IES Funding Opportunities Webinar:

Basic Overview Session

March 26, 2012

U.S. Department of Education

ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

IES Funding Opportunities Webinar: Basic Overview Session
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences

Presented by:
Elizabeth Albro, Ph.D.
Teaching and Learning Division
National Center for Education Research

Transcript
March 26, 2012

Slide 1

Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to join us. I'm going to describe the opportunities that are currently available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. These are for applications that will be due this summer—and early fall—for projects that could begin as early as March of 2013. Everyone should have the slides, I hope, and I'm going to walk you through them. Please do feel free to ask questions. Amanda will let me know when there are questions that are relevant and should be answered for the whole group. I will try to answer those at sensible places along the talk. So, please feel free to send your questions.

Slide 2

For those of you who are not familiar with the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), I always like to spend a little bit of time orienting my listeners to the legislative mission of the Institute. According to our legislative authority, we are charged with three things. The first is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States. As many of you are probably aware, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) does this work and has done it for many, many years. The NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) is one example, and only one, of where NCES describes the condition and progress of education in the United States.

The Institute is also charged with identifying education practices that improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities. This is the work on which the two research centers spend the majority of their resources. That's really what I'm going to talk about today: the kinds of [funding] opportunities for you all to apply to in order to help us build our research knowledge about education practices that support the achievement of our students.

Finally, we are charged with evaluating the effectiveness of federal and other education programs. The vast majority of that work is carried out through the National Center for

Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). I’m not going to talk any further about that today, although I invite you to explore our website to learn more about the work of NCEE.

Slide 3

For those of you who prefer a visual depiction of what I just said, here’s the organizational structure of the Institute. We are headed by our Director, John Q. Easton, who is advised by the presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed National Board for Education Sciences. Reporting to the Director is the Standards and Review Office, which oversees the peer review process for all of our grants. Toward the end of the presentation, I’ll talk a little bit about that as well.

I’m going to talk today, as I alluded to in the beginning, about the work of the two research centers which are highlighted, I believe, in blue or gray on your screen: the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). You’ll see that there are some parallel programs across the two centers, and, of course, there are also ones that are unique and distinct.

Slide 4

For those of you who would like to know the specific missions of each of the two research centers, here are the missions written at the most general level. The National Center for Education Research is charged, in part, with supporting rigorous research that addresses the nation’s most pressing education needs from early childhood to adult education. That’s rather a wide range of questions, and you’ll see that there are many opportunities across our projects to talk about the different kinds of research that we support.

The National Center for Special Education Research has a somewhat more circumscribed mission; they’re really focused on research relevant to infants, toddlers, and students at risk for disabilities from preschool through grade 12. This means that if you’re interested in carrying out work with students with disabilities who have exited the K-12 system, that work can be supported through the National Center for Education Research. If you have a question about where your application might potentially fit, you should really reach out and talk to program officers. Throughout the presentation today, I’m going to encourage you to make sure that you know who the relevant program officers for the topics that you are interested in are at the Institute and advise you to reach out and talk to them.

Slide 5

Before I get into the details of our current funding opportunities, I want to provide a quick overview of the current research investment.

Slide 6

For those of you unfamiliar with the work that we do, the National Center for Education Research has invested in a range of competitions over the years. As you can see on that initial line, the vast majority of our funding is devoted to our Education Research Grants Program. That's the program that I'm going to spend the most time talking about today. We have, since 2002, funded 488 programs in our main education research portfolio for a total of about $800 million. You'll notice that we have also funded (research and development) R&D centers, we have a large investment in both pre- and post-doctoral training, and we have a growing investment in the evaluation of State and Local Programs and Policies and in Statistical and Research Methodology in Education. The programs that are below the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education line are not currently being competed, so I'm not planning to talk further about them, but I would be happy to talk about them with you at the end of the presentation if we have time.

Slide 7

Similarly, the National Center for Special Education Research awards the vast majority of its funds under our Special Education Research Program. NCSER has been in existence since 2006, so it has not had as many years to fund research as NCER, but they have funded nearly 200 awards at a cost of $335 million to date.

Slide 8

Let's jump into the reason you're on the call: What are the current FY 2013 funding opportunities?

Slide 9

How do you figure that out? I'm going to tell you about them, but one of the most important things for you to be able to do at the end of this webinar is continue to explore what opportunities are available. The first thing that all of you should do—and I think most of you have already done it, because you're on this webinar—is to start at the IES website and particularly to go to the *Funding Opportunities* site. When you're on our website, I also want to encourage you to sign up for the *Newsflash*. Again, most of you are on the *Newsflash*, which may be how you got information about this webinar, but if you are not, it's a great way to get information released by the Institute.

Every year, our funding opportunities that are projected to be released are announced in *The Federal Register.* This year, they were announced on March 6th in *The Federal Register* notice. Once announced, you want to look at the current Requests for Applications (RFAs). If you're someone who has applied to IES over the years, it's really important to remember to download the most current version of the RFAs. There are changes that are made from year to year, often not huge but important. I want to encourage you to make sure that you have the most recent version of the RFAs for FY 2013 in your hands. So, if you applied last year for FY 2012, you really don't want to look at the FY 2012 RFAs; you want to look at the FY 2013 RFAs.

I'm going to say this quite a bit: I want you to contact relevant program officers for the topics that you're interested in, whether it's in the National Center for Education Research or the National Center for Special Education Research. It may make sense for you to talk with program officers across both centers to try to identify the place where your proposal might fit best. Everyone here is a doctoral-level scientist and we're all happy to work with you as you're developing your application.

Slide 10

For those of you who haven't been on our page recently, this is what it looks like. The right-hand box, where it says *News & Events*, is the place where you can sign up for the *Newsflash* if you have not already.

Slide 11

For those of you who are new to IES, I want to encourage you to check out all of these boxes. You want to make sure you get general IES news and information, as well as information from the two research centers. It might also be of interest to you to get information from the Evaluation Center as well as NCES. Again, this is all just informational and I hope that you will sign up for what interests you.

Slide 12

When you're looking for funding opportunities, do make sure that you click on the *Funding Opportunities* button and that will take you to this page.

Slide 13

We've tried to clearly lay out the steps on this page, which we think will help you in terms of making sure you have all the information that you need. You have to first, of course, identify the opportunity that makes the most sense given your research question. You should register for relevant Funding Opportunities Webinars. You all are doing really well; you've already got the first two steps down!

You want to make sure you have all the supporting documentation you need. You need to have the appropriate and current RFA. You need to have the Application Submission Guide, which is not yet up but will be soon, as well as the Application Package. We're going to talk a little bit about submitting your Letter of Intent, and then we'll talk about applying to Grants.gov.

Slide 14

It's really important that you read the Request for Applications. There's a huge amount of information in there and successful applicants know what's available. You want to look to make sure that the topics announced match what you're interested in applying for and you want to make sure the application that you're developing is in line with the current methodological requirements. Finally, it might be useful for you to look at the abstracts of projects that are funded under a research topic or program. These are the links here that will take you to the descriptions of the programs and the abstracts [of funded projects].

Slide 15

For those of you who are interested in our main RFA and the education research topics, they are in the Education Research Program. I'm going to talk now a little bit about the two sets of topics that are available. Under Education Research, you'll see that we have programs that span a wide variety of research projects. We support work that ranges from basic science that's being applied to learning in school settings underneath our Cognition and Student Learning Program [to the evaluation of district-level practices and policies]. For example, an examination of how changes at the system level are linked to changes in student achievement would be supported under our Improving Education Systems Program.

Across all of the research programs that I'm going to discuss today, you must remember that you need to build an argument for the changes that you are proposing to make in the learning environment—how they are hypothesized to link to student achievement and success in school. A couple of things I want to highlight, for those of you who are familiar with the RFA, are some changes. Under Education Technology, for the first time we are now inviting applications that are focused on exploration under our Exploration Goal; I'll talk a little bit more about the Exploration Goal later on, but that's a change where individuals can propose to try to identify which components of technology seem to be more associated with improved outcomes. For those of you interested in carrying out research in the area of reading and writing, I want to make sure that you're aware of the fact that we are now accepting applications to develop reading interventions, as well as writing interventions, under the Development Goal for Reading and Writing.

I'd also like to just draw your attention to the fact that under the Social and Behavioral Context for Academic Learning topic, we have included some language inviting applications to look at the role of service learning—trying to draw connections between activities happening in the school environment like service learning, and trying to identify whether, in fact, those activities are associated with academic learning outcomes.

I'm going to continue on, if we don't have questions about those topics, so that you can have a sense of the ones that are available under the Special Education parent RFA [84.324A] as well.

Slide 16

Under the Special Education parent RFA [84.324A], we have 12 topics that applicants can submit under. We have parallel programs to what's available in the National Center for Education Research—programs looking at cognition, programs looking at early intervention and early learning, programs in mathematics, programs in reading and writing, and programs for professional development. But we also have some programs that are unique to the Special Education community. For example, there's a program looking at autism spectrum disorders and seeking to support research in the area of autism.

Last year, we introduced a new topic called Families of Children with Disabilities. Because much of the education for students with disabilities occurs in the home, there is a real interest in learning how we can best support families of children with disabilities; this is a great opportunity for individuals interested in this topic area. Similarly, the Technology for Special Education was added last year; this is a new topic that I think is of particular importance in the area of special education.

Slide 17

Now, I'm going to try to move out to the Web and just give you a quick Internet tour, so that you all can see the ways you can use our website to help you learn about a project in which you might be interested.

Web Tour

We're going to go right to the *Funding Opportunities* page, so you all can see what you might do if you were a researcher interested, for example, in applying for a grant to develop an online pre-algebra tutor. Hopefully, you all can now see this page, which I had previously shared with you. Now, I'm going to just take you through these webpages.

The first thing you want to do is jump down to the *Current Funding Opportunities.* If you're interested in education research, you probably want to look under the *Education Research Program* link. So, I would click here, and that will take you to a description of our 10 topics; if you click on the *Mathematics and Science Education* bullet, you'll see that you can pull the full RFA up. You'll also see here that there's information about the program officer, Dr. Christina Chhin. She will be happy to talk with you as you're developing your application. But in our example, if you're looking at an online pre-algebra tutor maybe what you really want to do is look at the *Education Technology* portfolio. If you click here, you'll see that you can continue to get information about the RFA or that you can actually download the full RFA. You can view currently funded projects and you can get additional information about Dr. Levy, who oversees our Education Technology program.

Now, perhaps you want to do this work for students with special needs. Then, what you'd want to do is click back to *Funding Opportunities* and go to the *Special Education Research Programs* portfolio—you'll see the topics available. If you wanted to see who was overseeing the Technology for Special Education Programs, you could click here and get that information.

Some other resources that you might want to be aware of –if you click down for the *Funding Opportunities Webinar,* this will give you information about additional webinar topics moving forward. What else do we have here? If you want to submit your Letter of Intent, you would click down here. If you click here [on the *Letter of Intent* link], it's going to think a moment and it's going to take you directly to the site where you can upload your Letter of Intent, which would be here. So here's information about submitting your Letter of Intent.

Slide 18

For those of you interested in applying, which I assume is all of you, you know that IES has an expectation that you select not only a research topic that reflects the work that you're doing, but that you also identify a research goal under which your projects should be submitted. We have five research goals under which applicants can submit: <u>Exploration</u>, where the purpose of these projects is to generate hypotheses about what aspects of a learning environment are associated with student outcomes; <u>Development and Innovation</u>, which is intended to support researchers who are planning to develop and test new interventions—I'm going to talk in greater detail about each of these in just a second; <u>Efficacy and Replication</u>, the purpose of which is to identify what works—to test what works using experimental or a quasi-experimental research design; <u>Effectiveness</u> is our fourth goal, which in the past was called "Scale-Up Evaluation"—we decided to change the name, because the purpose of this goal is really to test the effectiveness of a program under typical circumstances; and <u>Measurement</u>, to develop and validate assessments.

I'm going to pause before I jump into the Exploration Goals, because I have a question here:

***Question**: "Can pre-doctoral students respond to RFAs in the major categories I have just covered?"*

***Answer**: Pre-doctoral students are not prohibited from applying, but I will tell you that the vast majority of the work that we support goes to experienced researchers or folks who have completed their doctoral program. This, in part, is a practical consideration in that applications come from institutions; and the institutions that are applying may or may not be willing to have a pre-doctoral student serve as the principal investigator on a project. Having said that, if you're a pre-doctoral student and you're interested in learning how to develop applications, it's a great thing for you to work with your primary advisor and think about how you would prepare an application that could potentially be competitive—that you could then take with you, when your doctorate is completed.*

I also have a note here from someone who has been reading ahead, and I'm to just go ahead and answer it now:

***Question**: "The fact that the institution and not the PI submits the application—does this preclude applications from small businesses?"*

***Answer**: It does not.*

Now I'm going to jump into the Research Goals. Again, applicants applying to our main research programs, either in education or special education, have to select or identify a topic that they're most interested in or that most fits with their research question, and figure out where they are in the research process and which goal will allow them to answer the appropriate research question for what they want to study.

Slide 19

Let me start first with Exploration. In the course of exploration, researchers are posing questions exploring associations between education outcomes and malleable factors. There are lots of things that are occurring in the education environment and it is not always clear to teachers, students, or researchers, which features are the most important for supporting student learning and/or which features might be harming opportunities for students to learn. The purpose of exploration is really to try to tease those things apart. As part of that exploration process, you are seeking to identify factors and conditions that may mediate or moderate the relation between malleable factors and student outcomes.

I’m going to fall back on my favorite example—let’s suppose that you are an early childhood researcher and you’re very interested in the dynamics that exist in classrooms. As someone who was once an early childhood classroom teacher, I know that when you walk into some classrooms they are noisy, very loud, and students are really busy. Other times you’ll walk into early childhood classrooms and the students are very quiet. It’s not always clear upon quick observation if noise or quiet is good or bad and which aspects of the environment are associated with student outcomes and which are the results of decisions made by the teacher. If you were interested in that question, you could pull together an exploration project where you propose to do some observational work in those classrooms—some noisy early childhood classrooms and some quiet early childhood classrooms—and try to tease out what features of the classroom seem to support or inhibit noise and test whether your hypothesized relationship between the relative loudness of a classroom and student outcomes is borne out by the data.

Multiple methodological approaches are sensible under Exploration. You could propose to collect primary data, as I just described here, or you could propose to analyze secondary data. Maybe you’re aware of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, the Kindergarten Cohort, and maybe you’re aware of some information that’s available on characteristics of classrooms that you would like to explore to see whether some of these malleable factors are associated with improved outcomes.

Another option would be to complete a meta-analysis looking for malleable factors that other researchers have identified to see whether there are consistent patterns across previous work that has been completed to suggest there is a place in the organizational classrooms that’s ripe for developing an intervention.

The other piece that’s important to remember for Exploration is that you’re carrying out this work in order to generate a hypothesis about which features are associated with what types of outcomes. At the end of an Exploration Goal you should have information that can be used either to support the development of a new set of interventions or instructional practices or to propose that a particular intervention is ready for evaluation under efficacy.

I’m pausing, because I have questions that are coming up.

Question*: “You mentioned seeking applications about educational technology in the Exploration phase. Is this for K-12 only, or does it include post-secondary?”*

***Answer**: I am going to quickly pull up the Education Technology requirements. For Education Technology, we do accept applications at the post-secondary and adult education level. So, you can certainly look at Exploration at the post-secondary level under Education Technology. Hope that answers your question.*

In an education technology environment, for example, things that are malleable might include whether students have the option to choose the content of a writing exercise. Maybe it's a writing intervention and you're trying to help post-secondary students master foundational writing skills that they're going to need to succeed in college. So, a particular malleable factor there could be choice. So, does choice of topic have anything to do with these students' ability to learn from the writing tutor? (May not be the best example, but it's the one that jumped to mind.) Let me know if that helps, if not, please go ahead and send another question and I'll do my best to answer.

Slide 20

The second goal that we support research under is the Development and Innovation Goal. This goal is intended to support researchers who want to develop an innovative intervention. The term "intervention" in the IES discourse is very broad and open. It encompasses not only curriculum or programs, but things like instructional approaches or instructional practices, as well as policies that are relevant to education outcomes.

If you already are working with an intervention and you have some research which suggests that there is a need for improvement over this intervention, then you can certainly propose to improve that intervention as well. In order to do that, you would need to provide prior evidence. What empirical or theoretical evidence do you have to suggest that there's a need to revise a current intervention that exists?

As part of the development process, you are also expected to have this process be iterative. So, the idea is not that you spend a year to develop an intervention and then immediately test it for its promise, but that you spend some time developing pieces of an intervention, testing that intervention out, getting feedback from the end users, and trying to make sure that what you are developing is adequate to the needs of everyone who's going to be using it, before you test it formally. So part of that process is to collect data on the feasibility and usability of the intervention that you're developing in actual education settings.

As someone who's trained as a cognitive scientist, I spend a lot of time working in very controlled circumstances where I develop interventions that are intended to be used by preschoolers. But the only way that I'm going to know whether what I've developed in the laboratory is going to work with the 4-year-olds it's intended for is to make sure that I take that intervention out and test it with 4-year-olds in the context of their preschool classrooms. So as part of our development process, you are required not only to develop the intervention but to also test its feasibility and usability in the settings where it's intended to be used and collect pilot data on student outcomes to see if your intervention is working as you intended.

Before I move on, I have a follow-up comment from Exploration:

Comment: *"At the end of an Exploration project, we should end up with a set of hypotheses and a possible intervention that would test these hypotheses?"*

Answer: *I think that you're mostly right, but not quite. The idea here is that you'll have a set of hypotheses and ideas about what an intervention might look like, but the development of an intervention will happen under a Development and Innovation Goal. So, you're not required at the end of an Exploration project to have a fully developed intervention, but you are expected to have a set of hypotheses about what components an intervention should have or what pieces of instruction should be addressed in a new intervention. Alternatively, at the end of an Exploration project, you may have hypotheses about interventions that are already in existence, as well as evidence to suggest they are ready to be tested, and so your next step would then be to test those interventions under an Efficacy and Replication rule.*

I hope that was clear. Again, if I'm not clear, please do send in questions and I will do my best to be clear.

Slide 21

Let's say that you already have an intervention, or you're aware of an intervention or set of interventions that you would like to test. Then, the Efficacy and Replication Goal is probably the place where you would want to apply. The purpose of Efficacy and Replication is to evaluate whether a fully-developed intervention is efficacious under limited or ideal conditions. So, you have an intervention you've spent some time developing, let's say it is an attention regulation curriculum for early childhood, and you want to see whether actually implementing this curriculum in the preschool classroom is going to have an effect under the best of all possible circumstances. So maybe you have master teachers who are implementing it, or you have lots of feedback that you're able to provide to the researcher as the intervention is being delivered.

You could also propose to gather follow-up data, if you already have an efficacy study or if you've already carried out an efficacy study, to see whether the intervention is having longer term effects. Again, in early childhood, it is often interesting to see whether interventions that have effects, e.g., on math outcomes, in the preschool years, continue to benefit students in their math outcomes in first, second, or third grade. You could propose to come in under Efficacy and Replication as a follow-up study.

Finally, it's important to note that we don't only fund initial efficacy studies. One of the things that we are interested in doing and think is very important is to replicate the effects of interventions in new studies with different populations of learners or different populations of instructors in different settings to see whether an initial finding of efficacy is in fact replicated under different settings.

I have some questions here. This is a question about development.

Question*: "Would adding on to a currently-existing 2nd to 6th grade Technology program to include 7th grade be considered improving an existing intervention or creating a new one under the Development and Innovation Goal?"*

Answer*: I think in some ways it could be either; it depends upon how you frame this. So when you're transitioning into middle school, how new is this intervention going to need to be? I think that it's probably not the most important thing you'll need to think about. You could talk about the fact that you're developing this new 7th grade set of materials, but that you're going to be building on a currently existing platform. I think that would be a sufficient justification for you to propose under Development and Innovation. Because there's clearly development work going on, but it is possible that in the course of developing the new materials for 7th grade, you may actually end up carrying out some revisions of the platform for 2nd to 6th grade. So, both of these can exist in the same application.*

Question*: "We have a set of interventions in place that have evolved and have collected some data on, but we have done no pilot study or assessment of what aspects of the set of interventions impact positively or negatively on student outcomes. Are we Exploration or Development?"*

Answer*: You know, that's actually a really good question. In part, I think it depends upon what you'd really want to look at. If what you're trying to do is really figure out which features of the interventions are most associated with improved outcomes so that you can know which features you want to test in an efficacy study, or if you think that by learning those features you might end up refining the intervention going forward, then perhaps you're at Exploration. If you feel like you have an intervention in place or maybe you already know things you'd like to refine in your current intervention, then maybe Development is the right home for you.*

This is a great example of one of the reasons why it's so important to build relationships with your program officers. We are all experienced at working with applicants and *because we are not involved in the review process, we are allowed to provide you with lots of guidance as you're developing your applications. There are lots of nuances, as you know, in all of your projects that would help me be able to better answer a question like that in terms of figuring out the best place for you to apply, but our program staff can do that; they like to do that. So, I want to encourage you to reach out to the relevant program officer for your topic area, and they can help you think about how best to position your application so that you can answer the research questions in which you are most interested.*

***Question**: "According to your definition of intervention, could it include professional development or training programs for early childhood teachers, i.e., not an intervention to be used directly with children, but that would indirectly lead to positive outcomes?"*

***Answer**: Absolutely. Most of the professional development work that we do under early childhood actually happens under Early Childhood Programs and Policies. I think Special Education is similar. We also have a program on Effective Teachers and Effecting Teaching, where the intent is to examine professional development programs of teachers. Now, the critical piece for you to be aware of is that for any study that's proposed, where you're looking at interventions targeting working with teachers in terms of helping teachers develop their skills, there is an expectation that you will propose to gather student outcomes as well as teacher outcomes so that we can measure the hypothesized indirect effect. The hypothesis is you're going to change teachers and by changing teachers, you will change students. We expect applicants to collect data on both teachers and students. I hope that answers your question.*

***Question**: "Are there any limits on who can apply for an Efficacy study? For example, can we apply for a new efficacy study rather than a replication or a follow up even though we have had one or two done in the past?"*

***Answer**: So I'm going to ask for some clarification here. So do you mean the intervention has already been studied, or do you mean that you have in the past applied for an efficacy study and carried out an efficacy study? I don't think in either condition there's a limit. I just want to make sure I answer the question correctly.*

So for the efficacy study, just so you all know, there's not like a button you have to check that says this efficacy study is new or replication or follow-up. Rather, what you'll do when you're developing your 25-page narrative is explain and provide the rationale and the justification for why you believe it's important for there to be another efficacy study for this intervention or why you're an appropriate team to carry out an efficacy study.

***Question**: “The intervention has already been studied. We would like to do one on a larger scale and in a fairly different setting.”*

***Answer**: So, the question then is really whether you’re coming in for Efficacy and Replication or Effectiveness. The requirements under Effectiveness are that you need to have at least two efficacy studies of the intervention that meet these rigorous criteria with beneficial and practical impacts on student outcomes. So, if you are in a situation where you have one efficacy study but you need to have a second one done on the intervention, then you should come in under Efficacy and Replication; if you already have two completed, then Effectiveness may actually be a more appropriate goal for the work that you’re proposing to carry out. I hope that answered your question.*

Slide 22

***Question**: “Should we use the Letter of Intent process to help figure out which initiative and program we belong in? In other words, should we call program officers before or after submitting Letters of Intent?”*

***Answer**: Yes, absolutely, you should do both. You can use the Letters of Intent as a way to help figure which initiative and program you belong to. But if you’re already thinking about it and you already have ideas about it, you don’t have to wait until the Letter of Intent deadline to get feedback. In fact, what I would recommend is that you read the RFA, figure out the right program officer, and email them and get on their calendar now to talk to them about the project that you’re proposing to submit. They can help you think about what information you should include in the Letter of Intent. If you’re not quite sure and it’s going to take you a little bit to figure out where you want to go, then you can submit the Letter of Intent and then you’ll hear back from the program officer.*

***Question**: “Can people who have only a bachelor’s degree apply for funding?”*

***Answer**: It really depends upon what your skills and qualifications are. The language in the RFA says that eligible applicants are those who have the relevant expertise in terms of scientific expertise and practical expertise to carry out the kind of work that the Institute funds. I think that people have different educational backgrounds and it would be very useful for you to reach out to a relevant program officer who can help you think about whether you would be competitive coming in as a principal investigator or whether you might benefit from building a team of researchers around you who could support you as you’re carrying out both the development activities and the research that goes with it.*

I'm going to press ahead through the goals because I want to make sure we get through them. Keep sending the questions, and I will stop and answer them in just a few minutes.

So under Efficacy and Replication, I just want to pull out some features of Efficacy and Replication to which applicants should pay attention. The first is that even though we encourage our researchers to carry out efficacy studies under the best of all possible circumstances, it's also important that you are very cognizant of what might be needed to implement this intervention under routine practice. So, even if you're a researcher or a developer moving into efficacy, there may be features that you haven't really thought through in terms of what you need under routine practice. For example, if you developed a curriculum focused on middle school science, it may be that you have great student materials, but you haven't fully fleshed out the teacher materials that need to accompany it. So, you want to make sure that you're aware of what else might need to be developed when you're pulling your Efficacy study together.

We recommend that applicants reduce the appearance of conflict of interest for developers and evaluators. This is an important thing to think about. So if a developer is proposing to study the efficacy of an intervention they developed, reviewers might believe that the developer has a vested interest in seeing that the program does well. There are some strategies that are recommended in terms of separating who does what in an efficacy study in order to reduce that appearance of conflict of interest.

For those of you interested in looking at mediator analyses, please know that we don't require any form of mediator analysis, but do recommend exploratory mediation analyses. In part, this reflects budgetary constraints. In order to carry out confirmatory mediator analyses, you often need much larger samples than we can actually support given our funding.

The other piece of information that's important for those of you in the Special Education community, is that NCSER also accepts efficacy studies that propose single-case experimental design. So, if you do work using single case designs, then you should look at NCSER.

Slide 23

Let me talk about Effectiveness. So, the purpose of Effectiveness is--as I mentioned before--to evaluate whether a fully-developed intervention that has evidence of efficacy is effective when implemented under typical conditions through an independent evaluation. Unlike Efficacy, where the developer can be involved in the evaluation of the intervention, under Effectiveness there's a required separation where the evaluator must be independent from the developer of the intervention. In addition--as I noted before--there is a new requirement in our RFA this year that if you are planning to submit an Effectiveness proposal, there must be two completed efficacy studies that show that that intervention has both beneficial and practical impacts on student outcomes.

Slide 24

Under Effectiveness, note that IES expects researchers to implement the intervention under routine practice, to include evaluators independent of development or distribution, and to describe strong, prior evidence of efficacy for the intervention. However, we do not expect wide generalizability from a single study. Again, there are constraints in terms of how much funding is available for the studies and the sample size possible to support under the Effectiveness Goal.

In order to understand whether an intervention is effective “at scale”--and that’s a phrase you’ll often hear people use--we would expect to see that occurring through multiple Effectiveness projects. So, sample size is not the key distinction, rather independence of the evaluator and implementation under routine practice. That is the distinction between effectiveness and efficacy.

One other thing that you should note if you’re thinking about this is that the cost of implementation of the intervention is limited to a quarter of the budget.

Slide 25

The Measurement Goal is our fifth goal. Measurement is a critical part of any kind of research project and is really a critical part of education. In order for us to be able to support learners, we need to know what learners know, what learners don’t know, and if there are areas where they are having misconceptions that are influencing their learning. If we want to help teachers develop professionally, we need to have good instruments that we can use to evaluate those teachers. All that kind of work, the development of measurement instruments, can be supported under our Measurement Goal.

We support two broad categories under this goal. The first is the development of new assessments or a refinement of existing assessments and validating those. [The second is the] validation of existing assessments for a specific purpose, context, and population. So often we have assessments that exist, but that have only been validated on a very narrow subsample of the population. And we do support researchers who are interested in gathering additional information about the degree to which the assessments are valid for a different population or a different purpose.

Slide 26

***Question**: “Is there a particular reason why only 2 percent of projects have been funded under this goal in the past according to the RFA?”*

***Answer**: So, this pie chart that you have here in front of you has the percentage of funded grants since 2004, which was the first year that we started implementing the goal structure. As you’ll see, we’ve only funded 2 percent of Effectiveness, because it’s challenging to have the right set of information to support proposing an Effectiveness study. Even in prior years, you needed to have prior compelling evidence of the efficacy of the intervention, and there is actually not as much information about an intervention that meets Efficacy requirements as you might think. So, we don’t see very many applications and I think that reflects the fact that the number of Efficacy projects that have been completed to date for particular interventions are actually relatively small. So, there is ample opportunity for funding additional work under Effectiveness.*

I think the other thing that’s important for those of you on the phone to know is that we do fund evaluation projects that look very similar to our Effectiveness projects under our Evaluation of State and Local Programs. That’s another place where people can ask these kinds of questions about what works that are very important.

***Question**: “Do these numbers refer to the percentage of applications submitted under each goal or to the percentage of funding allocated to each of the goals?*

***Answer**: This actually refers to the total number of grants. So, remember on the very first slide I said there are 488 grants that we have funded since 2002. So since 2004, this is the percentage of the grants that we’ve funded to date. So, it reflects the number of grants that we received distributed across these goals. About half of the awards that we funded to date are actually Development and Innovation. About a quarter are testing efficacy of interventions. We have 13 percent that are Measurement or Exploration and just a small number are Scale-Up/Effectiveness.*

Slide 27

If you look at the Special Education portfolio, you’ll see that it actually looks quite similar. Again, I think this reflects the number of applications that we receive and the distributions of applications that we receive.

I had a question about Efficacy and Replication that I want to make sure I answer before I move into the next set of slides about the work that we support and funding opportunities that are available.

***Question**: “For Efficacy and Replication, does IES prefer to see proposals that collect data in different geographical areas, different parts of States, or multiple States or is that not a priority?”*

***Answer**: We actually don’t have any language about that in the RFA, where we talk about geographical areas. I think in some ways it’s going to depend upon what the intervention is that you’re proposing and what prior work, if any, has been done. But we don’t have any specific language about that.*

***Question**: “We are developing an online assessment and analytic solution that is Common-Core aligned. Currently, we are in the development stage, but have already received interest from university researchers. Which goal would we apply under?”*

***Answer**: Really it depends upon what you want to do. If you want support to continue to develop your intervention, you would apply under Development. If you would rather test the efficacy of this assessment system, then you would come in under Efficacy. Again, this is another great example of a question with which a program officer can help you.*

Slide 28

Just so you all know in terms of the maximum award amounts, they range, as you can see in terms of the maximum number of years and award amount. From 2 years—the maximum for an Exploration project that relies on secondary data—all the way up through 5 years—an Effectiveness study. Please note that we have maximum amounts for which applicants can apply. So, you do not want to go over the amount that’s listed in this chart by goal, because your application will be returned without review. Please do pay attention to those restrictions.

For those of you who are familiar with IES and have applied in the past, you’ll notice that the Development and Innovation Goal now provides an opportunity for up to 4 years’ worth of funding. You should note, however, that the 4 years’ worth of funding is really intended for applicants who are developing and then testing full-year curricula or maybe professional development curricula where, in order to adequately complete the pilot test, you’d need a full years’ worth of the implementation of the intervention.

Slide 29

Let me tell you something about some of the other programs that are available. I spent a lot of time on the two big RFAs—the “parent” RFAs, if you will—because those two programs are the foundation for everything else I’m going to talk about. We do, however, have quite a few other programs that may be of interest to those of you on the phone.

I just want to answer this one really quick question, so that people know before I move into these. The first is about a small business where there's a group of folks. Again, I want to encourage you to reach out to the program officers, they can help you figure it out. We do get applicants from lots of different kinds of groups who have different combinations of expertise, and we will help you think strategically about the best way to put in your application.

I had a question here about whether researchers at multiple institutions can submit a grant together. Yes, you can; in fact, we see many applications where multiple institutions are part of the team. You should know, however, that one of the institutions will need to be the primary institution, and all the others will be considered sub-awards.

***Question**: "Do most people start with an Exploration grant and then apply for the Development grant and move on up?"*

***Answer**: People start wherever they're ready to start. We certainly encourage individuals if they come in under Exploration to move to the next goal as they are ready, but there's no expectation or requirement that you start at Exploration and move through. You start wherever it's relevant, given the research that you're doing.*

***Question**: "If I'm planning to develop software that can be used by both Special Education and typical education settings, should I submit the application to both?"*

***Answer**: I would counsel you that if you're going to do that, you would need to be very clear about how the intervention would be different for the different populations of learners. You can't submit the same application to multiple competitions, and you can't submit the same application to multiple topics within a competition. Again, I would talk with the program officers for both of the two centers; they can help you think about the best place to put it. You may be able to put in an application for both, but you need to be really clear about how it's distinct.*

Slide 30

Let me talk to you about other opportunities that are available. We have a series of researcher training programs in education sciences that are supported under the National Center for Education Research. We have a post-doctoral research training program that may be familiar to some of you on the phone, which we've been competing for several years now. We also have a topic, which is new this year, focused on researcher and policymaker training in the education sciences.

Slide 31

Under the Post-Doctoral Training Program (for institutions, not for individuals), institutions are funded to establish post-doctoral training programs intended to train researchers in the skills necessary to conduct the type of research work the Institute funds.

The topics and the research goals that we've discussed is the kind of work that the Institute funds and the post-doctoral training program is intended to support the development of researchers who will carry out this type of work. This year, you should know that the Institute intends to make no more than five awards under the post-doctoral research training program.

Slide 32

The Researcher and Policymaker Training Program in the education sciences is a new subtopic in our training program. The purpose is really two-fold. There are two different kinds of training programs that you could submit. One is intended to provide researcher training for current education researchers to maintain and upgrade their methodological skills. For example, we currently support a summer randomized clinical trials institute for 2 weeks. If you wanted to propose a different kind of institute for current researchers, you could apply under the Researcher Training Program.

We also are inviting applications for policymakers, intended to provide evidence from rigorous education research to education practitioners and policymakers working on a specific program or policy. The idea here is that sometimes the flow of information from policymakers and researchers is back and forth. There aren't many opportunities for that conversation to happen. So, the hope would be that we will get applications from teams of researchers and policymakers who are interested in providing this kind of training.

***Question**: "Would postdoctoral training or researcher training programs be applicable for a neophyte doctoral program in aviation?"*

***Answer**: You know, I'm not sure that this is an area in which we typically support work. Actually, we don't, though if there is an interest on the part of your program to improve the skills of folks who are there and you can link it to education, you could potentially apply. Most of the work that we support, again, is really focused on preschool through grade 12. So I'm not sure; I think your question would be something to discuss with the program officer overseeing this grant program.*

Slide 33

Let me talk about the researcher training program in Special Education. So under the Special Education Research Training Program, there is one topic that's being competed this year focused on Early Career Development and Mentoring. This particular RFA is intended to provide new investigators support to further develop their methodological, content, and grant writing expertise that is needed to develop a strong line of research that includes federal funding.

This is something where a young or a new investigator, pre-tenure, can put in an application with input from a mentor. You need to have a mentor identified at the time of your application. It requires that you propose a research plan and a career development plan; these two things go hand-in-hand. It's important to note that the mentor cannot be your doctoral or dissertation advisor or a post-doctoral advisor. In terms of the timeline for this, you can apply within 3 years of receiving your Ph.D. or completing your post-doctoral fellowship. The total amount available is $400,000 over 4 years.

Slide 34

There's another new program within Special Education that I'd like to draw your attention to that is called the A3 initiative: Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities. The purpose here is to focus on developing intensive, strong interventions that can work to assist the improvement of students with intractable learning problems. The goal is to examine reading and math achievements and focuses on students in grades 3 to 8. The Institute intends to award not more than three of these A3 centers, which will be networked together. They'll be a tightly-linked network of researchers across a variety of disciplines who will work together to solve these problems. The A3 centers are 5 years—you can apply for funding for up to 5 years at $10 million each.

Slide 35

We have a program focused on Statistical and Research Methodology in Education. This program is intended to support research to expand and improve the methodological and statistical tools available for education researchers. So, if anyone on the phone would like to be the next developer of a tool like hierarchical linear modeling for education research, this is your program. If you're interested in doing work, e.g., on power analysis or on what an effect size means or anything else relevant to the development of methodological and statistical tools, this is the home for you. The intent of the tools is for them to be used to improve the design of research studies, the analysis of research data, and interpretation of research findings.

Slide 36

We also have an Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies Program. There was a question about whether districts can apply in partnership to research projects. This is actually the best place to apply, if there is a member of a district team on the phone who would really like to have an evaluation of an intervention that they are planning to implement. The purpose here is for the Institute to provide support for the rigorous evaluation of education programs or policies that are paid for and implemented by State or local education agencies. The idea here is that the Institute will pay the cost of the evaluation, and the State or district will pay for the implementation of the intervention that they were intending to implement anyway.

The purpose here for these programs is to determine both the overall impact of the programs or policies and the impact across a variety of conditions. We have funded 10 of these evaluations to date, and they are quite different. Just a couple of examples of evaluations we are supporting are gifted education participation in Broward County, Florida; the Michigan Merit Curriculum and Michigan Promise Scholarship Program, which is intended to promote college attendance and success by reframing curricular expectations and requirements in high school; and three evaluations at the preschool level—preschool programs in Tennessee, preschool programs in New Jersey, and a literacy core curriculum for early childhood educators in Ohio. That’s just 5 of the 10, and I invite you to go to our website to see what other programs we’re currently funding, and if you are interested in evaluating something in your State you should do that as well.

Districts and States can apply to any competition, so you’re not restricted to applying here. I just wanted to highlight this particular program, because I think it’s actually a great opportunity for States and districts to build those partnerships.

***Question**: “Do these programs need to originate from the State, or can they include independently-developed programs that are funded by the State?”*

***Answer**: I don’t believe there are any restrictions about from where the programs need to originate. So, if you are putting in a program and you’d like to test whether it’s working to improve the outcomes of your students, then you could look at that particular topic. The other thing to know is that districts and States can apply to any competition and we’re happy to work with you as you’re thinking through where the right home is for you to apply.*

Slide 37

I had a request to talk about the new Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research. We have a new competition—our most recently released RFA. The purpose of this program is to support the partnering of researchers with State and local education agencies in the development of joint research projects. The Institute is very interested in supporting research that is relevant to the needs of the practice community, but it's not always easy to carry out the research or practice community efforts to build the relationships that they need in order to make sure that the research being proposed is relevant.

The hope here is that the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships Program will allow researchers and State and local education agencies to come together before the evaluation process begins to develop this partnership, so that they can think about the questions that are most relevant to their particular practice community, work together, and have some money to support the development of an application. The goal here would be that this money will support the development of an application under our regular education grant program.

I hope that gives you some sense of what this new RFA is. We will have a webinar later on where we're actually going to talk in-depth about the expectations of the researcher-practitioner partnerships; I certainly hope that if you're interested in them you will participate in the webinar.

Slide 38

Let me just pull up this slide for you to look at maximums. As you can see, we have a range of funding amounts and a range of years. Please remember that they are maximums; however, you'll notice that there aren't any minimums. So, it is also important to recognize that you don't have to put in a really expensive proposal. I think that if you're interested, for example, in doing statistical and methodological work, you may not need to request $900,000 to carry out this work, if it's going to involve a single researcher and the primary cost of the study is to pay that researcher's time. You want to make sure that when you think about the funds that you're requesting they actually map onto the needs of the project. The money there is a maximum, but you're not required to ask for all of it.

***Question**: "Are the required efficacy studies prior to an effectiveness study required to be NCER or IES-funded studies?"*

***Answer**: Absolutely not, they simply need to meet the expectations of rigorous research. The What Works Clearinghouse standards are a good place for you to begin if you're trying to determine whether the prior efficacy studies meet the quality of rigor, but* *they don't need to be funded by IES. There's certainly plenty of great work that's been funded by many, many other sources.*

***Question**: "Can you clarify that we can, however, submit applications to different topics if the applications are substantively different?"*

***Answer**: Yes, you can. So long as the applications are substantively different, you may put in two different applications. You just can't put the same application in multiple topics at the same time.*

***Question**: "Are these maximums per year or total for the length of the grant?"*

***Answer**: They are total for the length of the grant. So, you can apply for 5 years for a total of $687,000 if you're planning to establish a post-doctoral training. Of course, if you're only planning to train two post-doctoral fellows over the course of 3 years, you can't actually apply for $687,000, because there are requirements in the RFAs that talk about the amount of money that fellows can receive per year.*

So, I want to encourage everyone to read the RFAs and the requirements in the RFAs, so that you can make sure that whatever budget you propose meets the requirements stated in the RFA.

***Question**: "Under the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships, is it only for regular education partnerships?"*

***Answer**: You know, there's no language in there that would restrict it. You could certainly apply—if the issue of interest for your community is relevant to Special Education. I don't believe there are any restrictions to apply.*

Slide 39

We only have about 12 minutes left; so let me just make sure that I have a chance to talk about the remaining slides; and a lot of them are going to be repetitive, because you guys have already heard me say these things. But these are sort of take-home messages. Now, we've got a sense of the opportunities that are available; but this is just the beginning of the process.

Slide 40

The next step is to reach out to our program officers. I showed you where you can find information about the program officers on the website. Information about program officers for particular RFAs are also at the end of the Request for Applications. So if you've downloaded the RFA, you can actually see that there.

Slide 41

We talked about the Letter of Intent in terms of the fact that they're important, that they're a great source of information. You should know that they're not required but strongly encouraged. They're submitted electronically. When I clicked through from our *Funding Opportunities* page, I showed you where the peer review website is and that's the place where you submit your Letter of Intent.

It's important for you to know that the Letters of Intent are not binding. Sometimes people are really worried: *"I'm not quite sure what I want to do. So, if I put it in, does this mean that I'm going to have to put in a proposal to do this?"* You do not, but it's really a good practice for you to follow, even if you've already talked to your program officer. It's important for two reasons: It helps your program officers make sure that you're in the right goal and topic, and it helps our Standards and Review Office as they are trying to plan for their panels, not only in terms of making sure we have enough panelists on hand for the number of applications but also in terms of substantive expertise.

This is, I think, particularly important for Special Education applications, where if you're proposing to do work on a disability category that has a relatively small number of incidences--for example, maybe you're interested in doing work with the deaf and hard-of-hearing population--we would need to make sure that we have reviewers on hand who have appropriate substantive expertise. Also, if you're proposing a single case design study, we need to make sure that our panelists include experts in the use of single-case design. So, Letters of Intent are to your benefit.

Deadlines for June applications are April 19th—less than a month away—and July 19th for the September deadline.

Slide 42

Deadlines matter for application due dates. We have two deadlines for our applications this year—**June 21, 2012**, and **September 20, 2012**. Not all topics accept applications at both dates, and the next slide shows which competitions and which dates go together. You do need to know that we do not accept late applications, and it's extremely important that you get your application in early. I would recommend that you get it to your sponsored projects office, if you're at an institution, at least 2 weeks in advance so that they have time to do all the work that they need to do in order to submit the grant to IES. If you're at an institution, it's not the Principal Investigator who actually does the final upload, but rather your sponsored projects office. So, you want to make sure you start building a relationship with those individuals, so that they can support you in this process.

Slide 43

Dates and deadlines for the June deadline: There are only three competitions that are going to be accepting applications. The first two are our parent programs, the Education Research Grants Program and the Special Education Research Grants Program. We have two deadlines each summer for them. So, here we have a June 21st deadline as well as a September 20th deadline. You should note that this is considered the same competition (Fiscal Year 2013), so you cannot put in an application in June and then submit the same application in September.

The Statistics and Methods Program is also accepting applications for June. They're accepting applications in June, but only in June. All of our other programs that I just went through have the deadline of September 20th.

Slide 44

Application packages are available on Grants.gov.

Slide 45

If you are not familiar with that website, if you're not registered on there, I want to encourage you to register and do that now, so that you can make sure that you have all of the appropriate information. It does not happen overnight; it takes up to a week to get your Grants.gov password in there; so if you don't have one, please make sure that you apply now and take care of it.

Slide 46

Before you submit your application, and as you're starting to pull together the material for your application, I want to encourage you to make sure you have everything you need. The Request for Applications that are all available now will give you the information you need in order to build the research narrative. It tells you everything you need for your appendices. It also gives you general guidelines around things like budget. So, you can start to work on that right now. As of mid-April, the full application package will be available on Grants.gov. What that means is that the package will include forms—the cover form and the budget form. It includes places for you to upload all of the research narrative and supplemental materials that you need to include. That package will be available on April the 19th and there's a Submission Guide that you should download and read that has different information than what's available in the Request for Applications. The package will be on Grants.gov.

Slide 47

Let's talk just briefly about peer review, and then I'm going to answer the questions that I see coming in here. We follow an external peer review process where we have standing panels of scientists who review the work that is proposed. The applications, when they are first submitted, are reviewed for compliance and responsiveness to the Request for Applications to which they were submitted. Those applications that are compliant and responsive are assigned to a review panel, and that's the time when we would identify whether an application has gone over the amount of years that they could request or they've gone over the funding that they could request, as well as things like whether they're responsive to a particular research goal or a particular topic.

The compliant and responsive applications are then assigned to two to three panel members, typically, each of whom conducts a primary review of each application that they're assigned. They score the applications and provide written feedback. All of those applications then go into a shared database; and a subset of those applications—those that are considered to be the most competitive—are then reviewed by the full panel. The full panels are typically about 20 people. After the scoring is completed by the panel, that information then comes back to us and we use that to make funding recommendations.

Slide 48

I want to encourage you, as you are preparing your application, to look at the webinar slides that are available, particularly going forward and participate in future webinars for the goal that's relevant to the work that you're doing and look at the information that's available.

Slide 49

In terms of the *Resources for Researchers* page, you can get to current and past webinars that are available, including transcripts and slides. We have a series of methodological resources which include training. We actually have videotapes of our RCT Training Institute. We have information about our Quasi Experimental Design Training Institute, as well as links to other resources that might be helpful as you're preparing your application. I want to just make sure you're aware of this set of information.

Slide 50

I want you to let us be of assistance to you, as you're developing your application. I think it's really important that applicants read the Request for Applications carefully. That helps you prepare to have a productive conversation with our program staff. Please feel free to reach out to us early in the process. As time permits, our program staff can review draft proposals and provide feedback as you're developing your application. So, please do contact us. We can be of help.

Slide 51

Finally, people always want to know how you find out whether you are receiving an award. You should know that after the review process is complete and we complete our internal process here, all applicants will receive an email notification of the status of their application. All applicants will receive copies of reviewer comments by email, if their application is reviewed. If you don't receive an award the first time through, you should plan to resubmit. It is a very competitive program. Our funding rates typically hover between 10 and 13 percent. You should certainly plan to resubmit and talk with your program officer.

Slide 52

Here are our emails. Amanda is the one that I would invite you to direct questions to about the Special Education Center, and I will do my best to answer questions about NCER. I have a series of questions, and I am going to answer them. I just want to thank those of you who have other obligations and who need to leave for being on the call/webinar and to let you know that we hope to hear from you soon.

***Question**: "Looking at the funds that have been awarded, all that I have seen have been awarded to large universities and research groups. Realistically, what are the chances that a small company with a well-composed proposal will receive an award?"*

***Answer**: I certainly don't have numbers, but I do know that there have been cases where a small company has received an award. I think the company called Quantum Simulations—under math and science—has received maybe more than one award to develop a chemistry intervention. So, there are cases. It is true that small companies are less represented, but that does not mean that you are not going to be competitive. If you have a good proposal and you're tackling an important issue, I think that we can work with you to help you craft a competitive proposal.*

***Question**: "Is there a benefit to applying in June as opposed to September?"*

***Answer**: I don't think there's any benefit to applying in June. The only distinction is that you can have a start date as early as March. So, that's the real distinction. For example, if you're proposing to carry out an efficacy study and you would like to start your efficacy trial in the fall of 2013, it probably makes sense for you to apply in June because that gives you sufficient lead time to make sure you have all your schools on board, to make sure you've recruited teachers, and to provide professional development as required. If* *you propose an application in September, your earliest start date is July 1 and that can be really difficult in terms of actually getting an efficacy study up and running.*

***Question**: "If one wanted to wait and start in November 2013, when should one submit the application?"*

***Answer**: We don't actually have start dates in November because awards need to start in the fiscal year; because of the way that the fiscal calendar works in the federal government, it begins October 1 and goes through to the following September. So, all of the research we support must start between March 1st and September 1st. I hope that was the question you wanted answered. If you're thinking that you're not actually going to be ready to start until 2014, then you would probably want to wait and apply under next year's competition.*

***Question**: "Who should I contact for general questions that don't relate to any specific topic or goal?"*

***Answer**: You should feel free to talk to either Amanda or myself, and we can help you with the questions that you might have.*

I also have been asked to let you all know that we've updated the PowerPoint since Friday and will be sending a new file to everyone.

I think that's all my questions. I'm going to just pause for a minute here to make sure that there aren't questions coming through. I know sometimes people can't type as fast as I can talk. If there aren't any, I want to thank everyone so much for your attention and questions. It's always good to have an engaged audience over the webinar.

***Question**: "I mentioned start dates, but when do people hear if they are funded?"*

***Answer**: The timing of that is not exact, so people will hear before the first start date. The review process is about 9 months long from the time applications are submitted to when decisions are made.*

***Question**: "What recommendation do you have for new researchers from PUIs?"*

***Answer**: I'm not sure what a PUI is. So, if you want to type that out for me, then I can perhaps answer that question.*

We will be having a webinar, particularly for folks who are new at this whole process, in about a month I believe.

Previous Question: *"Oh, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions – thank you."*

Answer*: So I think that the real challenge there, having been a faculty member at a liberal arts institution, is to make sure to convey that the institution at which you work has adequate support for you to carry out the research that you're proposing, and that you convey that to the review panel. I think this is another place where our program officers can really be of assistance in terms of helping you think about how you craft a proposal.*

There's also a possibility, if you are proposing to do work in the Special Education area, that an early career award might be really useful for you, because it could provide you with some protected time to do your research--because it's often a challenge, when you're at a teaching institution where you have a heavy teaching load, to make sure you have time to conduct your research.

Question*: Is funding assigned primarily by the review score or primarily by topic goal?"*

Answer*: Funding decisions are based entirely upon the review score. From year to year, you'll see that there is some bumping around in terms of the distribution of applications across topics and goals, and that depends both upon the number of applications within each topic and goal we receive, as well as the quality of those applications. Funding decisions are primarily based upon the scientific merit of the applications as determined by the peer reviewers.*

Question*: "Are the post-doctoral research training programs RFAs available?"*

Answer*: For every program that I've spoken about today, the Request for Applications is available on the website now. So, "Yes," is the short answer.*

Question*: "Who funds the IES?"*

Answer*: The Institute of Education Science is the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. So, we are a federal agency funded by taxpayer dollars. We're like the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health, but for education.*

Question*: "We are a non-profit that works in school districts and would like to have our program evaluated by a university research team. In this case, to whom should we submit the application?"*

Answer*: Probably in this case, the researchers should submit the application, because what's being evaluated is the research program. In this case, it would typically make sense to have the researchers submit.*

I think at this point I’m going to say that if folks have other questions, please feel free to email either Amanda or me and we will get back to you with the answers to your questions. I want to thank everyone for all of the questions and for paying such close attention. Thanks so much. Have a great afternoon.