

NCSER Webinar
Funding Opportunities for a Minority Serving Institution

Kim Sprague:

Hello. We're about to start the webinar from Funding Opportunities for a Minority Serving Institution. We're at the Institute of Education Sciences. My name's Kim Sprague and we're introducing Katina Stapleton from the National Center for Education Research and Amy Sussman from the National Center for Special Ed Research and we'll begin in one second. Please mute your phones. We do have the ability on our end to mute you as well, but it would help if you could mute on your end too. Thank you.

Katina Stapleton:

Welcome everyone. Once again, this is the webinar for Funding Opportunities for Minority-serving Institutions. I'm Katina Stapleton. I'm a program officer for the Pathways to the Education Sciences Research Training Program as well as a few other programs within the National Center for Education Research and with me is my colleague, Amy Sussman, who is a program officer for the National Center for Special Education Research.

For the majority of the presentation, I will be talking and Amy is here to respond to all of your questions that you have online. Please feel free to send questions at any time but we will also have dedicated breaks to respond to questions.

The purpose of this presentation is to give MSI faculty and an opportunity to learn what we are funding here at IES.

We're splitting this webinar up into two sections: the first of which is a general overview of funding opportunities at both of our research centers and then the second is a deep dive into the Pathways Program. If you think that you are not interested in the Pathways Program, you would be able to leave about midway. Once again, you can submit questions at any time and we will try to respond as appropriate.

Before we start in talking about our actual programs, we want to do a brief overview of MSIs so that you will know who we're addressing in this webinar.

MSIs include a wide variety of institutions of higher education that serve specific groups of minority populations. The categories, that we have listed here, have all been formally recognized in one form or another by the federal government through legislation or through grant programs. MSIs are eligible for all of our funding opportunities that are open to institutions of higher education, as well as our one targeted funding opportunity for MSIs.

So it's really important, as we move through the presentation, to make this point: all of our grant programs are open to MSIs but there is only one program that is specifically for MSIs and that's the Pathways to the Education Sciences Research Training Program. About a third of our presentation is going to focus specifically on Pathways. But before that, we're going to give you a broad overview of both our Education Research and Special Education Research Grant Programs as well as our Training Grant Programs.

Unlike at some federal agencies, program officers at IES are able to give pretty extensive technical assistance. So if you have questions after you leave this webinar, please feel free to email me or Amy or any other program officer to ask your questions.

IES is the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Our mission has several major components. The first one is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States. The second is to identify what works and what doesn't work in improving the education outcomes of students. Another part of our mission is to evaluate the effectiveness of federal and other education programs.

These different tasks are distributed across the four centers at IES. The National Center for Education Statistics is our data arm. The National Center for Education Evaluation is best known, probably, for its regional education labs and the What Works Clearinghouse. But they also do large-scale evaluations of education intervention. Today we're going to be focusing mostly on the two centers in blue -- our sister centers: The National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER).

NCER and NCSER are discretionary grant centers, therefore, we offer discretionary funding for research grants. Today we're going to go over the funding opportunities that are available for FY17. Everything that we're discussing today is available on our website at IES.ed.gov/funding. That's a one-stop shop for our information.

On our website we have a list of what we fund. However, it is equally important to the process of receiving government funding that you be able to properly match your research interests to an appropriate funding opportunity.

When you go to our website (ies.ed.gov/funding), I want you to work through this process. First I want you to really think about what's your core research and then do a quick check to see whether or not we have funding streams that align with that question.

Then you want to look more closely at the separate requests for applications that talk about the research requirements. I want you to do this because people often stop at one RFA and they think, "Oh I didn't fit with this one," not knowing that we might have other opportunities that fit them just as well or better. Then if you have any questions whatsoever, email a program officer and we'll do our best to clarify things for you.

When you go to our website you're going to see a set of steps that walk you through how to apply for an IES grant. The first step, of course, is for you to identify what's available this year. Then we ask people to submit letters of intent. Letters of intent tell us what you are planning to do. Program officers then respond to your LOI, telling you whether or not what you're doing aligns with what we fund. The deadline for the letters of intent has passed. But you can still simply email that same idea to the relevant program officer and they'll get back to you.

Next we encourage people to register for funding opportunity webinars like this one that give you an overview of the requirements. There's also going to a webinar on grant writing that we

encourage you to sign up for. For those of you on the phone that are from sponsored programs offices, as well as researchers, we think you should also sign up for the application process webinar (especially if this is your first time so that you make sure you're able to apply correctly).

Next you're going to download the RFAs packages. And finally—this is going to be really crucial—you're going to submit your application to Grants.gov on time.

How do you navigate ies.ed.gov/funding? When you go to the IES website and you scroll down to about halfway through the page, you're going to see the list of funding opportunities. This is essentially a list of hyperlinks that are aligned with each of our requests for applications. Please click on the hyperlink. You will find that within a number of these competitions there's actually a number of funding opportunities. So if you don't click on the link, you will not be able to see what they are.

For example, this RFA list includes "Education Research Grants" and "Special Education Research Grants." These two requests for application each have 11 different topics within them. So that's essentially 11 different opportunities rolled into one request for application. These topics roughly are equivalent to the field that you're working in. We'll show you a list of topics in a second.

Also, when you are looking in those two requests for applications, you will be asked to choose a goal. Goals are roughly equivalent to the type of research that you would like to conduct. To recap, within these two requests for applications, you must identify a topic and a goal.

Let's dig a little bit deeper.

What do we mean by topics? So, for the National Center for Education Research, which is shown on the left of your screen, we have 10 standing topics. Everything from *Cognition to Reading and Writing to Improving Education Systems* that together span research from PreK to adult. The majority of these topics are limited to K-12. However, our Early Learning Programs and Policies topic is our PreK competition and our Postsecondary and Adult Education topic covers that grade/age span.

This year we're introducing three topics under the banner "Special topics." They are meant to call special attention to these areas. They are *Arts in Education*, *Career and Technical Education* and *Systemic Approaches to Educating Highly Mobile Students*. And the Highly Mobile special topic covers research on homeless students, foster students, migrant students, and military affiliated students. So if you are interested in conducting research on any of those populations, you would submit to the *Highly Mobile* topic.

The National Center for Special Education Research has a very similar setup. They, too, have 11 topics. Amy is going to speak, just for a moment, about the changes in the NCSEER topics this year.

Amy Sussman:

We have 11 topics and they are the same topics that we've had in the past. But the one difference

this year is that within all of those topics we are focused on teachers and other instructional personnel. There are a few reasons for this. With low funding, we wanted to make the competition more targeted. Also, based on feedback we've received from the field and the public, there is a need for more research on teachers and other instructional personnel in special education and early intervention.

As an example, if you're developing an intervention or evaluating an intervention, the target of that intervention must be the teacher or other instructional personnel.

We don't anticipate that this focus will remain after this year's competition. It depends on funding, but we do plan on this being a one-time focus.

Katina Stapleton:

Before we go on, does anyone have any questions about topics? No? Okay. So we'll go on. Imagine that you've picked your topic. I am a program officer for Education Leadership so I'll assume that you are fascinated with that area and use that as our example. Once you have selected a topic, you should identify a goal. As a reminder, topic is roughly equivalent to fields and a goal is the type of research that you would like to conduct.

Each year we normally offer all five of the research goals. Our Exploration Goal supports research projects that identify malleable factors associated with student outcomes. What we're trying to see is: "What things that can be changed are positively or negatively associated with student outcomes?"

A good example, in the portfolio I monitor, is a project that looked at principal time use. Researchers are monitoring how principals use their time. Are they observing teachers in the classroom? Doing budgeting? Working on school discipline issues, et cetera? Then the researchers analyze the data to see whether or not any of these practices are associated with positive student outcomes.

The second goal is Development. Under this goal we give funds to researchers to fully develop interventions. These can be projects to develop interventions, policies, or programs from scratch. Or these can be projects to further develop interventions that already exist, for example, in a pilot form. Funding could be used to add an additional year or unit to an intervention or to change grade levels, et cetera. All developments require you to develop something, collect information on implementation and then, also, conduct a pilot to see if there's any preliminary evidence that the intervention actually improves outcomes.

In the next goal, Efficacy and Replication, we're asking, "Do interventions work?" Therefore under this goal we support evaluations of fully developed education interventions to determine whether or not they produce beneficial impacts on student education outcomes. And we're evaluating these interventions under either what we're calling "ideal" or "routine" conditions.

Under our next goal, Effectiveness, we support the independent evaluation of fully developed education interventions with prior evidence of efficacy to determine whether they produce a beneficial impact on student education outcomes relative to a counterfactual

when they are implemented by the end user under routine conditions in authentic education settings. Unlike Efficacy/Replication projects, Effectiveness projects evaluate only interventions with prior evidence of efficacy when implemented without special support.

We've actually had very few Effectiveness applications over the years but if you're interested in this goal, please contact a program officer to discuss your application to make sure you understand the requirements.

The last goal is Measurement. Under this goal we allow people to fully develop and validate educational measures or validate existing measures.

When you think about where your work fits into this goal/topic structure, I want you to think of a grid. On one side is, "Goal" and then the other side is, "Topic." You should determine which square your research fits in.

Do we have any questions on topic or goal? Okay.

The majority of the research we fund is under either the Education Research or the Special Education Research RFAs. So please make sure you look at those RFAs to see whether or not there's something that aligns with your work. But we actually fund much more than that.

In front of you is a list of other research opportunities that you should think about applying for. This year we are offering both topics within the Statistical and Research Methodology RFA, not just Early Career. Under both topics, we are funding researchers to solve methodological problems. That could range from how to improve simple case methodology to how to improve value-added estimates, et cetera. So if you consider yourself a statistician this would be a really good opportunity for you.

Another competition that people really should consider is Researcher and Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research. In some ways, this competition is reverse to the normal research process. For most of our competitions, the researcher has a question and then reaches out to a district or to a state education agency for help—"Could you participate in our study?" The Partnership RFA takes the exact opposite approach. Researchers go to the districts and SEAs and say, "Do you have a problem that you think research could help solve?" There are two competitions within the 84.305H RFA. One is essentially a two-year grant (almost like a planning grant) where researchers work with a district to carry out some sort of initial research on an issue or problem that has priority to them and then also helps develop a plan for future research on that issue.

The other topic is on state and local evaluations in which we provide funding for researchers to partner with LEAs or SEAs to evaluate a program that they would be implementing anyway.

For both topics in 84.305H you must have a partnership between a researcher and the state or local LEA. And your application is judged both on the research that you want to conduct and the quality of the partnership.

This year we are also providing a small amount of funding for researchers that want to do short-duration evaluations of education interventions. Research submitted under this topic (as well as under the Partnership RFA) can be done on special education research questions as well as education research questions.

Finally, we have a really cool research network opportunity where we're bringing together teams of researchers to form networks that focus on critical education problems. You submit your application individually. Then IES will form the network out of funded applications. Last year we funded an early childhood network and we began funding the Scalable Strategies for College Completion network. We're adding teams to the college completion network this year and have also launched a new network exploring science teaching in elementary school classrooms.

All of these funding opportunities are discussed in meticulous detail on the website and many of these opportunities also have their own webinars. The Partnership webinars, I believe, are this Thursday if you're interested in participating and learning more about that program.

Applications for every program are due on the same date this year, which is August 4th, 2016 at 4:30 and zero seconds Washington, DC time as determined by the Grants.gov clock. Our application deadlines are timed to the second. If you are one second late, your application will be considered ineligible for funding. I'm pausing there because I want you to think about it. One second.

When you're submitting your application, do not wait until the last minute. For me, the last minute is even the day of the application. It does not take a full day to submit an application but it may take a full day to fix errors. Examples may include uploading an application with a missing section or a bounced application with a notification that goes unseen in your spam folder. The later in the day that you submit on August 4th, the more dangerous it becomes.

The second thing is that time is measured by the government, not the clock on your computer or your cell phone. Even if your phone reads 4:29 P.M. at the time of submission, if Grants.gov thinks it is 4:30 P.M., then your application will be considered late. Please make sure you have submitted your application on time. Please tell this to the people in your sponsored programs office. Every year there is at least one applicant who faithfully submitted all their information to his or her sponsored programs office, where that office waited and submitted a late application.

Amy Sussman:

A webinar participant asked, "What if the system crashes?" If it can be absolutely documented that Grants.gov failed, then you might have an argument. Remember that your application must go through several layers of review to be accepted. It must go through Grants.gov and then the Department of Education.

Katina Stapleton:

There are also some universities that use a system to upload applications to Grants.gov, which creates another layer of problems. In addition people from universities that have never applied to IES before, are not in the Grants.gov system, or have expired registrations may have to wait several days for their information to be verified before submitting their application. Please make

sure you check on these things. A number of applications were eliminated from the Pathways Program last year because they came in late due to these types of problems.

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are the letters that you submit to IES describing what you would like to do your research on. Submission deadlines for LOIs have passed. If you would like to submit a letter of intent, look at the RFA and directly email the program officer of the program you are interested in. They will respond to you the same as if it were a regular LOI. This letter allows us to tell you whether you're on-, off-, or way off-track. We are looking for things like whether or not you're in the right topic or goal. However, program officers can also give you more substantive feedback on the content of your application.

All of the application packages are now available. If you look to the far right of the table, we have the start dates.

We just completed a quick overview of IES funding opportunities, and now we're going to move onto the Pathways Program.

Do we have any questions? If so, submit them online.

There is a question asking whether or not you could submit the same application to more than one competition. The answer to this question is, "No, you can't." You can submit different applications to multiple competitions, and there are some specific topics in the training RFAs that have additional requirements. For the most part, you can submit as many applications as you like, as long as they're different. Pathways is an exception.

If our research programs are aimed at building a body of knowledge about what improves student outcomes, our training programs are aimed at building a body of people who are able to conduct high quality education research and special education research. We have invested in research training since 2004 and have a number of programs that we fund. We generally fund at least one training program every year, and we have several training programs that are open for competition this year.

We have two training grant RFAs. The first one is the Research Training Grant Program in the Education Sciences through the National Center for Education Research. Within this RFA, we have the Pathways Program targeting MSIs and their partners, which will be discussed later in this webinar. We also have programs for Postdoctoral Research Training in the Education Sciences program and Methods Training for Education Researchers.

If you would like to develop a training program for current researchers to develop their research methods, you would apply to the Methods Training topic. What types of things apply? Many of you may have seen or even taken one of our Methods Training Programs. We have offered them on quasi-experimental research, experimental research (how to conduct randomized control trials), and single-case design. Cost-effectiveness analysis was a new one this year. Methods training programs tend to be summer workshops that are funded through IES.

The Postdoctoral Research Training grants are opportunities for universities to offer postdoctoral fellowships. These fellowships generally range from one to two years and are focused on a topic

selected by the postdoctoral research training program.

The second RFA is the Research Training Program in Special Education offered through the National Center for Special Education Research. This year, NCSER is competing one topic, Early Career Development and Mentoring. Amy will talk about this briefly in a minute.

What do these programs offer? In front of you, you have the maximum number of years and the maximum award amounts for each of these programs. Again, you should download the RFAs for the specifics. These training grants are also due on August 4th at 4:30 and zero seconds pm Washington, DC time as determined by the Grants.gov clock. These LOI dates have also passed.

I'm going to pause for a second so Amy can tell you briefly about the Early Career topic.

Amy Sussman:

Our Early Career topic is meant to support researchers early in their career, which we consider as someone receiving a doctorate degree or finishing a post-doctoral program within the last three years. It's for researchers at institutions of higher education and supports funding for training opportunities, such as courses and workshops, and, most importantly, working with a mentor. The main idea is that the training is through a mentorship. The Early Career grant also supports your actual research project, including a protected time for research, if your university allows you to receive protected time away from teaching in order to get your research off the ground.

Katina Stapleton:

For the next 20 minutes or so, we're going to do a deep dive into the Pathways to the Education Sciences Research Training program. This might be the program that the majority of you on the call are here to learn about today. If you applied last year, there are a few differences, and I'm going to try and point them out to you as we move through the presentation.

So the Pathways Program is really an extension of our predoctoral research training programs. Since 2004 we have offered fellowships to doctoral students who want to become education researchers by funding predoctoral research training programs at 20 universities across the country.

As the years passed, we discovered that while it is incredibly important to start developing researchers at the doctoral level, it's equally important that we also start a little bit earlier. Our Pathways Program really tries to kick start students' education research careers at the undergraduate or master's level. The Pathways Program offers funds to MSIs and their partners to create research training programs that focus on upper level undergraduates (juniors and seniors), masters' students, or post-baccalaureate students (students within five years of graduation).

We're also using the Pathways Program to encourage diversity in the education sciences. Over the years, our predoctoral training programs, and to some extent, our postdoctoral training programs lacked a lot of diversity. They lacked two types of diversity, both in the participants and in the universities that run them. The Pathways Program is meant to encourage a more

diverse body of students that are trained in education research and bring diversity into the types of institutions that offer research training.

The Pathways Programs, at their core, are meant to do three things. The first objective is to give a general introduction to education research. We hope that this sparks an interest in these students to continue conducting education research. The second objective is to offer students actual opportunities for conducting their own research and the third objective is to provide them with professional development and mentoring opportunities. Ultimately, we hope that students who participate in the Pathways Programs eventually enter doctoral programs where they can conduct research that is relevant to education. This does not mean that students are restricted to completing a doctorate in education; rather, they may complete a doctorate in any field that might provide input in education.

We will now discuss the Pathways Training Grant Awards. There will be a maximum of four awards this year, and these awards will be cooperative agreements. A cooperative agreement sits halfway between a traditional grant and a contract. Like a grant, you will propose what you would like to do, but like a contract, IES will have some input in how the programs are designed. The maximum project duration is five years and the maximum award amount is \$1.2 million, which includes direct and indirect costs. We split this up so that there are designated funds for the fellows as well as for program costs. We will discuss this in detail shortly.

For our most recent competition, FY16, we will award four Pathways Program grants. Abstracts for these awards are now posted on the IES website so you can read more about the types of awards that were funded in the most recent grant cycle.

Who is eligible for applying to the Pathways Program? Every application must include a minority-serving institution as either the applicant or partner. If there is no minority-serving institution in either role, then the application will be eliminated from the start. If you are from a research university that is not an MSI, you can apply if you identify at least one MSI to partner with you.

One frequently asked question is “How do I know if my institution is an MSI?” Most of you probably already know your designation from previous grants given to your university or because of a historical designation as an MSI (i.e. HBCUs). However, the list of designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Predominantly Black Institutions change slightly from year-to-year because of demographic changes.

To determine if your organization is an eligible MSI, first ask yourself if your institution awards bachelors or graduate degrees. If the answer is yes, then ask yourself if your institution is an MSI. The first question is important: if your institution is a community college that does not award bachelors degrees, you are not eligible to be the prime applicant for the grant whether or not your institution is an MSI; although your institution can still serve as a partner or collaborator.

What is the next step in determining if your institution is considered an eligible MSI? If you think your university is an HBCU, go to the White House HBCU list and check that list.

Similarly, if you think your institution is a tribal college, then you should check that list. For the most part, everybody else can check their institution's MSI status on the Title III and Title V eligibility lists. We have provided a two-year eligibility window. So, if your institution had a FY 15 or FY 16 designation as an Title III/V eligible institution, then you are eligible for a Pathways Program grant.

Hyperlinks to these lists are included in the RFA. When you click on the hyperlinks to these lists, you will see lists of institutions. If you look on the right of these webpages -- it's kind of small -- you'll see the FY 15 Title III and Title V lists.

I am currently looking at the eligibility page that shows the University of Alaska, which has a number of branches. You can see that each branch is listed individually. If you're part of a university system, make sure your individual campus is actually on the list.

If you have any questions at all about the MSI status of your university or you can't figure this process out, please email me. I would be happy to walk you through the verification process.

Let's go through this process one more time, because it's really important.

First, determine whether or not your institution gives out bachelors or graduate degrees in fields relevant to education. We get a lot of questions about providing funding for nursing or other professional degrees and I tell potential applicants that they could apply but it is unlikely that they would receive funding. It is harder to make a case for why ED should be funding the proposal, as opposed to another funding agency like the National Institutes of Health. Second, determine whether or not you're a Minority Serving Institution.

Second, if your institution fits these initial qualifications, you can apply as an MSI or partner. If your institution is an MSI, your institution can apply alone as an individual MSI, as part of a set of MSIs, or with other higher education institutes that are not MSIs.

However, if your institution is not an MSI, things are much more restricted. You must be an institution that grants a bachelors or graduate degree in a field relevant to education. The graduate degree could be a master's degree or a doctorate. In addition, your institution must partner with an MSI in order to be eligible for a Pathways grant. In a moment, I'm going to talk about what it means to be a partner.

We receive a lot of questions about eligibility for an FY17 grant: If you are at an institution that is going to receive one of the FY 16 Pathways Program grants, your institution is not eligible for a FY 17 grant. If your university is a partner on one of the FY 16 grants, your institution is also ineligible.

I'm going to pause for a second to distinguish between a partner institution and a collaborating institution. A partner institution is required to have a co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on the project. We think of them as being equal partners in the endeavor. The partner institution will contribute mentors, students, etc.

Collaborating institutions cover every other institution that is involved in the project that needs a title. This could be other universities, non-profits, for-profit research firms. A number of the FY 16 awardees are collaborating with research firms where they're placing students to do research; those firms were listed as collaborating institutions. It's really important to be able to see this difference between partners and collaborators, because there are no restrictions on the number of times you can be a collaborator, but you can only be funded as a partner on one training grant at a time. If you have any questions about this, send me an email.

What does this restriction mean for applying? We only plan to have a one-to-one relationship between awards and institutions. If you have a Pathways grant, you can't have a second one at the same time. We are not restricting institutions in the number of applications they submit, so you can roll the dice and be a part of multiple applications; however, we're only going to fund one application per institution. And we will decide which one is funded. We suggest that you're very careful when spreading out over multiple applications. If you have any questions at all, please contact me.

Amy Sussman:

Can I ask one of the questions now?

Katina Stapleton:

Yes.

Amy Sussman:

Can you give them an idea of what you mean by "fields related to education research"?

Katina Stapleton:

There are so many of them, I'll just start listing examples. First, any field that is in a college of education is considered relevant to education. Almost everything that would be in the social sciences would also count, like psychology, sociology, etc. We also have people submitting applications from the cognitive sciences, hard sciences (like biology and physics), and engineering. If you think your field is related to education and can make a case for the field, it will probably be ok. unless you're trying to make a case for professional fields and schools that produce people who will not conduct education research. This includes medical school, nursing school, law school, etc. Why? We're trying to produce future scholars who would be interested in conducting education research.

For examples, you can look at the online abstracts and see the various combinations of fields within the newly funded programs. Notice that there is a very wide range. You should also look at our pre-doctoral training programs, which also cover a wide, wide variety of fields related to education.

Each training program is required to have a training director or a principal investigator. They are the "buck-stops-here" person. PIs have the overall responsibility of the award and are the person that corresponds with IES. I am the primary person with whom PIs would be corresponding. You are also allowed to have co-PIs. You can have as many co-PIs as you want; however, the more co-PIs you have, the less money each person can be paid. We'll talk about this more in a

minute. For projects that have partner institutions, each partner must indicate a co-PI. If you're an MSI partnering with another MSI, both of you must have a co-PI. If you are a non-MSI partnering with an MSI, again, both of you must have a co-PI. The PI can be from any field, but they should be able to train people in education research.

I want to call out the difference between requirements and recommendations in the RFA. For each section of the RFA, you must include the requirements in your application for it to even be reviewed. If you don't have these things, your application will be considered non-responsive, and it will not go any further. Recommendations are things that we think can strengthen your application.

One question just came in saying, "Does the PI have to be able to offer all of the training?" The answer is, no. As we go through this webinar, we'll talk about the team. The team, which includes the PI, the co-PI, the research mentors, etc., should collectively have the skills to offer the training. It would be very odd for an application with a PI that has never conducted any education research whatsoever to be funded.

For your application to even be considered, your training program has to focus on education research and you have to discuss the students that this training program is targeting. Students could be upper-level undergraduates (juniors and seniors), post-baccalaureate students, or master's students. The program could be for one of these groups, or it could be for all of these groups or a combination. Of the four programs funded in FY 16, we actually have different combinations of fellows being served. We have at least one program that is covering the full spread of eligible participants, but we have others that are just training upper-level undergraduates.

Applications must also include a research apprenticeship. If your application does not have something that we can identify as a research apprenticeship, it will not be reviewed. I am stressing this because last year, people turned in applications with apprenticeships that looked a lot like independent studies. We do not consider independent studies to be actual apprenticeships. Students must do guided research with someone for your application to be considered responsive.

Applications should be complete in the proper format and on time. If your application is over the budget or over the limit, it will also be eliminated. There are a lot of rules. On the side, I have put the pages where these details are.

Your application must have a research narrative and that research narrative has four major parts. I tried to emphasize where you should address these issues in the narrative in red.

First, you need to establish a need for your training program. In the RFA, we've put out a general call we think is important, but you need to be able to explain to the reviewers why the training program you proposed is important. Show what the problem is, discuss how your training program can solve that problem, give us a really detailed plan about how you're going to implement your solution, which is a training program in this case, and discuss why you think you can pull it off.

Next, do you have the right personnel and the right resources?

I'm not going to go through all of this, but at the end of students' participation in the program, we want fellows who are ready to enroll in graduate school and have some experience conducting research.

When you're describing your research program, you should specify how your program is going to address a specific education research theme and a type of student that the program is going to be serving. What do we mean by theme? A theme is the unifying idea that guides the training program. It clearly has to be related to education research. It could be super broad, like "Our theme is everything about education research."

You can't realistically train students in everything about education research in this training program. Therefore, we suggest that you tighten up your theme a little bit, so it's more realistic, and so that you can give students a more targeted experience during their time in the training program. The topic can be kind of broad, like "using research to improve urban schools". It could also be "education technology" or "reading and writing". The topic could also be super narrow. One example is "quantitative methods to assess school performance". If you take a look at the four online abstracts for the four funded programs, you'll be able to see their themes, which are actually pretty specific.

When you're figuring out what the theme is, think about the type of fellow you hope to train and the type of research they'll conduct. What are those students bringing to the table? What kind of practical experience might they have? And what kind of skills might they have at entry to the program? That will allow you to figure out what you need to do to help them make it to the next stage.

We think of training as a process. At entry, you have a fellow who's going to have his or her background of existing skills, major, etc. Then we're going to add your training program. Hopefully at the end of the process, we're going to have someone who is ready to enter a doctoral program. I'm not sure if I've actually said this before, but the training programs can be eight weeks to one-year long. Ask yourself, "What is realistic to teach them during that period of time?"

How will you structure your training program? This is going to vary. Really, we have left this wide open, so we could see something as short as a summer research training program. A summer research training program would be a minimum of eight weeks. Or we could think of something that is year-round and anchored with the summer program. Or you have a training program through the year and then the students have apprenticeships during the summer. Your model is going to determine how long it's going to be.

There are a few parameters. The first one is that you have to have a minimum of 40 fellows over four years. For most of you, that would be a minimum of 10 students a year. You can have more fellows than that. You can afford a maximum of 60 fellows if you give them the maximum stipend. If you give them less than \$10,500 or if you cost-share, then you can have more fellows than that. I do not believe any of the currently funded programs have more than 60 fellows.

Any questions? So we have a question about whether or not the students can be master's students in education programs. And the answer to that is, absolutely, yes. We're going to talk about fellows again in a minute.

We just covered the general purpose of your training program. Now we're going to talk about the details of describing your plan. In this section, you want to make sure you put as much detail as possible in the limited pages that you have: information about how you're going to recruit the students, how you're going to train them, how much money you're going to get, and how you're going to figure out whether or not this works.

1. *Who's eligible?* Again, upper-level undergraduates, post-baccalaureate students, and master's students.
2. *Can you train teachers?* Yes, if they are master's students. Yes, if they are post-baccalaureate students. No, if they do not fall into one of those other two categories.
3. *Can you train students in joint masters-Ph.D. programs?* That is not the intent of Pathways, but you could train fellows during the master's portion of the Ph.D. program. Once they have their master's, it's too late.

Determine your student target. You can have students that just come from your campus or campuses, or you can recruit from your region or nationally. You should target a population that makes sense for your training program. Among the four newly funded programs, the targeted student populations are mixed. Some are from the university, some are regional, and some are national.

As we go on, we want to keep in mind one of the purposes of the Pathways Program. Overall, it's to increase diversity. However, Pathways Programs are open to any student that meets your basic requirements. If you say that this program is for juniors only on your college campus, then any junior on your college campus can apply. We hope that you will recruit students from these groups: racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation college students, economically-disadvantaged students, veterans, and students with disabilities.

You will put together a description of your general recruitment plan, as well as your selection criteria. And before you're awarded the grant, it will be reviewed by the lawyers at the Department of Education, to make sure it is consistent with the guidance of a voluntary use of race to achieve diversity in the area of education.

We're also evaluating aspects of your application that place gender restrictions on your program, which we're not allowing, and other things that are written in your plan. When you're looking at the guidance, the Pathways Program is considered a pipeline program.

In your application, you're going to discuss in depth how you're going to recruit your fellows and select them. You should recruit your fellows within the first year. It is pretty unlikely that you will start training during the summer. The 2017-2018 academic year is probably the earliest there will be a cohort of students in your Pathways program.

Fellows must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. They must meet the Pathways Program fellow requirements, which are juniors, seniors, post-bacs or master's students. Fellows must be willing to conduct research on practical issues relevant to U.S. education. If they come up with a publication as part of the program, then it has to be publicly available. We will also send out a survey, and we expect them to respond.

For participation, you are allowed to give fellows up to \$10,500 each for their eight-week to one-year participation. The allowance can include a stipend and pay for housing and food. For example, if you have students on campus for the summer, you can give them a campus meal plan, provide money for travel and research, and cover fees. The max for these types of monetary expenditures is \$630,000 total.

If you have any questions about what you can provide fellows, please email me, and we can go through what you're proposing. This is what we think is reasonable. Some people are coming over or under these amounts, depending on what is appropriate. If you're in a place that has an extremely high cost of living, you might have a stipend that's more than this.

Here are some questions that we get.

1. *Can you charge the students in any way, shape or form?* No.
2. *Can you pay for tuition?* You cannot pay for it out of the grant, but some universities pick up the cost of the tuition, if students want to get credit for participating in the program. And yes, you can pay their fees to do things like submitting applications to graduate school, take GRE prep, etc. as long as it's during the year-long fellowship.
3. *Can you give them less than \$10,500?* Yes.
4. *Can you use other funds to give them more?* Yes. When you look at the descriptions of programs, it will show if they have cost-shared, so that you can see what the "price" really is for the programs.

The core of all the training programs is the required research apprenticeship. The apprenticeship alone really isn't a training program, so we hope that you would include some other activities, like a lecture series or mentoring. When you are describing your activities, you should be clear what they are, as well as what they're going to learn by participating in them. What are these knowledge skills and abilities?

When you're describing the research apprenticeships, you should describe what fellows are expected to do, what types of research projects they're going to be working on, and how you think they will build their skills. Please describe this generally in the application, but you can also use the table in the Appendix. Please give as detailed as possible a description of what the fellows would be doing as part of these projects, and what you expect them to learn.

If you have other training activities (e.g., lectures, mentoring, GRE prep, communications workshops, site visits to districts), please describe them. The sky's the limit, so long as you believe the activities are important for your fellows. We also expect you to track the fellows' progress over the course of their experience in the program.

In the end, we hope that you are collecting enough information to figure out whether or not the training program is performing as intended. At a bare minimum, we would want to know the following: Did you actually recruit the types of fellows that you intended to? Did you deliver the training? Did those fellows actually apply to doctoral programs and get accepted? There are other measures as appropriate to your program.

Under the personnel section, make sure you include everyone that's important to the project, including the PI, the co-PI, any core faculty or mentors, etc. You should also discuss their roles on the project. What is their expertise? What are they going to be doing? Make it clear that this group of faculty or others will collectively have the skills to deliver the training.

You should also describe the resources at the applicant's institution, as well as resources of any partners or collaborators. If you're collaborating with a research firm, discuss what they're bringing to the table.

How much can you bill for program costs? You can bill up to \$570,000, which includes the PI salary. Together, PIs and co-PIs can have a maximum of two months salary, which can be split across people. This means that one person can be salaried for two months, or two people for one month each. Remember when I said earlier, the more people you have, the less money they get each? That's because there's a two-month max.

Here are some possible expenditures: annual travel to the PI meeting (required); a program coordinator (most people request a salary for six months per year, but you can ask for more than that, especially if you have a program that bridges multiple campuses); stipends for research mentors; and providing support for visiting faculty, trainers, workshops, recruitment, and websites.

What can't you fund? You cannot fund faculty research, faculty salaries outside of what's allowed, and most food. If you want to provide food, please let us know, so that I can let you know whether or not that is an allowed cost.

There are a number of appendices. If you applied last year, you need to explain how your application has changed in Appendix A. In Appendix B, you will provide a summary table of projects on which researchers are working. If there are additional opportunities for fellows to do research as collaborators, you should add a description of those projects here as well.

There will be a section for letters of agreement. Your school should write a letter stating their agreement to host the training program. If you have a partner, you need a letter from them stating their willingness to be a partner. If you have multiple departments that are involved, provide a letter from every department saying that they're going to be a partner. If you collaborate with an outside institution, you want a letter from them. In short, everyone that is involved in the training program should provide a letter. There is no page limit for this section.

You can place objects like tables or charts in Appendix E. While the bulk of information about your proposed training program should be in the actual application, there are things that are just too large and can be placed in the Appendix.

If you need a bibliography, you should also include it. There is no page limit.

There is going to be something called a budget narrative, where you will describe how you're going to meet the requirements for the budget. We've included a breakdown of where different expenses should be listed in the budget forms. If you have any questions, email me, and I will tell you if you're putting information in the right place.

Applications are due on August 4th at 4:30 and zero seconds pm Washington, DC time as determined by the Grants.gov clock. You should review all the requirements, which can be found in the Request for Applications. The actual application is a package and can be found on Grants.gov. You will also submit your application through Grants.gov. Please sign up for the application process webinar, which will walk you through the process.

Once you submit your application, it will be reviewed by a panel of reviewers. If you go to the ies.ed.gov homepage, there is a link called "Peer Review Process" under the "Standards and Review" section near the bottom of the page. This link will walk you through our peer review process, which I am summarizing here.

When you submit your application, it will be reviewed for compliance and responsiveness. For compliance screening, we look for things like the following: Do you have the right font? Were all the sections there? Was it on time? If the application is compliant, it moves forward. If it's not compliant, it's does not.

Then, we screen applications for responsiveness. We screen for things like the following: Are you in the right competition? Did you meet the minimum requirements? As long as you have met responsiveness criteria, it moves forward. If not, it does not move forward.

Applications that are both compliant and responsive are assigned to a review panel, which is generally a dedicated training review panel. Two or three of those panel members will review your application and assign it a score. Applications with the most competitive scores will move on to a full panel of approximately 15 to 20 people who will discuss your application. Each panel member will also individually score your application. The final score you receive is an average of all panel members' scores, and you'll get a single score that represents the strength of your application. Those that are most competitive are forwarded to us as the panel's recommendations for funding.

Each year, a cut point is determined. For the most part, applications that receive a score better than the cut point are funded. The cut point moves from time to time, but if your application is deemed to be outstanding, it will likely be funded. If your application is considered excellent, it also will most likely be funded. It will not be funded if it is considered "Very Good." "Outstanding", "Excellent", "Very Good", etc. are the literal interpretations of the scores, and the "Peer Review Process" link will walk you through that. "Excellent" and "Outstanding" should your goal when writing your application. Finally, we have an applicant notification system that will let you know the status of your award and give you reviewer comments.

Here are some questions we received during the webinar.

1. *Are online training modules okay?* Yes. We have a funded FY 16 application that has online training modules.
2. *Could you provide an overview of the differences between the FY 16 and FY 17 RFAs?* There are two key differences and then one more minor difference. The clear distinction between partner institutions and collaborating institutions is that we have defined partners as institutions that are contributing a co-PI. This aspect is really important, because partners can only be included on one funded grant. Collaborators, on the other hand, can be on as many grants as need be. The second difference is monetary. In the FY 16 RFA, we had three months funding for faculty, and that included the PI and the mentors. That was very difficult for us to tease out. Therefore split the PI funding so there are now two months funding that can be split between the PI and the co-PI and a certain amount of money that can go towards paying mentors. The third difference is that we are not accepting independent study as apprenticeships. Otherwise, it's the same as last year.
3. *Can core faculty be paid from the grant?* If you are either a co-PI or a PI, you can be paid for up to two months combined. If you're a mentor, then you can be paid with the money that is allocated to mentors. If you're bringing in speakers, coordinators, outside experts, etc., they can also be paid. If you have any questions at all, email me, and we can go through all of these people.
4. *Can the PI and the program coordinator be the same person?* No. We want there to be a designated program coordinator that's responsible for the day to day administrative tasks. Most people requested six months of funding for a program coordinator, but some people are requesting more. This salary can also be split. Say you have a three-university partnership, and you want an entire year's worth of salary for program coordination, you can split that three ways across three people (i.e. 4 months each for a coordinator at each of the 3 universities).
5. *What's the expectation for tracking?* You should propose what is reasonable.

We also received a couple of questions about the education and the special education research programs that were discussed at the very beginning of the webinar. We want to stress that only the 84.324A "Special Education Research Grants" Request for Application is restricted to research on teachers and instructional personnel. The 84.305A "Education Research Grants" RFA is not restricted to teachers.

Thank you so much for joining us. Both Amy and I are available for questions. And I really want to stress that any program officer can respond to your questions. If you are interested in Adult Education, for example, and you look at the topic description in the RFA, you will see that Meredith Larson is the program officer for that topic area. Please feel free to email her any questions that you have, and the same goes for all of our program officers. We look forward to seeing your applications, and please stay in touch.

[end of transcript]