should be provided for the principal investigator(s) and other key personnel. *Each vita is limited to 4 pages and should include information sufficient to demonstrate that personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their duties (e.g., publications, grants, relevant research experience) and have adequate time devoted to the project to carry out their duties (e.g., list current and pending grants with the proportion of the individual's time allocated to each project).* The curriculum vita must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in the project narrative section.

e. ***Narrative budget justification*.** This section will be submitted as a .PDF attachment and should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project. The budget justification should correspond to the itemized breakdown of project costs

that is provided in the Research & Related Budget (SF 424) Sections A & B; C, D, & E; and F-K. It should include the time commitments and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel. A justification for equipment purchase, supplies, travel and other related project costs should also be provided in the budget narrative for each project year outlined in the Research & Related Budget (SF 424).

For those applications that include a subaward(s) for work conducted at collaborating institutions, the narrative should also provide the details about the subaward(s). Include the actual subaward budgets as a separate attachment. (See below "Subaward Budget".)

U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. For the purposes of this competition, a modified total direct cost base is defined as total direct costs less stipends, tuition and related fees, and capital expenditures of $5,000 or more.

f. ***Subaward budgets.*** This section will be submitted as a .PDF attachment. For applications that include a subaward(s) for work conducted at collaborating institutions, applicants must submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each subaward for each project year. As noted above, the details of the subaward costs should be included in the Narrative Budget Justification. An Excel spreadsheet will be provided in the electronic Application Instructions document to allow applicants to enter the subaward budget information in accordance with the prescribed format. Applicants will complete the spreadsheet in Excel format, convert it to a .PDF file, and then upload it as an attachment.

g. ***Appendix A.*** At the end of the Project Narrative, applicants must include Appendix A and submit it as part of the same .PDF attachment.

In A*ppendix A,* the applicant must provide a support letter from the participating institution. The letter should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the training fellowship that will be required if the application is funded. Applicants also may include any additional figures, charts, or tables that supplement the training fellowship narrative in this section. For example, applicants might provide a table listing the projects that potential fellows could work on. Appendix A is limited to 10 pages. In addition, in the case of a resubmission, the applicant may use **up to 3 pages** of the appendix to describe the ways in which the revised proposal is responsive to prior reviewer feedback. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. Narrative text related to any aspect of the project must be included in the research or postdoctoral training narrative.

h. ***Additional forms***. Please note that applicants selected for funding will be required to submit the following certifications and assurances before a grant is issued:

A. SF 424B-Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
B. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
C. ED 80-0014 (if applicable)-Lower Tier Certification
D. SF-LLL (if applicable) - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

E. Protection of Human Research Subjects assurance and/or Institutional Review Board certification, as appropriate

13. APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be received by **4:30 p.m. Washington, DC time** on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this request for applications. Upon receipt, each application will be reviewed for completeness and for responsiveness to this request for applications. Applications that do not address specific requirements of this request will be returned to the applicants without further consideration.

14. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Applications that are compliant and responsive to this request will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Reviews will be conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the research training program and request for applications.

Each application will be assigned to one of the Institute's scientific review panels. At least two primary reviewers will complete written evaluations of the application, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to each of the review criteria. Primary reviewers will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score, for each application they review. Based on the overall scores assigned by primary reviewers, an average overall score for each application will be calculated and a preliminary rank order of applications prepared before the full review panel convenes to complete the review of applications.

The full panel will consider and score only those applications deemed to be the most competitive and to have the highest merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank order. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any proposal that he or she believes merits full panel review but would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

15. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT

The goal of Institute-supported programs is to contribute to the solution of education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. Reviewers will be expected to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research training fellowship will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is also described above in the section on Requirements of Applications to the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program (Section 4) and in the description of the training program narrative (Section 12.b)

a. ***Significance.*** Does the applicant make a compelling case for the potential contribution of the proposed postdoctoral research training program for training researchers to conduct the types of research that are funded by the Institute of Education Sciences? Are the Training Director's research projects likely to advance the scholarly development of the participating fellows?

b. ***Fellowship plan*****.** Does the applicant present (a) a strong plan for the proposed research training fellowship, including the role that fellows will play in ongoing research projects; (b) a clear orientation that emphasizes rigorous training in research methodology and statistics; and (c) an emphasis on research that addresses practical problems in education? Does the proposed plan meet the requirements described in the section on the Requirements of Applications to the Postdoctoral Special Education Research Training Program (Section 4) and in the description of the training program narrative (in Section 12.b)?

c. ***Personnel*****.** Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the Training Director and other faculty possess the training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed training fellowship?

d. ***Resources*****.** Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed training activities?

16. RECEIPT AND START DATE SCHEDULE

Letter of Intent Receipt Date: September 6, 2007
Application Deadline Date: November 1, 2007, 4:30 p.m. Washington, DC time
Earliest Anticipated Start Date: July 2008

17. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

- Overall strength of the proposed training program as determined by the peer review process
- Responsiveness to the requirements of this request
- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award
- Contribution to the overall goals described in this request
- Availability of funds

18. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO:

Dr. Jacquelyn Buckley
Institute of Education Sciences
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Suite 508I (eye)
Washington, DC 20208

Email: Jacquelyn.Buckley@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 219-2130

19. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq., the "Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002," Title I of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

20. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99. In addition 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

21. REFERENCES

American Educational Research Association (AERA). (2007). *Membership list of Special Education Research Special Interest group.* Retrieved February 12, 2007 from http://www.indiana.edu/%7Esersig/.

American Psychological Association, Research Office (2004). *2001 Doctorate Employment Survey*. Report by Jessica Kohout and Marlene Wicherski. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children, 62,* 399-413

Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. (2002, November). Rigorous evidence: The key to progress in education? Lessons from medicine, welfare and other fields. *Proceedings of The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy Forum*, Washington, DC.

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