

Request for Applications

Statistical and Research Methodology in Education

CFDA Number: 84.305D

<u>COMPETITION</u>	Letter of Intent Due Date	Application Package Available	Application Due Date
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PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW.....	4
1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS.....	4
PART II: STATISTICAL AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN EDUCATION	5
1. PURPOSE.....	5
2. BACKGROUND	5
PART III: REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.....	8
1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.....	8
A. Resubmissions	8
B. Submitting Multiple Applications.....	8
2. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.....	8
A. The Project Narrative	8
a. Significance of the Project	9
b. Research Plan	9
c. Personnel.....	10
d. Resources.....	11
B. Awards.....	11
a. Regular Projects.....	11
b. Early Career Projects.....	11
C. Ensuring Responsiveness of the Project Narrative	12
PART IV: GENERAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW INFORMATION	13
1. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT	13
2. FUNDING AVAILABLE	13
3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	13
4. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	13
5. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIRECT COST RATES AND FOR EXPENSES FOR HOSTING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES.....	14
6. DEMONSTRATING ACCESS TO DATA AND EDUCATION DELIVERY SETTINGS.....	14
7. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS	15
8. SPECIAL CONDITIONS ON GRANTS	15
9. SUBMITTING A LETTER OF INTENT	16
A. Content.....	16
B. Format and Page Limitation	16
10. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION PACKAGE	16
A. Documents Needed to Prepare an Application.....	16
B. Date Application Package is Available on Grants.gov	17
C. How to Download the Correct Application Package.....	17
a. CFDA number	17
b. Statistical and Research Methodology in Education Application Package	17
11. MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINE	17
12. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS.....	18
13. WRITING YOUR APPLICATION: CONTENT AND FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS	18
A. Overview	18
B. General Format Requirements.....	18
a. Page and margin specifications	18
b. Spacing	18
c. Type size (font size)	18
d. Graphs, diagrams, tables	19
C. Project Summary/Abstract.....	19
a. Submission	19
b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	19
c. Content	19
D. Project Narrative.....	19
a. Submission	19

b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	19
c. Format for citing references in text.....	19
d. Content	19
E. Appendix A (Required for Resubmissions, Optional Otherwise).....	20
a. Submission	20
b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	20
c. Content	20
F. Appendix B (Optional)	20
a. Submission	20
b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	20
c. Content	20
G. Appendix C (Optional).....	20
a. Submission	20
b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	21
c. Content	21
H. Bibliography and References Cited	21
a. Submission	21
b. Page limitations and format requirements.....	21
c. Content	21
14. APPLICATION PROCESSING.....	21
15. PEER REVIEW PROCESS	21
16. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT	22
A. Significance	22
B. Research Plan	22
C. Personnel	22
D. Resources	22
17. RECEIPT AND START DATE SCHEDULE	22
A. Letter of Intent Receipt Date	22
B. Application Deadline Date.....	22
C. Earliest Anticipated Start Date	22
D. Latest Possible Start Date.....	22
18. AWARD DECISIONS	23
19. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO.....	23
20. PROGRAM AUTHORITY.....	23
21. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS	23
22. REFERENCES	23

PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

In this announcement, the Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites applications for research projects that will contribute to its Statistical and Research Methodology in Education grant program. For the FY 2014 competition, the Institute will consider only applications that meet the requirements described in this Request.

Five major changes have been made in the FY 2014 Request for Applications.

- Two types of grants are being offered this year:
 - Statistical and Research Methodology grants (regular grants category): these are the same grants that have been offered in the past.
 - Early Career Statistical and Research Methodology grants (Early Career grants category): this is a new category of grants added to support high-quality work by relatively recent graduates using a smaller grant award over a shorter time period.
- You must discuss the applicability of the proposed research to applied education researchers and/or to education practitioners in the Project Narrative when discussing the Significance of the Project (see section III.2.A.a). Applications missing such a discussion will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed.
- If you are proposing to collect primary data, you must describe the data collection process and your data analysis procedures. Applications lacking this information will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed. In addition, you should demonstrate your access (or future access) to the settings in which data are to be collected.
- If you are proposing to analyze secondary data, you must describe the secondary data set and your data analysis procedures. Applications lacking this information will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed. In addition, you should demonstrate your access (or future access) to the data proposed for analysis.
- A new section has been added to this Request to help you ensure that your application is responsive to the substantive requirements for the Project Narrative.

Separate announcements are available on the Institute's website that pertain to the other research and research training grant programs funded through the National Center for Education Research. An overview of the Institute's research grant programs is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/overview.asp>.

PART II: STATISTICAL AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

Through the grant program on Statistical and Research Methodology in Education (Methods), the Institute supports research to advance education research methods and statistical analyses. The long-term outcome of this research program will be a wide range of methodological and statistical tools that will better enable education scientists to conduct rigorous education research.

2. BACKGROUND

The mission of the Institute, broadly speaking, is to provide rigorous evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to encourage its use. Critical to achieving this mission is providing education scientists with the tools they need to conduct rigorous applied research. To that end, the Institute invites applications to develop new approaches, to extend and improve existing methods, and to create other tools that would enhance the ability of researchers to conduct the types of research that the Institute funds. For information on the types of research that the Institute funds please see the Institute's research funding announcements at <http://ies.ed.gov/funding>. In this section, the Institute provides examples of areas in which research is needed to improve the statistical and methodological tools available to education scientists. These are meant only as examples. The Institute is interested in a wide range of topics, and *you are not limited to the examples described below*.

The Institute is interested in the development of practical statistical and methodological tools that can be used by most education researchers (rather than only by statisticians and researchers with highly sophisticated statistical skills) to improve the designs of their studies, analyses of their data, and interpretations of their findings. For example, education researchers are more likely to use a new statistical program that is based on software they already use rather than a program based on software that is primarily used by specialists. Similarly, education researchers are more likely to use easily accessible, stand-alone software with documentation written for a general research audience and disseminated through well-established websites than programs designed for highly trained statisticians and disseminated in methodological journals. Tools and resources that are designed to help education researchers are more likely to have a broader impact on education research. For example, education researchers can now more accurately determine adequate sample sizes for cluster randomized trials using Optimal Design software (freely available with documentation at http://sitemaker.umich.edu/group-based/optimal_design_software) and the ongoing compilation of catalogs of intraclass correlations for different types of outcomes and different types of schools and other clusters (e.g., Hedges & Hedberg, 2007). Similarly, education researchers would be better able to interpret the results of their studies (and those results would be of greater use to education practitioners and policymakers) if there were better ways of interpreting the practical implications of the results rather than relying on Cohen's 1988 guidelines for effect sizes. For example, an intervention's effects on student achievement can be benchmarked against normal student academic growth, student achievement gaps, impacts of other interventions, and through a comparison of the intervention's costs and benefits (Hill, Bloom, Black, & Lipsey, 2008; Lipsey et. al., 2012).

The Institute is interested in the study and improvement of statistical methods being used by education leaders and policymakers to make important decisions. For example, education leaders and policymakers are widely adopting value-added modeling methods to evaluate the performance of students, teachers, schools, and districts. In the case of State and district teacher evaluation systems, results from value-added analyses often play an important role in high-stakes decisions such as teacher tenure, pay, promotion, and termination. During a 2012 Institute-hosted meeting, "Recent Advances in Teacher Effectiveness", attendees were concerned that the ongoing adoption of teacher evaluation systems for high-stakes decisions was outpacing the research base underlying value-added modeling (see http://ies.ed.gov/director/teacher_effectiveness.asp). Methodological concerns, raised both at the meeting and in the literature, include such factors as the (1) reliability/stability, validity, and bias of the estimates produced: (2) the capacity of the models to address real world factors occurring in schools

such as student mobility, student assignment, multiple teachers per student, effects of previous teachers, differences by test used, and differences between the time period a student is taught by a teacher and the time period created by testing dates; (3) the need for better data linking teachers and students; (4) the lack of available measures of factors known to contribute to student achievement but outside the control of teachers; and (5) how the estimates should be used with other measures of teacher effectiveness (Guarino, Reckase, & Woolridge, 2012; Harris, Sass, & Semykina, 2010; McCaffrey, Sass, Lockwood, & Mihaly, 2009; Papay, 2010; Rothstein, 2010; Steele, Hamilton, & Stecher, 2010). The Institute has supported and wants to continue supporting research that addresses the practical uses of value added methods including (a) identifying and determining the importance of concerns like those raised above, (b) developing ways to improve the estimates produced by value-added models that can be implemented by education practitioners, and (c) determining the appropriate application of value-added models for different evaluation purposes.

The Institute also invites applications to develop tools or methods to help education leaders and decision makers use data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and to permit advanced analytic techniques to be readily applied to NAEP data. Mandated by Congress, the NAEP assesses the education achievement of students in the United States and monitors their progress over time. Commonly known as the "Nation's Report Card," NAEP has been collecting data to provide educators and policymakers with valid and meaningful information for more than 30 years. The state-of-the-art psychometric and sampling designs used in NAEP present an analytic challenge for many education researchers.

The Institute encourages applications to develop or investigate techniques to increase the generalizability of studies. Multilevel analyses provide estimates of effects across multiple schools or multiple districts, but the applicability of these estimates even to the schools in the sample is rarely considered, let alone the extent to which the effects could generalize to schools or districts not sampled. The Institute is interested in applications that develop tools that applied researchers can use to answer such questions as "Does it work in my school?" from a principal whose school was in a multilevel sample or "Could this work in my district?" coming from a superintendent whose school district was not involved in the study.

Another aspect of generalizability is that evaluations of education interventions are often conducted on samples that may not be representative of larger populations of policy interest. A convenience sample of schools willing to participate in a study may be used, or a group of students may be randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. While the study may have high internal validity, the findings may not generalize to other schools or students. The Institute is interested in applications to understand how results from such samples can be generalized to a broader population, even if not to the entire U.S. Although there has been some work in education on developing weights based on surveys or other sources of information on the population to make the estimate of the treatment effect more likely to reflect the effect in the general population, more research is needed to address this problem.

Increases in the speed of computer processors and sophistication of software have expanded the opportunities for methodological research. Advances have been made, for example, in the areas of item response theory (IRT) and Bayesian estimation primarily of use to other methodological researchers and, in the case of IRT, to test development companies. The Institute would be interested in work that identifies ways in which these technologies and advances stemming from them can be of use to applied researchers or practitioners. For example, do Bayesian estimation procedures have something to offer researchers addressing applied education questions that other estimation procedures do not?

The Institute is interested in applications to identify ways to increase the power of studies to detect effects. Education evaluations can be expensive, especially when schools are the unit of analysis. Although some work has examined the use of covariates and blocking to increase power (Bloom, Richburg-Hayes, & Black, 2007; Raudenbush, Martinez, & Spybrook, 2007), more research is needed. In addition, the Institute encourages applications to develop and refine tools for calculating power in

complex multilevel designs, such as cross-classified models, growth models, and multilevel latent variable models.

The Institute is also interested in research that will address attrition (both overall attrition and differential attrition) which can compromise a research design. For example, research on adult education interventions is often hampered by substantial student and teacher mobility. Evaluations of education interventions may have to contend with differential attrition, for example, when teachers and schools placed in the control group lose interest in remaining in the study or when students and teachers placed in the treatment group are more likely to remain as a result of the treatment. Researchers need information on the causes or predictors of attrition, methods to reduce such attrition, guidelines to determine if attrition has biased the estimate of the effect of an intervention, alternatives to analyzing the data (such as matched quasi-experimental comparisons) when attrition is high, and guidance on what data should be collected from the start of the study in case attrition forces researchers to rely on alternative analyses.

The Institute encourages research that examines quasi-experimental methods. Quasi-experimental methods (e.g., matching and regression discontinuity designs) are typically employed when random assignment is not feasible to evaluate the impact of an intervention. Work is needed to determine which methods best reduce selection bias in estimates of the treatment effect and the conditions that are necessary for producing such results. The Institute has restricted-use data files from random assignment studies that could be used to conduct this type of study. Information on obtaining the Institute's restricted-use data licenses is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp>.

The Institute also solicits applications to improve or extend statistical analyses of single-case experimental designs (e.g., alternating treatments, multiple baseline designs). Single-case experimental designs are critically important for research with low-incidence disability populations. In addition, they may provide a useful complement to group designs to understand factors that affect the response to an intervention (e.g., when manipulating components of an intervention to determine which contribute most to its impact). However, they pose several analytical challenges, such as violations of assumptions of traditional inferential statistics (e.g., independence between observations) and low numbers of participants, but they also come with the advantage of many measurements per participant, which yields a nested data structure. Applicants may propose research that continues exploration of various approaches (e.g., hierarchical linear modeling, nonparametric tests, measurement of effect size) for analyzing results from individual single-case studies, as well as analyzing aggregated single-case design data. Applicants may also propose exploring and developing applications of single-case designs for larger units at times when large enough samples for group designs are not likely to be available, such as individual schools making very specific changes or undergoing specific types of reform.

The Institute will also accept applications to conduct methodological research that piggybacks onto an existing study. For example, a researcher involved in an evaluation study of an education intervention might propose a project under this Request for Applications to test several strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of participants or to examine the influence of different consent procedures.

To reiterate, the Institute is interested in a wide range of topics, and you are not limited to the examples described above.

PART III: REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

A. Resubmissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to one of the Institute's previous competitions but that was not funded, you must indicate on the application form that your FY 2014 application is a revised application and include the application number of the previous application (an 11 character alphanumeric identifier beginning "R305"). The prior reviews will be sent to this year's reviewers, along with the resubmitted application. You must describe your response to the prior reviews using no more than three pages of Appendix A. Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to the FY 2014 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you must indicate on the application form that your FY 2014 application is a new application. You must explain why the FY 2014 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision using no more than three pages of Appendix A. Without such an explanation, if the Institute determines that the current application is similar to a previously unfunded application, the Institute may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year's reviewers along with the current application.

B. Submitting Multiple Applications

You may submit applications to more than one of the Institute's FY 2014 competitions. For example, you could submit an application to the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education (84.305D) and a second application to the Education Research Grants program (84.305A). In addition, within a particular competition, you may submit multiple applications. You may not submit the same or similar applications to more than one competition. In cases where this restriction is not met, the Institute will determine whether and which applications are accepted for review and/or eligible for funding.

2. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

The Institute intends to fund research projects that aim to expand and improve the methodological and statistical tools that are available for education researchers conducting research of the type that the Institute funds through its research grant competitions, statistics contracts, and evaluation contracts. For FY 2014, the Institute requests projects that will provide findings, resources, and tools of immediate practical use to education researchers by the end of the project.

The Institute has added an Early Career grants category for applications from early career researchers in order to help them implement their research agendas. These grants are to support the type of research discussed in the Background section, meet the requirements for the regular grants category discussed in this section along with additional requirements under the Significance and Research Plan sections, and are smaller in size and shorter in length (see Awards section III.2.B.b). Applicants to the Early Career grants category must have received their Ph.D. on or after April 1, 2009. Applicants eligible for the Early Career grants category may apply to either the Early Career grants category or the regular grants category. You should indicate your choice on the SF-424 cover sheet and at the top of the first page of the Project Narrative.

A. The Project Narrative

In your 25-page project narrative, use the Significance section to explain why it is important to develop the statistical or research method (method). Use the Research Plan section to detail how you will develop the method. Use the Personnel section to describe the relevant expertise of your research team and their responsibilities within and time commitments to the project. Use the Resources section to describe your access to institutional resources, education delivery settings (e.g., schools), and relevant data sources.

a. Significance of the Project

In the Significance section of the project narrative, you should clearly describe your research aims while providing a compelling rationale for the development of a new method or the further development of an existing one. The Significance section should answer three questions: (a) *What is the specific method to be developed?*, (b) *Why is this method expected to produce better research results than current practice?*, and (c) *What is the overall importance of the proposed project to solving practical problems in education research?*

In answering these questions, you should do the following:

1. Describe the specific issue or problem faced by education researchers that your work addresses.
2. Discuss the overall importance of this issue/problem to the improvement of education research, the overall importance of its resolution, and its relevance to the type of work the Institute funds.
3. Describe current methods used to address this issue or problem and explain why current practice is not satisfactory.
4. Describe your proposed method and how it is to be implemented. Contrast this with current typical practice and its identified shortcomings. A detailed description of the proposed method will clearly show that it has the potential to produce substantially better research results because (a) it is sufficiently different from current practice and does not suffer from the same shortcomings, (b) there are theoretical and empirical justifications for expecting the method to function as planned, and (c) education researchers will be able to use it.
5. Discuss the applicability of the proposed research to applied education researchers and/or to education practitioners. **Applications missing this discussion will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed.**
6. Discuss how the products of your research will be made widely available. This discussion must include a description of how the products of your research will be made accessible to applied education researchers and/or to education practitioners.
7. For applications to the Early Career category, if you are proposing work that builds on your dissertation, you should describe how the new work substantially differs from and expands on your past work. To this end, you should describe your dissertation with enough detail to ensure that the peer reviewers will understand the differences between it and the proposed work.

If you are applying for a Methods award to further develop a method that was the focus of a previous project, you should justify the need for another award, and describe the results and outcomes of prior or currently held awards to support the further development of the method.

b. Research Plan

The Research Plan must clearly describe how you will develop and test the method as well as check its feasibility of use by education researchers. You should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand what you are proposing to undertake and to judge the degree to which following the plan will yield answers to the research questions. The research plan should provide evidence that you have alternative approaches if difficulties are encountered.

You may propose to collect and analyze original data and/or to analyze secondary data. If original data collection is part of the proposed design, you must describe the sample (including inclusion/exclusion criteria), measures (including evidence of reliability and validity for the specified use), and procedures proposed for the data collection. **Applications proposing to collect original data but lacking such**

a description of the data collection process will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review. You should also provide sufficient documentation (e.g., Letters of Agreement) to assure reviewers that you already have access to the settings where data will be collected or that access can be obtained and the project can be carried out in a timely fashion.

If you propose secondary data analyses, you must describe the data set(s) to be used in the investigation including information on sampling design, sample characteristics, variables to be used, and the structure of the data set. The data set should be described in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether or not the proposed analyses may be conducted with the data set. If multiple data sets will be linked to conduct analyses, you should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to judge the feasibility of the linking plan. **Applications proposing to analyze secondary data but lacking such a description of the data set(s) to be used will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.** You should also provide sufficient documentation (e.g., Letters of Agreement) to assure reviewers that you have access to the data or that access can be obtained and the project can be carried out in a timely fashion.

You must include a detailed description of the data analysis procedures. The data analytic plan should have sufficient detail to permit reviewers to judge the appropriateness and adequacy of the plan for addressing the hypotheses or research questions. You should include an explicit discussion of how exclusion from testing, or missing data, will be handled within the statistical analyses. **Applications lacking a description of the data analysis procedures will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.**

You should describe how you will test whether the method works as it is intended to and produces reliable and valid results. In addition, you should describe how you will determine whether education researchers can successfully use the method (e.g., colleagues might use the method in their own research, students could use the method in a course you teach).

c. Personnel

For your application to be competitive, you will need a research team that collectively demonstrates expertise in the relevant content domain(s), the methodology required, working with the datasets proposed for use, adapting methods for use by education researchers, and working with schools or other education agencies as needed.

This section should identify all key personnel on the project team including those from other organizations. You should briefly describe the following for all key personnel:

1. Qualifications,
2. Roles and responsibilities within the project,
3. Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project, and
4. Past success at disseminating research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

For applications to the Early Career grants category, you as the principal investigator must have received your Ph.D. on or after April 1, 2009. In addition, you must include a mentor or advisory panel as a collaborating researcher(s). You must include these persons as key personnel and describe their qualifications for the proposed research and their roles on the project in the Personnel section. Mentors and advisers cannot have served as your dissertation adviser. Grant funds can be used to support the mentors' and advisers' roles in the project. Although mentors and advisers may be co-authors, the Institute expects that principal investigators will have first authorship on primary research publications resulting from the grant.

d. Resources

You should describe the institutional resources of all the institutions involved in the proposed research that will be used to support your study. You should discuss the overall management of the research project and what resources and procedures are available to support the successful completion of this project. You should describe your access to any data sets that you require and, if applicable, to schools (or other education delivery settings) you will be working with. In addition, you should include letters of support in Appendix C documenting the willingness of organizations to allow you to use their data sets for the purposes of your study and, if applicable, the availability and cooperation of the schools to take part in the study via letters of support. These letters should be placed in Appendix C and should convey that the organizations understand what their participation in the study will involve (e.g., provision of specific data, annual student and teacher surveys, student assessments).

If you have previously received a Statistical and Research Methodology award, you should indicate the results of your past work, its dissemination, and its use by other researchers. In addition, you should discuss any theoretical contributions made by your previous work. By demonstrating that your previous work has made these contributions, you provide a stronger case for engaging in another Statistical and Research Methodology project.

B. Awards

For the FY 2014 competition, the Institute has two categories of projects: (1) regular grants which are similar to projects that have been funded under previous competitions and (2) Early Career grants for early career researchers. Both categories of projects are to address the same types of methodological issues and meet the same requirements (except those regarding personnel) discussed throughout this request. However, they differ in project length and award amount.

a. Regular Projects

Your proposed length of project should reflect the scope of work to be accomplished. **The maximum duration of a Statistical and Research Methodology project under the regular grants category is 3 years.** Applications that propose a longer project length will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Your budget should reflect the scope of the work to be done. **The maximum award for a Statistical and Research Methodology project under the regular grants category is \$900,000 (total cost = direct + indirect costs).** An application proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

b. Early Career Projects

The Early Career category is intended for applicants proposing high-quality work that can be done over a shorter period and requiring less funding. **The maximum duration of a Statistical and Research Methodology project under the Early Career grants category is 18 months (1.5 years).** Early Career applications that propose a longer project length will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

Your budget should reflect the scope of the work to be done. **The maximum award for a Statistical and Research Methodology project under the Early Career grants category is \$200,000 (total cost = direct + indirect costs).** An Early Career application proposing a budget higher than the maximum award will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

C. Ensuring Responsiveness of the Project Narrative

The Institute will review only applications that are responsive to the requirements set out in this request. To help ensure responsiveness to the substantive requirements for the Project Narrative, you should be sure to include the following:

In the Significance section:

- A discussion of the applicability of the proposed research to applied education researchers and/or education practitioners.

In the Research Plan:

- A discussion of (a) the data collection process if primary data is being collected, (b) the data analyses to be done, and (c) how you will test the method and check its feasibility of use by education researchers.

In the Personnel Section:

- For applications to the Early Career grants category: (a) a discussion of how the proposed work differs from the PI's dissertation research (if the project will build off of the dissertation research) and (b) a description of the mentor(s) and/or advisory panel and the role they will play.
 - Note: Early Career PIs must have received their Ph.D.s on or after April 1, 2009 and neither the mentor nor advisors can have served as the PI's dissertation adviser.

Overall:

- A time frame that falls within the maximum project length and a budget that falls within the maximum award.

PART IV: GENERAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW INFORMATION

1. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications. The maximum length of the award period is 3 years for the regular grants category and 18 months for the Early Career grants category.

2. FUNDING AVAILABLE

Although the plans of the Institute include the Statistical and Research Methodology program described in this announcement, awards pursuant to this Request for Applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications.

The size of the award depends on the scope of the project. Please attend to the maximums set for project length (3 years for projects under the regular grants category and 18 months for projects under the Early Career category) and budget (\$900,000 for regular grants projects and \$200,000 for Early Career grants projects). If you request a project length longer than the maximum length or a budget higher than the maximum award, your application will be deemed non-responsive to the Request for Applications and will not be reviewed.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities.

You may submit an application if your institution is not located in the territorial United States. You may also propose working with sub-awardees who are not located in the territorial United States. In both cases, your proposed work must be relevant to education in the United States. Also, institutions not located in the territorial U.S. (both primary grantees and sub-awardees) cannot charge indirect costs.

You may collaborate with, or be from, for-profit entities that develop, distribute, or otherwise market products or services that can be used in the proposed research activities. Involvement of the developer or distributor must not jeopardize the objectivity of the research. In cases where the developer or distributor is part of the proposed research team, you should discuss how you will ensure the objectivity of the research in the project narrative. Products derived from the grant may be copyrighted, and used by the grantee for proprietary purposes, but the U.S. Department of Education reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such products for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so [34 C.F.R. § 74.36(a) (2013) (<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=28ac4dbfeabba7d842fc8544fc835881&ty=HTML&h=L&r=SECTION&n=34y1.1.1.1.21.3.13.16>)].

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

4. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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

Your institution is responsible for identifying the Principal Investigator. Your institution may elect to designate more than one Principal Investigator. In so doing, the institution identifies them as individuals who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically. All Principal Investigators will be listed on any grant award notification.

However, institutions applying for funding must designate a single point of contact for the project. The role of this person is primarily for communication purposes on the scientific and related budgetary aspects of the project and should be listed as the Principal Investigator. All other Principal Investigators should be listed as Co-Principal Investigators.

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. Should the Principal Investigator not be able to attend the meeting, he/she can designate another member of the research team to attend.

5. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIRECT COST RATES AND FOR EXPENSES FOR HOSTING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

When calculating your expenses for research conducted in field settings, you should apply your institution's negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate, as directed by the terms of your institution's negotiated agreement with the federal government.

Institutions, both primary grantees and sub-awardees, not located in the territorial U.S. cannot charge indirect costs.

If you are requesting funds to cover expenses for hosting meetings or conferences, please note that there are statutory and regulatory requirements in determining whether costs are reasonable and necessary. Depending on the type of organization you belong to, you should refer to the Cost Principles for Federal Grants set out at:

- 2 CFR Part 225 (OMB Circular A-87, State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments), (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title2-vol1/xml/CFR-2011-title2-vol1-part225.xml>);
- 2 CFR Part 220 (OMB Circular A-21, Educational Institutions), (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title2-vol1/xml/CFR-2011-title2-vol1-part220.xml>); or
- 2 CFR 230 (OMB Circular A-122, Non-Profit Organizations) (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title2-vol1/xml/CFR-2011-title2-vol1-part230.xml>).

In particular, federal grant funds cannot be used to pay for alcoholic beverages; and federal grant funds cannot be used to pay for entertainment, which includes costs for amusement, diversion, and social activities. In general, federal funds may not be used to pay for food. A grantee hosting a meeting or conference may not use grant funds to pay for food for conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business. You may request funds to cover expenses for working meetings (e.g., working lunches); however, the Institute will determine whether these costs are allowable in keeping with OMB Cost Principles. Grantees are responsible for the proper use of their grant awards and may have to repay funds to the Department if they violate the rules for meeting- and conference-related expenses.

6. DEMONSTRATING ACCESS TO DATA AND EDUCATION DELIVERY SETTINGS

You may propose to conduct research that requires access to studies currently under way, 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 prior to receiving funding. 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 doing any of the following:

Building off existing studies

You may propose studies that piggyback onto an ongoing study (i.e., that require access to subjects and data from another study). In such cases, the Principal Investigator of the existing study must be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

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 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 settings in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings 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 full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, the Institute may ask you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.

In addition to obtaining evidence of access, the Institute strongly advises applicants to establish a written agreement, within 3 months of receipt of an award, among all key collaborators and their institutions (e.g., Principal and Co-Principal Investigators) regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

7. 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 manuscript is to be made 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.

8. SPECIAL CONDITIONS ON GRANTS

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.

9. 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 June 6, 2013**. 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 (identified in Section 19) of your intention to submit an application if you miss the deadline.

A. Content

The letter of intent should include the following:

1. Descriptive title,
2. Identification of the project as a regular project or an Early Career project,
3. Brief description of the proposed project,
4. Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Principal Investigator and any Co-Principal Investigators,
5. Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators (including mentors and advisory panel members for Early Career projects) and contractors,
6. Duration of the proposed project, and
7. 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 1 page (about 3,500 characters).

10. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION PACKAGE

A. Documents Needed to Prepare an Application

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 Statistical and Research Methodology in Education Grant Program (CFDA 84.305D) 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 competitions 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 **June 6, 2013**.

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 Statistical and Research Methodology in Education Request for Applications, applicants must search on: **CFDA 84.305**.

b. Statistical and Research Methodology in Education Application Package

The Grants.gov search on CFDA 84.305 will yield more than one Application Package. For the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education grant program, you must download the Application Package marked:

Statistical and Research Methodology in Education CFDA 84.305D

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 Statistical and Research Methodology in Education grant program.

11. MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINE

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time on September 4, 2013**.

Grant applications must be submitted electronically through the Internet using the software and application package provided on the Grants.gov website: <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 Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering Systems (DUNS) number, and
- an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) (see <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

Your institution is strongly encouraged to start the Grants.gov registration process at least four weeks prior to the application due date. For more information on using Grants.gov, you should visit the Grants.gov website.

Applications submitted in paper format will be rejected unless you (a) qualify for one of the allowable exceptions to the electronic submission requirement described in the Federal Register notice announcing the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education Grant (CFDA Number 84.305D) competition described in this Request for Applications and (b) submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Institute that documents that you qualify for one of these exceptions.

12. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Institute encourages you to contact the Institute's program officers as you develop your application. Program officers can offer advice on choosing the appropriate grant program to apply under and preparing applications. They can also offer substantive advice on your research idea and draft project narrative. To identify the appropriate program officer for your research idea, see Section 19 below.

In addition, you are encouraged to sign up for the Institute's funding opportunities webinars for advice on choosing the correct research program, 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>.

13. 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 1 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 six 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 is 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 described in Section 13.B *General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

The project summary/abstract should include the following:

- Title of the project,
- The title of the Request for Applications (i.e., Statistical and Research Methodology in Education),
- A brief description of the purpose of the project,
- A brief description of the project's contribution to solving practical problems in education research,
- If applicable, a brief description of the sample that will be involved in the study (e.g., age or grade level, race/ethnicity, SES),
- If applicable, a brief description of the dataset(s) to be used, and
- A brief description of the primary research method.

Please see the website <http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/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 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 Plan, (c) Personnel, and (d) Resources.

Information to be included in each of these sections is detailed in *Part III: Requirements of the Proposed Research*. The information you include in each of these four sections will provide the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the application.

E. Appendix A (Required for Resubmissions, Optional Otherwise)

a. Submission

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

b. Page limitations and format requirements

Appendix A is limited to 15 pages. It must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in *Section 13.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

(i) Required Content for Resubmissions

Appendix A is required if you are resubmitting an application or are submitting an application that is similar to an application you submitted previously. If you are resubmitting an application, you must provide a description (up to three pages in length) of how the revision is responsive to prior reviewer comments. If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you must provide a rationale (up to three pages in length) explaining why the current application should be considered a "new" application rather than a "resubmitted" application.

(ii) Optional Content for All Applications

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 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.

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 (if included), 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 13.B General Format Requirements*.

c. Content

The purpose of Appendix B is to allow you to include examples of how the research products will be made easily usable by education researchers (e.g., through a user interface, a table of results). These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. Narrative text regarding these materials must be included in the 25-page project narrative.

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 if it is included) 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, other data sources, 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 should include in Appendix C relevant letters of agreement from partners (e.g., schools and districts), data sources (e.g., state agencies holding administrative data), mentors and/or advisory board members, and consultants.

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, activities, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. 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 13.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.

14. APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications must be **submitted electronically and received by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time on September 4, 2013**. 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 not be accepted.

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 responsiveness.

15. 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 and the review procedures posted on the Institute's website http://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/application_review.asp by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the 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.

16. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT

The purpose of Institute-supported 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: Requirements of the Proposed Research*.

A. Significance

Does the applicant provide a compelling rationale for the significance of the project as defined in the Significance section?

B. Research Plan

Does the applicant meet the methodological requirements described in the Research Plan section?

C. Personnel

Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the Principal Investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research?

In addition, for projects under the Early Career grants category, does the project include the appropriate advisory personnel?

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?

17. RECEIPT AND START DATE SCHEDULE

A. Letter of Intent Receipt Date

June 6, 2013

B. Application Deadline Date

September 4, 2013 4:30:00 pm Washington, D.C. time

C. Earliest Anticipated Start Date

July 1, 2014

D. Latest Possible Start Date

September 1, 2014

The grant review and award process takes approximately 8 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, 2014).

18. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:

- 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.

19. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO

Dr. Phill Gagné
Institute of Education Sciences
400 Maryland Ave, SW
CP - 619
Washington, DC 20202

Email: Phill.Gagne@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 219-1412

20. 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.

21. 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.

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