



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring

CFDA Number: 84.324B

<u>COMPETITION</u>	Letter of Intent Due Date	Application Package Available	Application Due Date
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PART I GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

In this announcement, the Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) describes its Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition, which is funded through the National Center for Special Education Research. Separate announcements are available on the Institute's website that pertain to the research grant programs that are funded through the National Center for Special Education Research (<http://ncser.ed.gov>) and to the discretionary grant competitions and research training programs funded through the Institute's National Center for Education Research (<http://ncer.ed.gov>).

The Institute invites applications to the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition. For the FY 2013 competition, the Institute will consider only applications that meet the requirements outlined below in this Request for Applications.

For the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition, the Institute supports individual Principal Investigators seeking training and career development support. However, as with all grants funded by the Institute, the award is made directly to the institution of higher education.

The Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition will be awarded as cooperative agreements. The National Center for Special Education Research is interested in being a partner and working collaboratively with the awardees throughout the life of the project.

PART II INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING

2. PURPOSE

The Institute has established the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition to increase the supply of scientists and researchers in education who are prepared to conduct rigorous and relevant special education and early intervention research addressing issues that are important to infants, toddlers, children, and youth with or at risk for disabilities, their families, special education practitioners, and policymakers and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education. Further, the program aims to prepare scientists to develop and evaluate new products and approaches that are grounded in a science of learning, to design and validate assessments, and to address applied education research problems using sophisticated statistical methods to analyze data. The specific intent is to prepare researchers who are able to conduct the type of research that the Institute funds and to prepare competitive proposals that address relevant education topics and meet the methodological requirements specified for the Institute's research grant competitions.

The Institute's research grant competitions are designed to produce research that contributes to the solution of education problems identified by education policymakers and practitioners. The work of the Institute is grounded in the principle that effective education research must address the interests and needs of education practitioners and policymakers, as well as children and students, parents and community members (see <http://ies.ed.gov/director/board/priorities.asp> for the Institute's priorities). The Institute's research grant competitions target research questions and key student outcomes of interest to education policymakers and practitioners.¹ In early childhood, the primary outcomes of interest are school readiness and developmental outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities. From kindergarten through Grade 12, the core academic outcomes of reading, writing,

¹ Descriptions of the Institute's research programs are available at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>.

mathematics, and science are the central outcomes of interest, as well as social and behavioral skills that support academic learning in school, and successful transitions to employment, independent living, and postsecondary education. The aim of the Institute's research training program is to build capacity in the field of special education to conduct rigorous research that addresses these issues pertinent to infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

3. BACKGROUND

A number of reports have described current education practice as not resting on a solid research base (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2002; National Research Council 1999, 2000, 2002). Grounding special education policy and practice in the United States on evidence will require transformation of both the research and practice fields. Students with disabilities continue to fare worse than their peers without disabilities, achieving lower rates of success on both in-school (e.g., achievement) and post-high school outcomes (e.g., enrollment in postsecondary education) (Newman, Wagner, Huang et al., 2011; Newman, Wagner, Knokey et al., 2011). To improve outcomes for children and students with disabilities, practitioners will have to turn routinely to education research when making important decisions and education researchers will have to produce research that is relevant to those decisions. To achieve this ambitious agenda, there is a need for a cadre of well-trained scientists capable of conducting high quality research driven by problems of practice and conducted in consultation and collaboration with special education practitioners and leaders.

The Institute's research grant competitions use a goal structure to organize the identification of research problems. The five goals are as follows:

- Exploration
- Development and Innovation
- Efficacy and Replication
- Effectiveness
- Measurement

The focus of this training program is to assist early career scientists in conducting research applicable to these five goals.

In addition, the Institute's National Center for Special Education Research supports research across 11 topics:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Cognition and Student Learning in Special Education
- Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education
- Families of Children with Disabilities
- Mathematics and Science Education
- Professional Development for Teachers and Related Service Providers
- Reading, Writing, and Language Development
- Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning
- Special Education Policy, Finance, and Systems
- Technology for Special Education
- Transition Outcomes for Secondary Students with Disabilities

You are encouraged to review these topics and goals (<http://ies.ed.gov/funding>) as you plan the research portion of your training program application.

PART III REQUIREMENTS OF THE RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING

Program Officer: Dr. Amy Sussman (202-219-2126; Amy.Sussman@ed.gov)

4. PURPOSE OF THE EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING PROGRAM

The Institute has established the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program to address the need to support new investigators in special education and early intervention during their first years in institutions of higher education. In a recent report funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, Smith, Montrose, Robb, Tyler, and Young (2011) estimated that 50 to 67% of the faculty in departments of special education at doctoral degree granting universities is expected to retire in the next five years. It is likely that most of the positions will be advertised at the Assistant Professor level and, thus, filled by early career scientists. To develop and maintain a strong cadre of researchers interested in addressing the needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, and their families and teachers, it is essential to provide a structure to assist new investigators in developing their own line of independent research. The Early Career Development and Mentoring Program is designed to fill these needs by providing new investigators support to further develop methodological, content, and grant writing expertise needed to develop a strong line of research that includes federal funding. An important aspect of this program is the requirement that the research and training be guided closely by a scientist experienced in the study of infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disabilities, and/or their families or teachers. The program intends to provide new investigators with protected time in their faculty positions during which they can concentrate more intensively on developing research skills and executing their program of research.

The overarching purpose of the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program is to provide support for an integrated research and career development plan for investigators in the early stages of their academic careers and who have established an interest in special education research, with the ultimate aim of launching independent research careers focused on infants, toddlers, children, and youth with or at risk for disabilities. The award will provide support for research (including salary for protected time to conduct research) and career development that includes training under the guidance of an experienced mentor or mentors. Under the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program, the focus is on training and research in special education.

5. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

A. Applying to Multiple Competitions

You may submit proposals to more than one of the Institute's FY 2013 competitions. In addition, within a particular competition, you may submit multiple proposals. However, you may submit a given proposal only once (i.e., you may not submit the same proposal or similar proposals to multiple competitions), including the research proposed under the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program. If the Institute determines prior to panel review that you have submitted the same proposal or similar proposals across competitions and the proposal is judged to be compliant and responsive to the submission rules and requirements described in the Request for Applications, the Institute will select one version of the application to be reviewed by the appropriate scientific review panel. If the Institute determines after panel review that you have submitted the same proposal or similar proposals to multiple competitions and if the proposal is determined to be worthy of funding, the Institute will select the competition under which the proposal will be funded.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING AWARDS

A. Requirements of Academic Institutions, Principal Investigators, and Mentors

Under the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition (Early Career Program):

Academic Institutions

- Awards will be made directly to academic institutions in which the Principal Investigators are faculty members.

Principal Investigators

- Eligible Principal Investigators must have completed their doctoral degree or postdoctoral program within 3 years of the application due date.
- Eligible Principal Investigators must hold a tenure-track position (e.g., Assistant Professor) at an institution of higher education, or must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the award. In the latter case, you must include a letter of support in Appendix A from the future home institution indicating that an offer has been made and accepted.
- Eligible Principal Investigators may *not* have been a Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator on a research grant from the Institute in the past.
- Eligible Principal Investigators may be from any one of a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education (e.g., general education, human development, political science, psychology, sociology, statistics) within institutions of higher education provided that their focused research and mentoring is in the field of special education or early intervention.

Mentors

- Principal Investigators must have one primary mentor. However, if justified, co-mentors may also be established. This may occur when one mentor has expertise in the relevant content area and the other has expertise in another aspect of your proposed research plan (e.g., statistical methods, psychology).
- Mentors (the term “mentors” includes both primary and co-mentors) must have expertise in research with infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disabilities, and/or their families or teachers, and strong experience in the specific topic of interest identified by the Principal Investigator.
- Mentors must hold tenured positions at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor. The Institute regards mentorship as a critical responsibility of the professorate, and considers serving as a mentor for early career awards to be an honor and great service to the field.
- Mentors may be at institutions that differ from the Principal Investigator’s home institution. If the primary mentor is at a different institution, there must be a co-mentor at the Principal Investigator’s institution. This co-mentor will help guide the Principal Investigator’s career development at the home institution (e.g., navigating the institution’s procedures for grant submission), as well as provide additional content and/or methodological expertise.
- The Principal Investigator’s graduate school or dissertation advisor and postdoctoral supervisor may not serve as mentors under this competition.

B. Requirements for the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program

a. Significance of the Research and Career Development Plans

By describing and justifying the focus of the proposed Early Career Program plans, you must address the following:

- justification for the need for further career development, including your need for additional training (especially if you have already received postdoctoral training) and the skills and/or content knowledge that will be gained from the proposed career development activities;

- your planned program of research, including the progression from prior research to the research that will occur over the award period to the line of independent research that will be developed over the next 5 years;
- the significance of the proposed research project, including a clear description of the research questions and/or hypotheses, theoretical and empirical rationale for the study, the practical importance of the research questions, and a compelling rationale justifying the importance of the proposed research; and
- the significance of the career development plan, including the mentor's role in guiding your work, the additional training and educational opportunities that you will pursue, and how these mentoring and training opportunities are supportive of the research plan.

You should make a compelling case for the potential contribution of the proposed research training activities toward enhancing your knowledge and skills necessary to conduct the types of research the Institute funds.

b. Research and Career Development Plans

Please note that although the research plan must be included in the proposal, the **Institute anticipates that there will be further development of these plans early in the award period through the guidance of the mentor(s)**. Further, there will be less proposal space available for a detailed research plan due to the requirement to propose a career development plan as well. Therefore, the Institute expects less detail in the proposed research plan compared to proposals submitted to the Special Education Research Grants competition. For example, if the Career Development Plan includes additional instruction on and experience with the use of Structural Equation Modeling to facilitate the completion of the research, the Institute would not expect a detailed explanation of the analysis strategy to test possible models. Similarly, if the Career Development Plan includes training in single case experimental design, the Institute would not expect a detailed description of the design requirements and analysis approaches. In each section of the research plan, you should clearly explain how the career development plan will support the development of the research strategy as appropriate for the your background. The Institute *does* expect attention to the major elements of design (e.g., sample, measures, procedures/interventions, analysis).

(i) Research plan

You should describe how the proposed research relates to the research programs supported by the Institute's National Center for Special Education Research. You must incorporate the Institute's goal structure (i.e., Exploration, Development & Innovation, Efficacy & Replication, Effectiveness, Measurement) and the Institute's special education research topics (e.g., Reading, Writing, and Language Development; Autism Spectrum Disorders; Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education) in framing the research questions and research plan. (For a more complete description of the Institute's goal framework and topics, see the Special Education Research Grants Request for Applications, <http://ies.ed.gov/funding>).

(a) Research questions/aims

You should clearly describe the aims of the research project, including the specific research question(s), and hypotheses as appropriate, that they intend to address.

(b) Methodology

a. Sample

The sample should be described and justified in relation to the overall aims of the research project. What is the population of interest? How will disability defined? How will inclusion in the study be determined? What will be the necessary sample size, based on a power analysis, to address the research questions?

For the purpose of Institute's special education research programs, a student with a disability is defined in Public Law 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). The Institute encourages research on high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities, and English learners with disabilities, across all topic areas and goals.

The sample may include children who are *at risk for developing disabilities*. If you are proposing to study children at risk for developing disabilities, you must present research-based evidence of an association between risk factors in your proposed sample and the potential identification of specific disabilities. The determination of at risk for disabilities status must be made on an *individual child basis* and may include, for example, factors used for moving children to higher tiers in a Response to Intervention model. *The method to be used for determining if a child is at risk for developing a specific disability must be made explicit in applications and must be included as part of the sample selection process.* Evidence consisting only of general population characteristics (e.g., labeling children as "at risk for disabilities" because they are from low-income families or are English learners) is *not* sufficient for this purpose. In addition, you must identify the disability or disability categories that the sampled children are at risk of developing.

Although the focus of your research must be on students with or at risk for disabilities, students without disabilities may be included in your sample (e.g., an inclusive classroom) if appropriate for the research questions. For example, students without disabilities may be part of the comparison population or part of the research sample for assessment development and validation.

b. Research Design

You must propose a research design to address the research questions. You should use the Institute's goal framework in developing the research questions and the research design. For example, you may choose, based on your research questions, to model your design on an Exploration project (Goal 1) that specifies the malleable factors to be examined and how they relate to the developmental, educational, or transitional outcomes of interest, and may include the investigation of potential mediating or moderating factors. Similarly, you may choose to develop a research plan that models a Development and Innovation project (Goal 2) that describes the iterative process of developing or modifying an intervention as well as the design of a pilot study that will address issues of feasibility of implementation and the promise of intervention effectiveness.

c. Measures/Data Sources

Name and briefly describe the most likely measures that you will use to assess variables of interest, including child and student outcomes and information about their reliability and validity. If extant data will be used, the dataset(s) should be named and the measures of interest that were used in the data collection should be specified. In the latter case, you must note if a restricted use license is held. If not, describe plans for obtaining one.

d. Data Analysis

You should include a description of planned data analysis procedures. Strong applications will explain how the analyses address the proposed research questions.

(ii) Career development plan

In this section, describe two components of a career development plan – mentoring and additional training. Both aspects of the career development plan should be well integrated with

the research plan. *The primary mentor is expected to work with you in developing this career development plan prior to submission of the application.*

For each mentor, there should be a comprehensive explanation of the expertise the mentor possesses and how the mentor will aid you in acquiring new expertise and guide your development as a scholar. For example, how is the mentor's area of expertise relevant to your program of research?

The *mentoring plan* must contain a detailed description of the planned process of mentoring. This will include such activities as meetings (primary mentors are expected to communicate with Principal Investigators at least once per month), the level of involvement in the research project, and any additional guidance that will be useful for your development as a scientist. Such additional guidance may include reviews of manuscripts for publication, development of grant applications, and/or development of a publication plan. The mentoring plan must specify how the mentor(s) will guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan as well as through your progression toward independent research. The mentoring plan must fit appropriately and be well integrated with the research plan. If there are co-mentors, this section must also describe a plan for the coordination of mentoring activities among the mentors.

The career development plan should also include an *additional training plan*, including educational opportunities to extend your expertise. For example, you may participate in campus-based training activities and opportunities, audit courses, or attend workshops external to your home institution (e.g., a summer institute, grant-writing workshop, advanced statistical course). As with the mentoring, these training activities should be well integrated with the research plan. You should concretely describe your training goals and how the activities will help you reach these goals.

(iii) Evaluation plan

To guide the evaluation of progress toward meeting planned research and training goals, you must provide a timeline of activities that support the goals. In addition to activities that are specific to this application (e.g., data collection, attainment of new data analysis skills), you are required to include manuscripts submitted for publication and applications submitted for funding. These planned activities and products/outcomes will be used as benchmarks for indicating accomplishments on annual and final reports (see *Section 6.B.f. Cooperative agreement, annual review, and risk status*), which the Institute will use to evaluate progress by Principal Investigators and the Early Career Program as a whole.

(iv) Salary, honoraria, travel, and additional costs

The budget may include up to 50% of your academic year salary to be used for academic year support and/or summer salary (see *Section 6.B.d. Resources*).

Budgets may include an honorarium of up to \$3000 per year for mentors. If there are co-mentors, this maximum allowable sum must be divided among all the mentors.

Funds should be used for the costs of conducting the proposed research and executing the career development plan. This may include such costs as research and administrative staff salary, research supplies and equipment, participant compensation, local travel for data collection, and registration for training workshops or institutes.

Funds may be requested for the following travel activities: (a) travel for you or your mentor to meet when you are not at the same institution; (b) travel and registration to participate in professional research conferences; and (c) travel and registration for specialized training workshops available through other entities (e.g., summer institutes in methodology or statistical

analysis). A portion of these funds must also be allocated for travel for the Principal Investigator to attend one 3-day Institute meeting each year in Washington, D.C.

Please note that funds for facility renovation and maintenance are not allowed.

(v) Letter of commitment from institution

You must include in your application evidence of institutional commitment to furthering the goals of the Early Career Program and creating a supportive environment for research and training, including recognition of the potential need for release time from some teaching responsibilities to develop an independent program of research. A letter of support that specifies the institution's support of the Principal Investigator, submitted in Appendix A, is expected from the Principal Investigator's department or college.

c. Personnel

You must describe your qualifications to be Principal Investigator and the qualifications of your mentor(s), specifying your accomplishments and the mentor's proposed role in training within the 25-page narrative of the proposal as well as elaborating how the research expertise of these key personnel reflect the content and methodological foci of the Institute. You should also describe the mentor's prior experience with mentoring early career researchers (including faculty or postdoctoral fellows). The mentor's time commitment should be made clear in the career development plan narrative. In addition, Appendix A must include a letter of support from each mentor that indicates the mentor's involvement in the development of the career development plan, intention to provide ongoing guidance, and acknowledgement of the necessary time commitment and scope of activities proposed.

Applications should demonstrate the ability of the mentor(s) to provide training and guidance relevant to the Institute's special education research priorities by including the mentors' current and recently completed research projects and the relation of these projects to the Institute's research programs. **You must include a summary table in Appendix A of the special education research projects conducted by the proposed mentor(s).** For each project listed in this table, the following information should be provided:

- (a) role of the mentor in the project (e.g., principal investigator, key personnel, consultant);
- (b) brief description of the research project, including methods used;
- (c) brief explanation of how the project fits with the Institute's research programs and goals as listed in the Institute's Special Education Research Grants Request for Applications (<http://ies.ed.gov/funding>);
- (d) funding source, if applicable; and
- (e) duration of project.

Additional information on personnel should be provided in the 4-page biographical sketches (or abbreviated curriculum vitae) for each person.

d. Resources

In this section, you must provide a description of the resources available to support your research and training at your institution (e.g., availability of workshops, established research groups relevant to your research interests, potential research sites). You should include any resources provided by the institution (e.g., "start-up packages" or other resources) and explain how you will have time to conduct your proposed research given your other faculty responsibilities.

e. Awards

The length of the early career award may vary due to the nature of the research and training. **The maximum duration of an early career award is 4 years.** An application proposing a project length greater than 4 years will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Costs may vary due to the scope of the research project and the extent of the training activities. **The maximum award is \$400,000** (total cost = direct + indirect). An application proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

The Institute intends to award not more than 10 early career awards, pending the results of scientific review.

f. Cooperative agreement, annual review, and risk status

If funded, the Institute and awardee will establish a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is used because there will be substantial Federal involvement (beyond monitoring) with the awardee during the performance of the grant. The cooperative agreement outlines project objectives, activities and benchmarks for the research and career development plans, reporting dates, and other expectations related to communication and dissemination. The cooperative agreement also specifies the character and extent of the anticipated programmatic involvement of the Institute in the project and clearly defines the responsibilities of both parties in the agreement.

Per EDGAR 74.51, awardees are required to submit annual reports and a final report according to the schedule given in the agreement. More information about specific annual and final report contents will be provided by Institute staff at least 30 days before the report is due.

The Institute will also monitor awardees' legal and fiscal compliance to protect against fraud, waste, and abuse. Annually, the Institute will conduct a risk assessment for each awardee. This assessment will review an awardee's performance toward meeting objectives as well as legal and fiscal compliance. If an awardee is placed on high risk status, special terms and conditions may be placed on the current award, and there may be implications for obtaining future funding.

PART IV GENERAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW INFORMATION

7. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award cooperative agreements pursuant to this request for applications. The maximum length of the award period is 4 years.

8. FUNDING AVAILABLE

Although the Institute intends to support no more than 10 early career awards as described in this announcement, all awards pursuant to this request for applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications.

The **maximum** amount of the early career award is \$400,000 for a 4-year award. The size of the award will depend on the scope of the research and career development plans. Please attend to the maximums set for project length and budget. **If you request a project length longer than the maximum or a budget higher than the maximum, your application will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed.**

9. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants must be academic institutions, such as colleges and universities, in the United States and its territories. Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply.

Can I apply if I am not located in the United States or if I want to collaborate with researchers located outside of the United States?

You may only apply if you are employed at an **academic institution in the United States or its territories.**

Can I apply to do research on non-U.S. topics or using non-U.S. data?

All research supported by the Institute **must be relevant to education in the United States.**

10. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

The Principal Investigator is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research and career development plan, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports. Your institution is responsible for identifying the Principal Investigator.

The Principal Investigator is expected to attend one meeting each year (for up to 3 days) in Washington, D.C. with other grantees and Institute staff. The project's budget should include this meeting.

11. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIRECT COST RATES

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.

12. DEMONSTRATING ACCESS TO DATA AND EDUCATION DELIVERY SETTINGS

You may propose to conduct research that requires access to secondary data sets or education delivery settings (e.g., classrooms, schools, districts). In such cases, you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources. Whenever possible, you should include letters of support from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, the Institute may require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds. If you cannot provide such documentation, **the Institute may not award the grant or may withhold funds.**

You will need supporting evidence of partnership or access if you are:

Using secondary data sets

If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer review panel and your research relies on access to secondary data sets (such as federally-collected data sets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary data sets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed data sets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to the Institute from the entity controlling the data set(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed data set prior to submitting your application, the Institute may ask you to provide updated documentation indicating that you still have permission to use the data set to conduct the proposed research during the project period.

Conducting research in or with education delivery settings

If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer review panel and your research relies on access to education delivery settings (e.g., schools), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary schools to receive continued funding. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of schools at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to the Institute indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary

number of settings for the proposed research before the first-year funds will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of schools prior to the application, the Institute may ask you to provide documentation that the schools originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research. If you indicate in your application that the research will not begin until the second year of the award you will need to provide documentation to the Institute indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research before the second-year funds will be awarded.

In addition to obtaining evidence of access, the Institute strongly advises applicants to establish a written agreement, within three months of receipt of an award, among all key collaborators and their institutions regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

13. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS

Recipients of awards are expected to publish or otherwise make publicly available the results of the work supported through this program. Institute-funded investigators **must submit final, peer-reviewed manuscripts** resulting from research supported in whole or in part by the Institute to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC, <http://eric.ed.gov>) upon acceptance for publication. An author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all graphics and supplemental materials that are associated with the article. The Institute will make the manuscript available to the public through ERIC no later than 12 months after the official date of publication. Institutions and investigators are responsible for ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this requirement.

14. SPECIAL CONDITIONS ON GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

The Institute may impose special conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has an unsatisfactory financial or other management system; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

15. SUBMITTING A LETTER OF INTENT

The Institute asks that you submit a letter of intent by **4:30 p.m.** Washington D.C. time on the relevant due date for the competition to which you plan to submit. The Institute staff use the information in the letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer review panels, secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications, and provide feedback to you on your research idea. The Institute encourages you to submit a letter of intent even if you think you might later decide not to submit an application. The letter of intent is not binding and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application. The letter of intent must be submitted electronically using the instructions provided at <https://iesreview.ed.gov>. Receipt of the letter of intent will be acknowledged via email. Should you miss the deadline for submitting a letter of intent, you still may submit an application. The Institute asks that you inform the relevant program officer of your intention to submit an application if you miss the deadline.

A. Content

The letter of intent should include:

- 1) Descriptive title
- 2) Brief description of the proposed project, including both the research plan and career development plan
- 3) Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Principal Investigator
- 4) Name and institutional affiliation of mentors and any other key collaborators and contractors
- 5) Duration of the proposed project
- 6) Estimated total budget request (the estimate need only be a rough approximation)

B. Format and Page Limitation

The online submission page (<http://iesreview.ed.gov>) contains fields for each of the content areas described above. You will use these fields to provide the necessary information. The project description should be single-spaced and should not exceed one page (about 3,500 characters).

16. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION PACKAGE

A. Documents Needed to Prepare Applications

To complete and submit an application, you need to review and use three documents: the Request for Applications, the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide, and the Application Package.

- 1) The *Request for Applications* for the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring (CFDA 84.324B) competition describes the substantive requirements for a research application.

✓ Request for Applications <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

- 2) The *IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide* provides the instructions for completing and submitting the forms included in the Application Package.

✓ IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

Additional help navigating Grants.gov is available in the Grants.gov User Guides:

✓ Grants.gov User Guides http://www.grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp

- 3) The *Application Package* provides all of the forms that you must complete and submit. The application form approved for use in the competition specified in this RFA is the government-wide SF-424 Research and Related (R&R) Form (OMB Number 4040-0001). *Section C* below explains how to download the Application Package from Grants.gov.

B. Date Application Package is Available on Grants.gov

The Application Package will be available on <http://www.grants.gov/> by the following date:

September Application Package

July 19, 2012

C. How to Download the Correct Application Package

a. CFDA number

To find the correct downloadable Application Package, you must first search by the CFDA number for each IES Request for Applications *without* the alpha suffix. For the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring Request for Applications, applicants must search on: **CFDA 84.324**.

b. Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring Application Package

The Grants.gov search on CFDA 84.324 will yield more than one Application Package. To find the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring Application Package, you must download the appropriate package:

Application Package:

CFDA 84.324B – Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring Application Package

You must download the Application Package that is designated for the grant competition and competition deadline. If you use a different Application Package, even if it is for an Institute competition, the application will be submitted to the wrong competition. Applications submitted using the incorrect application package may not be reviewed for the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring competition.

17. MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINE

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time** on the application deadline date.

Grant applications must be submitted electronically through the Internet using the software and application package provided on the Grants.gov web site: <http://www.grants.gov/>. You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the Institute's Grants.gov Application Submission Guide and the instructions in the User Guides provided by Grants.gov.

Please note that to submit an electronic application through Grants.gov, your institution must be registered with Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp).

To register with Grants.gov, your institution must have

- a valid Duns and Bradstreet Universal Numbering Systems (DUNS) number, and
- an active registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

Your institution is strongly encouraged to start the Grants.gov registration process at least four (4) weeks prior to the application due date.

Applications submitted in paper format will be rejected unless the applicant (a) qualifies for one of the allowable exceptions to the electronic submission requirement described in the Federal Register notice announcing the Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring (CFDA Number 84.324B) competition described in this Request for Applications and (b) submits, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Institute that documents that the applicant qualifies for one of these exceptions. For more information on using Grants.gov, applicants should visit the Grants.gov web site.

18. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Institute encourages you to contact the Institute's program officer as you develop your application. Program officers can offer advice on choosing the appropriate competition, as well as substantive advice on your research and career development ideas and draft project narrative. To identify the appropriate program officer, see *Section 25. Inquiries May Be Sent To* below.

In addition, you are encouraged to sign up for the Institute's funding opportunities webinars for advice on choosing the correct research competition, grant writing, or submitting your application. For more information regarding webinar topics, dates, and registration process, see <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>.

19. WRITING YOUR APPLICATION: CONTENT AND FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Overview

In this section, the Institute provides instructions regarding the content of the (a) project summary/abstract, (b) project narrative, (c) Appendix A, (d) Appendix B, (e) Appendix C, and (f) bibliography and references cited. Instructions for all other documents to be included in the application (i.e., the SF-424 forms, biographical sketches, narrative budget justification, and human subjects narrative) are provided in the *IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide*.

B. General Format Requirements

Margin, format, and font size requirements for the project summary/abstract, project narrative, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and bibliography are described in this section. You must adhere to the type size and format specifications for the entire narrative, including footnotes, to ensure that your text is easy for reviewers to read and that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects.

a. Page and margin specifications

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.

b. Spacing

Text must be single spaced in the narrative.

c. Type size (font size)

Type must conform to the following three requirements:

- The height of the letters must not be smaller than a type size of 12 point.
- The type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi.
- The type size must yield no more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch.

To ensure your font meets these requirements, you should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. The type size used must conform to all three requirements. **These requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted.**

When applicants use small type size, it difficult for reviewers to read the application and applicants may receive an unfair advantage by allowing for more text in their applications. **Consequently, the use of small type font is grounds for the Institute to not accept an application for review.**

As a practical matter, applicants who use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing, or other alterations typically meet these requirements. Figures, charts, tables, and figure legends may be in a smaller type size but must be readily legible.

d. Graphs, diagrams, tables

The Institute encourages applicants to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If you choose to use color, you must ensure that the material reproduces well when photocopied in black and white.

C. Project Summary/Abstract

a. Submission

You must submit the project summary/abstract as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

The project summary/abstract is limited to one single-spaced page and must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements above.

c. Content

The project summary/abstract should include:

- 1) Title of the project
- 2) The RFA (Research Training Program in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring)

- 3) A brief description of the purpose that addresses both the research and career development plans
- 4) A brief description of the research plan including research questions/hypotheses, sample, intervention (if applicable), measures, and data analysis plan
- 5) A brief description of the proposed training and mentoring activities

Please see the web site <http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/> for examples of project summaries/abstracts.

D. Project Narrative

a. Submission

You must submit the project narrative as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

The project narrative is limited to **25 single-spaced pages** for all applicants. The 25-page limit for the project narrative does not include any of the SF-424 forms, the 1-page summary/abstract, the appendices, research on human subjects information, bibliography, biographical sketches of senior/key personnel, narrative budget justification, subaward budget information, or certifications and assurances. If the Institute determines that the narrative exceeds the 25 single-spaced page limit, the Institute will remove any pages after the twenty-fifth page of the narrative.

To help the reviewers locate information and conduct the highest quality review, you should write a concise and easy to read application, with pages numbered consecutively using the top or bottom right-hand corner.

c. Format for citing references in text

To ensure that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects in the project narrative, you should use the author-date style of citation (e.g., James, 2004), such as that described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Ed.* (American Psychological Association, 2009).

d. Content

Your project narrative must include **four sections** in order to be compliant with the requirements of the Request for Applications: (a) Significance, (b) Research and Career Development Plans, (c) Personnel, and (d) Resources. Information to be included in each of these sections is detailed in *Part III, Section 6.B. Requirements of the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program*. Your response to the requirements outlined in these sections will provide the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application.

E. Appendix A

a. Submission

Appendix A must be included at the end of the project narrative and submitted as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix A is limited to 10 pages. It must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 19.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

(i) Purpose

In Appendix A, as described in *Section 6.B.c. Personnel*, you must include a summary table of ongoing (and recently completed) special education research projects conducted by you and the mentor(s).

You may also include figures, charts, or tables that supplement the project narrative as well as examples of measures (e.g., tests, surveys, observation and interview protocols) to be used in the project in Appendix A.

These materials and the letters of agreement (described below) are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix A.

(ii) Letters of agreement

You must provide a letter of support from your institution in Appendix A. The letter should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands and agrees to the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources that will be required if the application is funded. If you have not yet started your faculty position by the due date of the application, you must ensure that the letter of support from your future institution clearly indicates that there has been an offer, an offer acceptance, and an agreed upon start date.

You must provide a letter of support from the mentor(s), including the primary mentor and any additional co-mentors. The letter should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, resources, and mentoring activities that will be required if the application is funded.

Letters of support should not be reduced in size.

F. Appendix B (Optional)

a. Submission

If you choose to have an Appendix B, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix A, and submit it as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix B is limited to 10 pages. It must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 19.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

In Appendix B, if you are proposing to develop, evaluate, or validate an intervention or assessment you may include examples of curriculum material, computer screen shots, assessment items, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment to be developed, evaluated, or validated. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. You should include narrative text describing these materials in the 25-page project narrative, not in Appendix B.

G. Appendix C (Optional)

a. Submission

If you choose to have an Appendix C, you must include it at the end of the project narrative, following Appendix B (or if no Appendix B is included, then Appendix C should follow Appendix A) and submit it as part of the same .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix C does not have a page limit. Appendix C contains letters of agreement from research partners (e.g., schools, districts, states, consultants). You must ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters.

c. Content

You may include in Appendix C the letters of agreement from research partners (e.g., schools and districts), data sources (e.g., state agencies holding administrative data), and consultants. You must provide these letters before the year that the research project is to begin but no later than the beginning of the second year of funding.

Letters of agreement 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 research project that will be required if the application is funded. A common reason for projects to fail is loss of participating schools and districts. Letters of agreement regarding the provision of data should make it clear that the author of the letter will provide the data described in the application for use in the proposed research and in time to meet the proposed schedule.

H. Bibliography and References Cited

a. Submission

You must submit this section as a separate .PDF attachment.

b. Page limitations and format requirements

There are no limitations to the number of pages in the bibliography. The bibliography must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 19.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

You should include complete citations, including the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), titles (e.g., article and journal, chapter and book, book), page numbers, and year of publication for literature cited in the project narrative.

20. APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time** on the application deadline date listed in the heading of this request for applications. After receiving the applications, Institute staff will review each application 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.

Once you formally submit an application, Institute personnel will not comment on its status until the award decisions are announced except with respect to issues of completeness and eligibility.

21. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

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

Each compliant and responsive application is 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, the Institutes calculates an average overall score for each application and prepares a preliminary rank order of applications before the full peer 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 application that he or she believes merits full panel review but that would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

22. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT

The purpose of Institute-supported training and research is to contribute to solving 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. The Institute expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is also described above in *Part III, Section 6 Requirements of the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program*.

A. Significance

Does the applicant provide a compelling rationale for the significance of the research plan and career development plan?

B. Research and Career Development Plans

Does the applicant meet the requirements for each of the two plans?

- a. Research plan
- b. Career development plan

C. Personnel

Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the Principal Investigator, the mentor(s), and other key personnel possess appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research and career development plan?

D. Resources

Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed activities? Do the commitments of each partner show support for the implementation and success of the project?

23. RECEIPT AND START DATE SCHEDULE

A. Letter of Intent Receipt Date	July 19, 2012
B. Application Deadline Date	September 20, 2012
C. Earliest Anticipated Start Date	July 1, 2013
D. Latest Possible Start Date	September 1, 2013

The grant review and award process takes approximately eight months from the time of submission of the application. Applicants will be notified about funding decisions via email *no later than* the earliest anticipated start date (July 1, 2013).

24. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

- Overall strength of the training program and the scientific merit as determined by peer review,
- Responsiveness to the requirements of this request,
- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award,
- Contribution to the overall program of research described in this request, and
- Availability of funds.

25. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO

Dr. Amy Sussman
Institute of Education Sciences
400 Maryland Ave, SW
CP – 510d
Washington, DC 20202

Email: Amy.Sussman@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 219-2126

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. REFERENCES

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