Institute of Education Sciences
Funding Opportunities Webinar
Basic Overview Transcript

April 5, 2011

U.S. Department of Education

ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

IES Funding Opportunities Webinar – Basic Overview
U.S. Department of Education

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Transcript
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Slide 1

Good afternoon, everyone. This is Liz Albro. Thank you so much for joining us. I hope that this will be entertaining for you all. Please do send your questions. If they are germane to what I'm talking about right now, I'll answer them right away. Otherwise I will hold them until the end. Hopefully everyone can see my slides, and I'm just going to go ahead and jump right into the presentation.

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So let me begin with a little bit of an overview about the Institute of Education Sciences. For those of you who are not familiar with IES, we were formed in November of 2002, and we have three charges that have been given to us by Congress.

Our first legislative mission is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States. Many of you may be familiar with the activities of the National Center for Education Statistics, and much of what they do fulfills this mission.

A second mission that we are charged with is identifying education practices that improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities. Much of the work that we do across all four of the IES centers works to answer this particular mission and this charge. I'm going to spend much of my time today talking about how we support research in order to identify these practices.

Finally, we are also charged with evaluating the effectiveness of Federal and other education programs. Again, much of the work of the National Center for Education Evaluation is linked to evaluating effectiveness, but many of the research programs that we support through the National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research involve evaluating effectiveness.

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For those of you who prefer a visual structure, I have an organizational chart here for you. As you may know, and as you probably have just learned through my presentation here, we have four centers that compose the Institute of Education Sciences. We have two research centers, the National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research, and it is these two centers about which I will speak today. We also have the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. We all report to the Director. Our second Director is John Q. Easton, and he is advised by a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed Board for Education Sciences.

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I wanted to start first with just a brief description of how to identify funding opportunities that are available in the Institute of Education Sciences. I assume that many of you already know how to do this, given that you are on this webinar, but here is just a brief recap. First, I want to encourage everyone to begin the process of looking for funding opportunities at the IES website. So that website is ies.ed.gov.

Once you are there, I also want to encourage you to sign up for the newsletter. So if you're not signed up for the IES newsletter, that's a really important thing for you to do so that you can receive notification of when our request for applications are posted, if there are any changes or modifications that are made to the requirements, as well as learning who the winners of the most recent competitions were.

I also want to tell everyone—and I'm going to say this many times during the presentation today—to review the current requests for applications. It's really important not only that you know the requirements in the request for applications but you make sure that you are responding to the one that is currently active. We just released the fiscal 2012 request for applications, and everything that I'm going to speak about today reflects those RFAs. There are changes that occur from year to year, and so you want to make sure that you're not writing an application in response to an out-of-date RFA.

Funding opportunities are also announced in the *Federal Register*, and you should also know that you are encouraged to reach out to relevant program officers across our two research centers.

Our program staff can help you identify the appropriate program for your particular topic or for your particular research question; however it's really useful, helpful for everyone, if you read the request for applications prior to contacting the program officers, then we can be sure to have a productive conversation for both of us.

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For those of you not familiar with the website, I just have a picture here for you all to see. This is the National Center for Education Research website. Circled in red you will see the place where you can link to find the "Request for Applications." That would be the "Funding Opportunities" tab and the "News Flash."

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A couple things to note about signing up for the News Flash: You want to make sure that you check all of the relevant buttons for all of the centers. If you only check the general IES news and information you will not get all the information that you perhaps want from the two research centers, so please make sure to confirm that you've checked all the right boxes.

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Just a sense of timelines before we jump into the topics. There have been a few changes to due dates this year, and I wanted to highlight this at the very beginning. So as has occurred for the past several years, for our two primary competitions, the Education Research Grants Program and the Special Education Research Grants Program, we will accept applications twice. We will accept them on June the 23rd, as well as on September the 22nd.

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Please note that we do recommend that you submit a letter of intent. The first set of letters of intent are due April 21st, and letters of intent for the September applications are due in July.

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For those of you who have not been to our Funding Opportunities page, I just wanted to show this to you so you all see what it looks like. If you're looking for the request for applications, you want to look at the very top line where it says, "For Fiscal 2012 request for applications and the submissions guide click here."

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If you click on that button it will take you to this page. On this page you can pull up all of the current requests for applications. This is where you want to go to get information about the topics that are currently being competed, the goal requirements, as well as requirements for what should be included in your application package.

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So how do we figure out what grant program is the right program for the project that you wish to propose? First, I promised you I would say this multiple times, please read the request for

application. Within the request for applications you will really be able to see which topics are potentially relevant for your research question and which research goals really allow you to ask and answer the questions that you are most interested in pursuing.

I want to also encourage you, if you have not already done so, to look at the abstracts of projects that have already been funded under a particular research topic. This can be very helpful if you're trying to get a sense of whether, for example, your project is a reading and writing project or a teacher quality project. You might want to look at both of those to see what is the most relevant topic for you.

I want to just note that to get to the Special Education Research projects, it's the same URL, except that instead of NCER, you should type NCSER, and that will take you to the special education abstracts. All right.

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Once you've done all that, then you should reach out and contact a program officer. Program officers are associated with topics, and their contact information is included at the end of each RFA.

Question: *Here, I'm going to actually pause. I have a question here, which says, "When will the Application Submission Guide be available?"*

Answer: *That will be available at the same time as the letters of intent and application package, so that will be April 21st. But I want to encourage everyone not to wait until April 21st to start pulling their application packet together. The Submission Guide is really intended to step you through the process of completing the forms in grants.gov. So it's really more about what is the right information to put into this particular box in the form, as opposed to the substantive part of writing the research narrative or preparing a supplementary or document appendices and other pieces of information.*

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So what are the topics that were currently competing? The first list and the list that you have in front of you now comes from the Education Research Grants Program, or CFDA number 84.305A. As you note here, we have a smaller number of topics than we had last year. We've highlighted some of the topics where things have changed or where there are pieces of information that I'd like to share with you.

But first, let me just tell you that our programs are organized two ways, by the outcomes of interest, so in reading and writing and math and science we're particularly interested in supporting the development and evaluation of interventions intended to support student learning and reading and writing and math and science.

We also have a set of topics that are really focused on looking at the systems. The Improving Education Systems: Policies, Organization, Management, and Leadership topic is really interested in research that supports our knowledge of how to organize the system of education, and that can happen in many levels. So it can happen within the school, it could happen within the district, it could happen within a super district if you're in a very large State, or it could happen at the State level. We're really trying to learn how to make the system of education work better.

Something you will note here is that we have a new topic called Effective Teachers and Effective Teaching. What we have done here is we've decided to combine our two teacher quality programs into a single program to encourage work looking at the sort of policies that support teaching.

The other topic combination that we have done is the Post-secondary and Adult Education topic. Because we are working with adult learners in both contexts, we have created a single topic, one focused on questions of access and persistence in post-secondary education, as well as retention in those systems. And then, we're also interested in supporting work in the adult education arena, where we're really working with adults who are below high-school level learners. So I want to encourage you, if you are interested in that, to look at those particular topics.

Please notice: The reason that Reading and Writing is bolded is to let everyone know that we are not accepting Goal Two Development applications under the Reading and Writing topic area. This is the same as last year. The Goal Two Development restriction is specifically for reading. I want to be clear. It's not for writing. So if you want to develop a reading intervention for a K-12 population, you should not apply under Reading and Writing; however if you would like to develop an intervention for writing instruction, we encourage you and welcome your application.

All right. The other topics you all can read, as well as I can. We have a continuing program in Cognition and Student Learning, where we encourage folks who have done work in cognitive science to build bridges with partners in education and work to bring what we have learned about learning in the laboratory into the classroom. We have a strong and growing program in Social and Behavioral Context for Academic Learning. How do we support the social environment for classrooms? So, for example, if you think about kindergarten classrooms, many of them have a lot of children, many of whom are very active and are still learning how to behave in a classroom context. Research might be on learning what kinds of strategies teachers can use in order to focus attention and encourage children to sit for the time they need to in order to attend. We fund work that looks at that as well.

We have a strong program in Education Technology, so if you are interested in supporting and seeking funding for work in the area of technology, we do have a program in that area as well. We have a strong program in Early Learning Programs and Policies, so if you're interested in 3- to 5-year-olds pretty much, preschool programs, that's what we focus on at the National Center for Education Research. If you are interested in working with infants and toddlers, we'll talk about those in just a minute under the Special Education Research Program. And finally, we have a program

focused on supporting English learners, and so if you're interested in working specifically with that population, I would encourage you to review that topic as well.

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All right. So let me move on to special education. So within special education you will notice that there is a fair amount of overlap. I think there are a couple of overarching things that you should know that makes the Special Education Research Program a little bit different from the National Center for Education Research Program. The first is to note that the special education portfolio accepts applications working with learners from kids who are infants, toddlers, through the school years. Special education funding is not able to support research with individuals who have exited the public school system, so we do not have any programs—or at least under special education—where we work on adults with special needs. If you are interested in looking at adult learners who come to the learning environment with special needs, you should look at perhaps our Adult Education Program and talk with our program officer for that.

A couple things I'd like to draw your attention to that are a little bit different for the special education portfolio. If you'll notice the fifth topic, we have a topic there called Transition Outcomes for Special Education Secondary Students. One of the things that the special education community is quite concerned about is learning how best to support students as they exit out of the K-12 system, and we have an awful lot of knowledge to learn about how to best support those learners.

We have a program specifically focused on autism spectrum disorders, so if there are individuals on the phone who are interested in conducting research to support the learning and achievement of students on the autism spectrum, I would encourage you to look at that topic.

And finally, I want to draw your attention to two new topics that are being competed this year, Technology for Special Education and Families with Children with Disabilities. So if you're interested in developing technology to support learners with identified special needs, you should consider applying under the Special Education Research topic, and if you're interested in carrying out research to learn how best to support families in their attempt to help students succeed in school and children with disabilities, please look at the Families with Children with Disabilities topic.

That's sort of a general overview of the topics, and I will be happy to entertain questions moving forward about the topics. Please know, however, that many of the sort of detailed questions about "Is this topic right for my question" are probably best directed to the program officers of those topics because they know those topics much better than I know them.

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So now what I'd like to do is shift a little bit and talk about the fiscal 2012 research goals. These goals will look similar to the research goals that those of you who are familiar with our competition

will know, but there have been some small changes, and I'd like to draw your attention to those as I present.

So we have five research goals. We support research in the area of Exploration, in the area of Development and Innovation, in the area of Efficacy and Replication, in the area of Scale-up Evaluation, and in the area of Measurement. I'm going to walk through each of these over the next several slides and sort of give you an overview about the kinds of research questions that you can address under each of these research goals and highlight some of the methodological features of each of these goals that you should be taking into consideration as you are preparing your application.

Please note that there is an implicit developmental sequence among the first four goals. So Exploration is often about hypothesis generation that you would then use in order to develop or innovate an intervention based upon what you learned through an exploration process. The Efficacy and Replication projects depend upon having developed an intervention that's ready to be tested. The Scale-up Evaluation projects depend upon you having a series of efficacy studies that have already been completed. The Measurement goal, in effect, is important for all four of those previous goals and, clearly, is something where we have a requirement for lots of work.

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So let me just talk a little bit about the Exploration goal. For Exploration, I mentioned that we think about this as our hypothesis generation goal. The purpose here is really to explore the association between education outcomes and potentially malleable factors. So I think it's really important to recognize that our real focus here is on trying to identify things that can be changed in the education system that we think are related to improving education outcomes.

It's important to note that a malleable factor is something like—perhaps it has to do with the way teachers behave in the classroom. Perhaps it has to do with the physical environment of the school. Perhaps it has to do with the kind of materials that students are presented with. We do not consider malleable factors to be things like a student's gender or a student's socioeconomic background. These might be mediators or moderators that might explain relationships that you see, but they are not, in fact, things that are under the control of the education system.

So what kinds of projects might fit under Exploration? Please note that what I have listed here are three possible methodological approaches. These are not inclusive. These are just the most typical ones that we see.

So how might you explore whether the presence of a particular set of instructional factors are associated with student outcomes. One way you could do this is you could identify a set of data that has already been collected. So perhaps in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—that is the data that was collected by NCES—there is a set of information there about teacher instructional

practices. You could propose to analyze that data and look to see if those teacher instructional practices are associated with student reading outcomes.

On the other hand, you could look at that question by proposing to gather some primary data. So maybe you have access to a set of schools where you could actually observe the differences in reading instruction and teacher practices across a range of upper elementary school classrooms and then code that data and then see if that's associated with reading outcomes.

Or finally, you could say: "You know, there's been an awful lot of work done looking at these kinds of things in the past, I would like to propose to do a meta-analysis where I do a re-analysis of already existent published data where I can look to see if I can identify possible features of the classroom environment or of teacher instructional practices that could potentially be manipulated and changed in the context of an intervention." The main thing to remember about Exploration is that it's really about generating hypotheses. It's not about confirming causal questions. And that's really an important consideration to think about when you're trying to decide if your project fits best under Exploration or under Efficacy.

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The second goal on the list is called our Development and Innovation goal. This particular goal is the one for which we have historically received the most applications and have funded the most applications. Between 50 and 55 percent of the projects that we support fit into the Development and Innovation goal. And the purpose of the funding under this goal is to develop a new intervention, and please know that I use the word "intervention" very broadly. So while this could refer to a full-year curriculum in a particular academic content area, it could also refer to an instructional approach, a particular way of providing professional development; it could refer to a program of training for paraprofessionals; or it could refer to some form of a policy that would be implemented at a State or district level. So please take that word very broadly.

So under Development and Innovation, you can propose to develop, or further develop and refine, a new intervention. The goal here is to try to make this intervention as potentially powerful as you can, getting all the critical components in place. As part of this process, you are expected to describe how you would develop this new intervention. You're expected to collect data on the feasibility and usability of this intervention by the targeted end users in actual education settings.

In the process of collecting this information, you should be following an iterative process, where the data you're collecting feeds back to the revisions of the intervention as you are moving forward to try to make it even better.

And finally, at the conclusion of a Development project, you are expected to collect pilot data on the relationship between this intervention and student outcomes.

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The third goal that we accept applications for is called Efficacy and Replication. The purpose here for the Efficacy and Replication projects is really to evaluate whether or not a fully developed intervention is efficacious under limited or ideal conditions. What does this mean? What this really means is you're trying to test the causal question. You're trying to answer what works or whether this works. So we really want to know whether, in fact, this intervention that's fully developed—that has all the components that it needs—actually works to improve student outcomes.

We do have a secondary, sort of a sub-goal, if you will, under Efficacy and Replication, where if you have already collected efficacy data that demonstrates that an intervention is effective in the short term and you think that the effects of this intervention may persist over time and you would like to seek funding to follow students, you can propose an Efficacy Follow-up study where you would gather follow-up data, where you're examining the on-going effects of the intervention.

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One of the things that you will notice has changed a bit from the fiscal 2011 RFA is that we have a strong emphasis here on thinking about what might be needed in order to implement the intervention under routine practice. One of the most difficult things is that you can spend 3, 4, 5 years of your life developing an intervention that you think is very robust and very powerful, you've got some preliminary data to suggest that maybe it is, but then when you try to test it in a formal efficacy trial, you discover that you have not thought about all of the factors and features that surround that implementation that you as an expert in your content area have had in place.

So for example, often if you're a university faculty member and you have developed an intervention, you probably have had graduate students who have been involved in the implementation of that process. Graduate students are not identical to teachers in the classroom who have many other demands on their time. And when you ask a teacher in a classroom to implement this intervention that you have developed, you may find that there are things that you have not considered in terms of teacher professional development, in terms of manualization of a curriculum that you already need to have in place. So while I want to encourage individuals who are coming in under Development to think about that, I also think it's important for applicants who are proposing an Efficacy and Replication study to make sure that they have thought through what is needed to support implementation of the intervention under routine practice.

Another really important thing and an important change in our Efficacy and Replication goal is that there is an explicit discussion of the need to reduce the appearance of a conflict of interest for developers and evaluators. So when you're coming in to test a causal question and if you're the developer and you're proposing to be the lead on an efficacy study, you need to think carefully about who is going to be responsible for carrying out the formal evaluation of the intervention. You need to think about what kinds of decisions you might want to make methodologically in order to make sure that any apparent conflict of interest has been addressed.

Please note that we do not require confirmatory mediator analyses under the Efficacy and Replication goal, but we do recommend, if it's something that you can do, considering proposing exploratory mediator analyses.

And finally, for those of you who are considering applying under the National Center for Special Education Research, you need to be aware of the fact that there are new requirements for single-case efficacy studies that reflect the guidance that was put forward by the What Works Clearinghouse. If you are interested in proposing to carry out an efficacy study using the single-case methodology, you need to be aware of the new requirements.

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The fourth goal is our Scale-up Evaluation goal. Applications to the Scale-up Evaluation goal can be submitted when you have an intervention that has an accumulation of prior evidence suggesting that the study is efficacious under somewhat limited circumstances. So when we talk about efficacy studies, we often think about them as testing the "What Works" question in the best of all possible worlds. So if you had everything going the way you really wanted to do it, could you get, in effect, a positive effect on student outcomes?

Under Scale-up we're transitioning, and once we have evidence that an intervention can work under the best of all possible circumstances, we now want to ask the question as to whether this intervention is effective when implemented under typical conditions through an independent evaluation.

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So as you go through and look at the requirements of the Scale-up Evaluation goal, you will notice that it maintains many of the requirements from past years. You are expected to implement the intervention under conditions of routine practice; that is, it should be typical classroom teachers who are delivering the intervention, or school leadership, or whoever the targeted end user is; the evaluators must be independent of the developers of the project and of the distribution of the intervention; and you must have prior strong efficacy evidence for the intervention.

Please note, however, that we do not expect to foresee wide "generalizability" from one scale-up study. In part, this has to do with sort of the cost to look at a scale-up question that's "nationally representative." What we expect instead is that over time we will fund multiple Scale-up projects where we get information about the "generalizability" of our findings over time and over different sample populations. And so in the past, I think individuals have interpreted the difference between efficacy and scale-up as one of sample size. We are sort of re-emphasizing here that sample size is not a key distinction from Efficacy goal projects. It really has to do with the independence of the evaluation and implementation under routine practice. As in Efficacy, we do not require confirmatory mediator analyses, but we do encourage exploratory ones.

And finally, this is new—please note that the costs of implementation are limited to 25 percent of the total budget that you request. So given that, it's really important for you to think about whether you want to do a cost share, perhaps with the district, or a cost share with the publishers. Figure out a way to make sure that you can keep to that limit.

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Finally, we have a Measurement goal. I'm sure for many of you on the phone, know that the need for high-quality measures is often not met with sort of high-quality measures being available. So we recognize that, and we have a robust and growing set of projects that we have funded under our Measurement goal. The purpose of that goal is to support research to develop and evaluate assessments, and that includes—and, again, this is not a limiting condition, but it includes things like item development and sort of narrowing the item pool so that it actually reflects the constructs you interested in, as well as supporting a range of reliability and validity analyses.

I would like to note, however, that we do not intend for our Measurement projects to carry out national validations. The scope of funding that we have available is certainly not large enough to support a national validation of an instrument.

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This is something else that's new, that's really important for everyone to note. So here I have included the amount of funds that are available by goal, and I want everyone to notice two things: first, that we have included a typical range per year, and again, a reminder that the budget figures that we include in our request for application include direct and indirect costs. That's a total cost, a total amount that you can request; and this year, we are capping the amount of funds that can be requested for each of the five goals. So please note that there is now a maximum and applications need to respect that maximum and we will not be funding projects over that amount.

So just to recap, I know you all can read this as well as I can, but just to let you know sort of the range for Exploration, if you are only proposing to do a reanalysis a of secondary data, you can request no more than 2 years worth of funding and no more than $700,000. If you propose to collect primary data, whether that's independent or in conjunction with the secondary data analysis system, you may request up to 4 years worth of funding and $1.6 million. For Development and Innovation, the total amount of funding that you can request is $1.5 million, and you can request no more than 3 years worth of support. For an original Efficacy and Replication project, you can request up to 4 years worth of funding and $3.5 million. If you already have completed an efficacy study and you'd like to get additional funding for follow-up, you can request follow-up funds for 3 years, in the amount of $1.2 million.

For Scale-up, you can request up to 5 years worth of funding up to a cap of $5 million. If you propose to do a follow-up study (so like Efficacy and Replication there is an opportunity to follow-up studies) to follow students who participated in prior scale-up evaluations, you can request $1.5

million for 3 years. And finally, under our Measurement goal you can request up to 4 years worth of funding and $1.6 million.

I'm going to pause here. I have a question about a letter of intent.

Question: *You said I encouraged you to submit a letter of intent.*

Answer: *That is absolutely right.*

And then the follow-up question was:

Question: *"How important is the letter of intent?"*

Answer: *The letter of intent is important in two ways. The letter of intent is important because it comes to each of the program officers or to the relevant program officers. And if you submit a letter of intent, then your program officer will contact you, and it will provide an opportunity for you to have a conversation with the program officer about your topic. The other reason that it's very important to submit a letter of intent is that our Standards and Review office uses that information in order to make sure that they have a full complement of reviewers who will be participating in the review. I think this is particularly important for individuals planning to apply to the National Center for Special Education Research. If you are proposing to carry out work with a very specific population of learners with identified special needs, it would be very important for us to identify reviewers who are skilled and knowledgeable about the type of individuals that you're planning to work with, and we may not have those individuals already on our standing panel. So those are the two functions of the letters of intent.*

It's important for you to know as well, that the letters of intent are never seen by the reviewers, and they are not in any way binding, so they really are a way for you to begin a conversation and for our Standards and Review staff to have some additional information about the scope and range of projects that they may elect to see, or applications.

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So now I'm going to shift to talking about our other programs, and then I'll come back and talk a little bit about the peer review process and provide some helpful hints. So I did want to let individuals know about other programs of research that we are supporting, other than our two main RFAs: Education Research grants program and Special Education Research grants program.

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We have two post-doctoral research training programs in the education sciences that are being competed this year. One is being supported through the National Center for Education Research. The other is through the National Center for Special Education Research. These grants are for institutions to establish post-doctoral training programs in order to train researchers in the skills necessary to conduct the type of research that the Institute funds.

Please note that that is the constraint. You need to be a doctoral-degree granting institution. You can support up to eight post-doctoral fellows depending upon the number of years that you're planning those post-doctoral fellows to be in training. The maximum amount of the award is $687,000. As you may infer from looking at that number, what the award really does is it provides stipend support, as well as some support for travel costs and research costs for the post-doctoral fellows. There's a small amount of money for administration of the program, but this is really meant to be a program that provides for the training of fellows. It doesn't support the mentors, if you will, or the project directors, and it's not really a salary generator for them.

It's important to note that we are not competing our predoctoral research training program. We have competed that in the past; however it is not being competing for fiscal 2012.

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I want to talk now a little bit about our Research and Development Centers, both within NCER and NCSER. The topics that are competed for our R&D Centers vary year by year.

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Currently, in the National Center for Education Research, we support a total of 16 R&D Centers. For 2012, we are competing two R&D Centers, one focused on cognition and adult literacy, where the focus is really on bringing what we have learned from cognitive science into supporting adult learners. The purpose of this R& D Center topic is really to carry out some exploratory work and to do some development work in the area of adult literacy. We are also competing the State and Local Policy topic, and this is a relatively wide open topic. And I would refer you to the request for applications for additional information.

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Under Special Education, the National Center for Special Education currently supports a total of three Research and Development Centers, and they are competing four R&D Center topics for 2012. The first is focused on school-based interventions for secondary students with autism spectrum disorders; the second is focused on reading instruction for deaf and hard-of-hearing students; the third is focused on interventions for families of students with autism spectrum disorders; and the fourth is focused on interventions for families with students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

As you can see here, the Special Education Center is really using the Research and Development Center mechanism to support work targeting a particular population of learners, and trying to identify and develop interventions to support those learners. Across all of the R&D Centers, those are 5 years worth of funding, and you can request a total up to $10 million a year to support the work of the R&D Center.

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We also have a program focused on Statistical and Research Methodology in Education. This is our 84.305D request for applications. In this particular program of research we solicit research projects that are intended to expand and improve the methodological and statistical tools available for education researchers. I always like to think of this particular program as the program where if you're going to create the next Optimal Design or sort of specify how to use HLM, this is the topic area for you.

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And our final program that I'd like to talk just briefly about is our Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies. Under this program area we provide support for rigorous evaluations of education programs or policies that are paid for and implemented by State or local education agencies. What's important to note here and what's different between the Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies RFA, as compared to the Scale-up Evaluation goal under our main RFA, is that in this particular competition we are requiring that there be an explicit partnership between the State or district that's implementing the intervention and the researcher. So in this case, the State or local education agencies are paying for the implementation of the programs and they're seeking a rigorous evaluation of that program. And that's going to happen, and so IES will pay for the evaluation component of that work.

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So here's just a summary of the amount of funds available for these other grant programs. And we have under the post-doc training program, again, the typical range really depends upon the number of post-docs. Five years up to $687,000 total. For the R&D Centers, it's up to $10 million over 5 years. For the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education program you can request up to 3 years of funding and a million dollars, and under the State and Local program, you can request up to 5 years worth of funding and $5 million.

I do have a question about the amount of indirect costs that are allowable. Please note that for every one of our programs, except for the training program, you may request the full indirect cost that's part of your indirect cost agreement; however for the post-doc training competition, you are limited to 8 percent. And we do encourage all applicants to consider whether the off-campus indirect cost rate might be applicable. This becomes particularly true for many of the evaluation projects or efficacy projects where much of the work is actually happening off campus.

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Letters of intent. So the letters of intent are due, I believe it's April 21st, and then in mid-July. While letters of intent are important, but not required, we do encourage all researchers to submit letters of intent.

Question: *I had a question, which asked whether there was a form for the letter of intent.*

Answer: *We do not have a form; however, there is a location where one can go, and the information about how to submit a letter of intent is included in the RFA. I don't want to give you the wrong web address if I try to pull it up from memory, but there is information in the request for applications that specifies what needs to be included in the letter of intent. It's typically no more than a page worth of information, and it really just gives a basic overview of the project as proposed or as you're currently thinking about it.*

So just to repeat here, applications are accepted twice a year for fiscal 2011. June 23, 2011, and September 22, 2011 are when applications will be due this year. It's really important to know that we do not accept late applications. Every year we have individuals who request or want to know whether that is an option. It is not an option. So please don't count on that.

The authorized representative is the one who pushes that final submit button, and I want to encourage all of you on the phone who are working with your sponsored-projects office to make sure that you get your sponsored-projects office all of the information they need at least 2 weeks prior to the due date so that they have time to review it and make sure that they have all of the supplemental materials that need to be uploaded in order to complete the application and that you and your team then have an opportunity to review what was uploaded to make sure that there has not been an oversight, where a wrong CV was uploaded or a wrong—I don't know—maybe an earlier version of the application was uploaded or of the appendices. So please don't try to submit right on the deadline and know that it's busy on that last day, and even on the last couple of days. If the application doesn't go through by 4:30 p.m. and zero seconds on the due date, it will be considered to be late.

Slide 33

For fiscal 2012, application packages will be available on Grants.gov. Most of your institutions should already be registered on Grants.gov.

Slide 34

For those of you who have not been to Grants.gov, this is what it looks like. As you notice there is a—on the left-hand column—a place for applicants to log in. There's a place to seek grant opportunities. And when our application packages are posted—it should be April 21st for the first round—you can go to "Find Grant Opportunities" and that information will be available for you there.

Slide 35

So as you're getting ready to pull your application together, I do want to remind you, particularly as you're filling in the forms, that there are three places that you need to look for information to make sure you've gotten everything you need. The first is the request for applications, and so you really

want to start there, because the request for applications has all of the substantive information about what kinds of information needs to be included for an exploration project versus an efficacy project. It has information about the topic areas. All of that information is in the RFA.

However, in order to submit the application through the electronic process, you will also need to make sure that you review the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide and that you download the correct application package from Grants.gov. Again, the last two, the Submission Guide and the package, will be up the end of April for the June deadline, and they will be up in July for the September deadline.

Just a word of wisdom, please note that if you download the information or you download the package for the June deadline and then decide that you're not ready to apply and want to actually apply in September, you will need to go back into the system and download the correct application package for September. You cannot apply in September using the application package that was submitted for June. Okay?

Slide 36

Let's see. I have some information about resources for researchers, but let me just answer this question here, which said:

Question: *"For either the Exploration or Development and Innovation goals, is there a limit on the amount of grant funds that can be used to measure student outcomes?"*

Answer: *Under the Exploration goal there are no limits for the amount of grant funds that can be used to measure student outcomes.*

Under the Development and Innovation goals, there is a limit to the amount of funds that can be expended on the collection of pilot data. I believe it's 30 percent. I don't have it in front of me. But the idea is that collection of the pilot data should not be consuming—the majority of the time or the project for the development project; however, you can certainly be measuring student outcomes throughout the development process, and so there are no limits on the measurement of student outcomes as you're going through the iterative development process. I hope that's clear. If that's not, please just send the question again, and I'll try again.

A couple of other things for you all to be aware of: We have tried to compile and pull together a set of information called "Resources for Researchers" that is available on the IES website. But do know that we also include information and we have some of our past webinars that are available that are appropriate. There will be future webinars going forward, so there's a much more extensive grant-writing workshop where Dr. Allen Ruby will step you through the process of completing applications for each of the goals, and Dr. Emily Doolittle will be holding a webinar, where she's going to walk you through the process of actually completing the forms and going over the submission guide. So if you're interested in learning more about those steps, please do be sure to sign up for those webinars.

Slides 37 & 38

Here's where you can find the link to the "Resources for Researchers" page, and it's on both of the two NCER and NCSER pages.

Slide 39

And if you click on the "Resources for Researchers" page, you will come to this page where you will note that we have information on preparing an application, so there are additional resources for you to think about. We've got a list of current and present research funding opportunities webinars. We have a series of methodological resources where you can link to from this site, so if you need to know, for example, where to download the Optimal Design software for completing your power analysis, we have a link that will allow you to get to that from our page.

In addition, we have a set of available data sets and tools that are available, and if you want to know what NCES has or what other sorts of data sets are available, this is a great resource. And if you want additional information about the peer review process, please note that we have a link there at the bottom of that list that takes you to a full description of the peer review process.

Slide 40

So I want just to close here, and then I'm going to turn to questions. It's to help us help you, so please do take the time to read the request for applications carefully. There's a tremendous amount of information there. We spend a lot of time crafting that document to try to make sure that as many of the questions and concerns that applicants have are addressed therein, and I think—it's actually, from my perspective—it's a very useful document for helping you make sure that you have included all the information that you need.

Please know that you should reach out to the IES program officers early in the process. We are here to help, but as you might imagine the closer it gets to the deadline, the less time we have available to help you. If you have questions now, I want to encourage you to reach out to our program staff now. We'll be sure to get you on our calendar and talk with you and provide you feedback.

The other piece of information I always like to make sure that I note is that IES program staff are available to review draft proposals and provide feedback. We are not part of the peer review process, so we have the ability to provide you with feedback. So please don't be afraid to contact us. This is one of the parts of our job that we really love; so we are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Slide 41

I'm going to move to the next slide and put up my email so you all can email me. But first I'm going to go through here and start to answer questions.

Question: *Is it 4:30 Eastern Time in terms of the application on the due dates?*

Answer: *It's 4:30 Washington, DC, time, so it is Eastern Time. It's defined by the Grants.gov clock, and I'm glad you asked that question, because that's a really important question to note. So for those of you on the West Coast, it's going to be 1:30 your time.*

Question: *What exactly is due by April 21st?*

Answer: *So on April 21st, the letter of intent is due by then. The application is due June 23rd, for the first deadline. If you decide not to apply in June but then decide to apply in September, that deadline is September 22nd. The other important thing about April 21st is that that is when the application package becomes available and when the Grants.gov Submission Guide will be available.*

And we have a question of:

Question: *"How can we obtain copies of funded proposals?"*

Answer: *I think that the best thing for you to do in terms of a copy of the funded proposals is to actually begin with a conversation with your program officer. As I alluded to at the beginning of my presentation, the requirements change from year to year, and so it's not always a good thing to look at prior funded proposals, because they are writing in response to a previous request for applications and you don't want to make the mistake of following something that they did based upon a prior requirement.*

We do have full structured abstracts up for most of our projects, and I think that that can provide you with a lot of information about what's available and what kind of research projects we funded. I really do think that the best thing you can do in terms of getting feedback and trying to think about how to put your application together is to read the request for applications, where we have quite a lot of information about how to put your application together. Also, take advantage of your program staff who are here to help you and provide you with feedback.

I have a question from someone who is interested in learning more about resubmissions.

Question: *"So is there anything different for resubmissions, other than labeling it as a resubmission?"*

Answer: *Yes. For resubmissions you label it as a "resubmission," but then you also have the opportunity to use up to three pages in Appendix A to provide a response to the reviewer's comments. That's actually a really important thing that you want to do, because one of the first things reviewers will do when they review a resubmission is look at the prior reviewer's comments and look at your response to those reviewer comments. Then they will evaluate your application in light of how well you've responded to reviewer concerns.*

Question: *I have a question here which says, "Is there a place where we can see good examples of logic models?"*

Answer: *If you go to our "Resources for Researchers" page there is information there from our summer RCT Training Institute, and one of those sessions, actually, I believe it was led by David Cordray, and there is a very nice*

example of a logic model there. If you want to email me directly, you can email that to me, and I can direct you to the right piece of that presentation.

Question: *"Are student outcomes restricted to K-12 students, or can outcomes be for participants such as teachers; for example, for professional development interventions?"*

Answer: *I'm really glad you asked that question because that's actually a really important question. Under our Effective Teachers and Effective Teaching topic, as well as under our new Improving Education Systems topic, which has a leadership component under it, if you are proposing to develop an intervention for teachers or for leaders or for other individuals who are working with students, you are still required to provide a link to student outcomes, because we have plenty of evidence from teacher quality research that simply changing teacher knowledge and/or teacher practice may not be sufficient for changing student outcomes. So just changing the teacher does not necessarily mean that you're going to be changing student outcomes. So we require that applicants under our teacher program collect both teacher outcomes and student outcomes. So I would really refer you to our program officers, Harold Himmelfarb and Katina Stapleton who work with those areas and can provide you with lots of feedback.*

Question: *"I saw an RFA about evaluating in-service teacher training for special education. Is that currently available?"*

Answer: *You know, I actually don't know the answer to that question, so I would like it if you can send me that question directly. You have my email address, so just send it to me, and I will forward to my colleagues in the Special Education Center, and perhaps we can provide you with some additional information about that.*

Question: *"Is it required that the researcher has faculty status, even those in administrative positions?"*

Answer: *We have no requirements about the faculty or non-faculty status of our applicants. Essentially, the language in the request for application states that the entities which apply and the individuals on the team that apply should have the required skills necessary to carry out the research as stated. The vast majority of the projects that we support have multiple individuals. Lots of teams are involved, and so there are a range of individuals with different expertise and different statuses that are part of projects, so there is not a requirement that an individual be a faculty member.*

Question: *"Is it okay to submit twice with the same topic in June and September?"*

Answer: *So if the question is, "Can I submit the same application twice in June and September," the answer is, no, you may not. If the question is, "Is it okay for me to submit two different research proposals asking different questions under the same topic in June and September?" Yes, that's okay. All right. So just to reiterate, if you want to put the same proposal in twice and put it in June and September, only one of those applications will be reviewed. That's not appropriate. However, if you have two different ideas and they're both relevant to the same topic, you are permitted to put in those two different proposals, one in June and one in September.*

Question: *"Are the student outcomes related to academic content only or can it be related to student behavior, e.g., physical activity or on-task time, et cetera, outcomes?"*

Answer: *Most of our topics are focused on academic achievement; however not all of them are, and I want to encourage you to go back and look at the requirements for each of the topic areas. So under the social and behavioral topics, for example, you are expected to gather some behavioral data, right, depending upon your question, but you are also expected to gather academic outcomes as well.*

However, under the postsecondary topic, you can have outcomes that are related to things like persistence in school or access to college, or dropout from high school. So those are certainly related to school performance but those are not academic content only. However, I really want to encourage you to look at the requirements for each of our topics because it varies from topic to topic.

So I'm hoping that there are people busily typing questions. I know I tried to leave lots of time for questions because I know that it's not possible to cover everything in a basic overview, so I'm going to be patient and wait and see if there are any other questions that come.

Question: *Ah, so here: "How long after submitting your proposal will you receive information about proposal approval?"*

Answer: *So, here, let me actually walk you through the peer review process. I'll walk you through that and, in part, that will let you know about the timeline. So let me just take the June application deadline, I'm going to walk you through the timeline. So you submit your application to IES for consideration for the June 23, 2011 deadline. There's a series of steps that we will then go through here at our office, where we will go through and review for responsiveness to the requirements of the RFA. We will look to make sure that it's compliant to the administrative requirements, things like your font size and your margin size.*

Then those applications will go to our Standards and Review office, who will be responsible for distributing them to our peer review panel. Our peer review panelists will—two to three and sometimes four individuals—will review each proposal independently. Those scores will come in, and then there is a triage process where the most competitive applications are then brought before the full peer review panel, somewhere between, typically, 18 to 22 individuals who will have a discussion about those applications. Each member of the panel will then provide a set of scores for the applications discussed at panel. Based upon those panel recommendations of scientific merit, we will then make a set of recommendations to the director of IES for approval for funding. So that's sort of all the steps that applications go through.

And what the timeline is for the applications that come in June, the earliest start date is March 1, 2012. Notifications happen, clearly, before March 1st, but the timeline for notifications really vary. It's about a 9-month process as we go through the whole process, all of the various steps that I laid out.

Question: *"How many projects do you anticipate funding this year?"*

Answer: *We actually do not have a number of projects that we anticipate funding. We have been fortunate in that we have been able to fund all projects that were considered to be outstanding or excellent by the peer reviewers, so we don't have a certain number of applications that we are bound to fund or that we expect to fund this year.*

I have another question about a letter of intent, which says here:

Question: *"What should be in a letter of intent?"*

Answer: *A letter of intent should include a brief description of the purpose of the project. It should identify which research goal and research topic you're applying to. It should provide a brief description of the research methodology that you're proposing and the research questions that you propose to answer, and, finally, a sentence or two about the analysis plan that you're proposing to follow.*

I have a question here, another question about a resubmission.

Question: *"If large components of an unfunded proposal have been eliminated but the bulk of the professional development components and other research parts are the same, does that qualify as a resubmission?"*

Answer: *I want to refer you to really talk with the program officer about this and let's provide them an opportunity to look at your revisions, to talk about your revisions, and to look at it in light of your prior application.*

The one sort of words of wisdom I'd like to share is that if you have an application that's going to be reviewed by a similar panel, just know that it's likely that individuals on the panel who heard the application discussed before may well see it again, and they may think it's a resubmission even if you do not. So you need to think carefully about how you frame that, whether you sort of say up front, "This was an application that was previously submitted but we made major changes to it, and so we are considering it a new application." Or if you want to go the other way to say, "It's a resubmission, we've made some changes in response to reviewer comments, and here is why we think it's a resubmission."

Question: *"Is there a rubric for the peer reviewers to follow, and if so, is it available to the grant seekers before the deadline for submission?"*

Answer: *If you look in our "Request for Applications," you will see toward the end of the RFA, in every single RFA, we have a list of the criteria that the reviewers are asked to rate each application on. For most of our proposals, those criteria are significance, research plan, personnel, and resources, and there's information about each of those, again, in the RFA.*

Please note that for each of those criteria—significance, research plan, personnel, and resources—what is important will vary as a function of the topic and the goal. If you look in our "Request for Applications" you will notice the way the expectations for the research goals are laid out, it's organized by significance, research plan, personnel, and resources. And so if you follow the information in the RFA, that's what the reviewers have, so they don't have anything different from what you do.

Question: *"What is the percentage of applications that get accepted?"*

Answer: *Our percentage rate varies from year to year, as you might imagine. It does depend upon the number of applications that we receive. But if you look over time, we hover between 10 and 12 percent of the applications that*

come in do receive funding. So it's pretty competitive, and it's true that typically applications that get funded, it's more likely that they get funded on a resubmission. It is challenging for a first-time applicant to get funded.

Question: *"Are submissions from a mid-sized statewide non-profit organization that contain a research and evaluation development eligible for consideration?"*

Answer: *The language in the request for application states that applicants who have the capacity to carry out research are eligible for applying, so it sounds like your institution has that capacity. So as far as I could tell from what you said, you should be eligible. But please do follow up with the program officer for the topic, and they can provide you with additional details if necessary.*

Question: *"Can you use both primary and secondary data in a single research study?"*

Answer: *Yes, is the short answer to that question. And, in fact, particularly for exploration projects, you may find that the set of hypotheses that you really want to explore are really best addressed by doing some sort of a combined project, where maybe you do some original work doing a secondary data analysis, and then you propose to also collect some primary data at the same time or in succession, in sequence. All right.*

I have two questions about methodological approaches. I'm going to read them both, and then I will attempt to answer them.

Question: *"How often are mixed methods or strictly qualitative approaches funded or are you specifically looked for quantitative-only proposals?"*

So that's one question. And that was followed by a very similar question, which says:

Question: *"How much support is there for qualitative or mixed-methods or research? We're now interested in asking the question of why an intervention worked and getting more information about it."*

Answer: *So the answer is that we fund a fair amount of what I believe you have described here as mixed-methods approaches. So we certainly have a lot of work where qualitative methods are used in order to understand and address some of the "why" questions, right, trying to understand issues around implementation, and trying to provide close descriptions of classroom or instructional practices. Much of that work you can see in the exploration projects that we funded. Although I will say that if you look at the development work, a lot of the development work relies on close qualitative work, as you're trying to understand how an intervention is operating as you're trying to improve it, as you're trying to figure out how to make it work the best way that it can.*

There's also often qualitative or, say, case study data that's collected as part of Efficacy or Scale-up studies, where you may have a large-scale field-based RCT and you have information being gathered from the experimental data, but you also propose to gather some more rich descriptive data about what these interventions look like when implemented. There's lots of different ways that you could do it, but there certainly are lots of case studies that have been funded in conjunction with the quantitative work that you see funded under Efficacy and Scale-up evaluations.

Question: *We have a question about the strictly qualitative approaches.*

Answer: *I will say that I don't think I have any examples of a project where only qualitative approaches were used. Certainly, we have several Exploration projects, which are predominantly qualitative, but there's almost always a quantitative component because you're trying to assess student outcomes.*

And I think, finally, for the individual who is interested in learning more about why an intervention worked and getting more information about it, I think that that is something that could potentially be explored—be looked at under the Exploration goal, I encourage you to talk to the program officer about that particular project.

Question: *If you have a literacy project that focuses on English language learners in preschool, would you submit an RFA for reading and writing, English language learners, or early learning goal?"*

Answer: *Oh, now this is requiring me to know my bullets. I know that you can't submit it under Reading and Writing because that is limited to students in K-12. English Learners is limited to K-12 as well. So I believe that Early Learning is the only place where you would apply, given the preschool focus. But please check the request for applications.*

For each of the topic areas there is a section entitled "Content and Sample Requirements." And if you look in that area, under each topic you will notice that there is information there about what's the particular age range of the population that is available. It will specify whether preschool applications considering preschool learners can be considered under that topic or not. All right.

Question: *"Probably in the RFA, but is there reporting required on a specific timeframe for projects that are funded?"*

Answer: *That's not actually in the RFA. But we do have reporting requirements for applications that are funded. So for most applications there is an annual report that is submitted to describe the progress of the project, and if you're interested in learning more about the output and what we've learned from the work that we've funded, if you go to our "project selector" and go to our abstracts page, we actually have information about project websites and publications that have come out of the research that we've funded. So, as you might imagine, there's more information on some of the earlier projects that we funded, projects funded in the early 2000s that really provide lots of detailed information about what was found in the project.*

A question was asked:

Question: *"Where can I get a copy of the webinar?"*

Answer: *The webinars will be posted on the IES website. I don't know exactly the time. They'll be up pretty quickly. I have a webinar, so this one is repeated again next week, so probably the slides for the webinar will be up after the 12th, when I am due to do this presentation again.*

And we normally also will put up transcripts, so you all can look at transcripts of this conversation with the answers to the questions. That will take a little bit longer. It will take a couple weeks for the transcripts to be produced and

then reviewed. But both the slides and the transcripts will be available on the IES website, and you can get to it from that "Funding Opportunities" page.

Question: *"Where can you see a list of the program officers?"*

Answer: *So the best way to find that information—well there's sort of two ways. The easiest way is if you have the request for applications for the particular program that you're interested in applying to, if you go to the end of those RFAs, there is a list of the program officers associated with each of the topics that are available. The other way that you can find out is that if you go to the "Funding Opportunities" page, there is information available. There are topics that are there, and you can click the links, and they will take you to a page where the program officer's name is listed.*

Question: *A second question, "Will the grant-writing webinar, which was filled when I tried to register, also be posted online after it takes place?"*

Answer: *Yes. All that information will be available online after it takes place.*

Questions: *"Is there any advantage in applying to Early Learning or one of the topic areas if you span pre-kindergarten to Grade 1?"*

Answer: *I would really encourage you to talk to with Caroline Ebanks who is the program officer for our Early Learning Programs and Policies topic here in the National Center for Education Research, or Joan McLaughlin who is the program officer in the National Center for Special Education Research, and they can provide you with lots of feedback about whether you have the option to apply to Early Learning or to one of the topic areas with that span. All right. So I think there's not a straightforward answer to that question.*

We are getting close to the end of our time and it looks like we have answered everyone's questions, at least for now. I want to remind you all that I am available online, so if you have a particular set of questions that you'd like me to answer, or if you'd like me to share them with my colleagues, please do send me an email and I will either reply to you or forward you to my appropriate colleague who will follow up with you.

But, if there are no further questions, I think I'd like to thank all of you for your kind attention. I hope this was helpful. I know it's a lot of information to try to process all at once. Thanks so much for your attention and your wonderful questions. Good luck, and I hope to see applications from lots of you, if not in June, certainly in September.