



Institute of Education Sciences **Funding Opportunities Webinar** Researcher and Policymaker Training Program

May 18, 2012

**IES Funding Opportunities Webinar:
Researcher and Policymaker Training Program
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences**

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Good afternoon. My name is Meredith Larson, and I am the Program Officer that oversees all research training program grant competitions through the National Center for Education Research (NCER) this year. That includes both the postdoctoral training programs—which we will not be talking about in great detail today—and the Researcher and Policymaker Training Program—the reason you are here.

Today, I'm going to briefly go over the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and what our mission is and will put the training into that larger context. Then, I'm going to spend the majority of our time looking at the Researcher and Policymaker Training Program grants. We'll go through the purpose of the grants and then actual suggestions about how to develop your application so that you adhere to some of the requirements listed in the Request for Applications (RFA). Assuming we have time, I will go through how to submit an application and what to expect after you have that application submitted. If you have questions, feel free to send them in. I will be pausing at times to answer those questions as we go.

Let's go ahead and get started with IES.

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IES is the scientific arm of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). We are independent from the larger Department, and our function is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States, to identify education practices that improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of federal and other education programs.

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Ultimately, we aim to provide rigorous and relevant evidence upon which policymakers and practitioners can base their decisions. To do this, we try to identify what works, for whom, and under what conditions. Primarily, our focus is on students that are at risk of failure. These students encompass a wide range. Depending on what sort of research question you have, they can range from students that are in preschool all the way through postsecondary education.

The work of IES is done across four centers. The two grant awarding centers are the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). There is additional training through NCSER, but today we're going to be looking at the training that occurs in NCER.

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All of the training that occurs at IES is in an attempt to help people find relevant evidence, to produce more relevant evidence, and to consume it. If our goal is to provide the information that will inform education policy and practice, we need researchers with the ability to make that evidence, and we need policymakers and practitioners who feel confident in using it. Thus, we aim to provide training opportunities.

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At NCER, we've had other training programs including a predoctoral training program, which has trained over 600 doctoral students, and a postdoctoral training program, which has trained about 100 postdoctoral fellows. We have also had two researcher training summer workshops (we'll talk about them in a bit more detail in a few slides). These researcher trainings were funded under Unsolicited Grants, but these sorts of trainings would now fall into the topics that we're talking about today: the researcher training workshops.

NCER aims to expand these activities and introduce this new layer of the policymaker through the official Researcher and Policymaker Training Program.

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These are the funding opportunities that we will be talking about today. For those of you who are looking at the RFA, this will be Topic II in RFA 305B.

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Let's start with what IES wants from these programs. Ultimately, we are interested in projects that will target various methodological issues and techniques that will be of importance for the training of researchers, and we want to provide research that is

relevant to the policymakers. We want to give them the opportunities that will inform them about various policies they can apply to their work at the State, local, or classroom level. IES is interested in projects that can be targeted to the work that the researchers or policymakers must do in their daily lives. We are not interested in sort of broad, general overviews of methodology in education research or general training for policymakers about how to find information—how to find research. It really needs to be targeted to a specific technique or a specific issue of importance.

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IES also has expectations of what can come out of these grants. By the end of the project, we hope that people who have provided the training can give a description of the program as it was realized with descriptions of all of the key components discussed in the original application, whether they occurred as the program was realized, and whether additional components were added. We are also looking for data demonstrating the program success in recruiting and training the people you have identified. We want information about these participants' perceived value of the training and whether they felt that they could use this in their work lives.

We would also like to know about a fully specified description of the measures that you used to track the participants. We want to know what you used to help evaluate their experience in the program and how they moved beyond the program—both during and following the training program. We want this to link back to your original application and the skills that you described in it. In your application, which we'll be talking about in more detail in a few slides, you're going to identify not only the topic area but also what you think the participants will get out of it. At the end of the project, we hope that you can evaluate your ability to ensure that the people got what you thought they should be getting from your training.

Lastly, we hope that the people who have training can give recommendations for future training programs—ideas of promising practices, for example.

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Just a couple basic things about both of the training programs. IES considers that the training programs, especially the Researcher and Policymaker Programs, should be run as partnerships between us—the Institution—and the trainers. We see this as something that we want to be a part of, so that's why we are making these into cooperative agreement awards rather than just straight discretionary grants as they have previously been. As the first bullet says, this is the first year that this training program has been listed as a topic to which people can apply. In addition, I want to note that we intend to award no more than three of this sort of grant, and they could all be

Researcher Training Grants, or Policymaker Training Grants, or some combination of them.

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The maximum length of any training program is 3 years and the total cost is \$1 million—that includes both the direct and the indirect costs. However, I want to stress that just because there are these maximum awards and maximum years, you do not have to take the maximum. Smaller projects—for example, if something was only a year long—would be of just as much interest to us as 3-year projects. You want to make sure that whatever money you request reflects the scope of your training. By scope I mean not just time but also the number of participants you suggest training, whether you are going to have an online training or an in-person training, etc. All of these things will affect your budget.

Question: “What is a cooperative agreement?”

Answer: *Within the discretionary grants—which are different from formula grants that might be given to States—a grantee institution would have a lot of flexibility in determining how the money is going to be used. Within a cooperative agreement, the institute, ED, and the grantee work in collaboration. So, we would work with you in identifying the goals. The application that you put in would be the starting point of that negotiation. If there were certain needs or interests that the government or the institute had, we would talk about that and negotiate things.*

If there are any follow-up questions with that, go ahead and send them in. If I don't have time to answer them now, I can send you information via e-mail to clarify what that means.

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Now, let's go ahead and talk about who can apply. You can apply as long as you have the ability to conduct the training and use scientifically valid research. We can have principal investigators (PIs) from a variety of relevant disciplines. You can come from economics, education, human development—it's pretty wide open. The core is that you have to be able to provide this intensive training in education research and, potentially, research methodology or statistics.

At the institutional level, an institution can have more than one award and may submit more than one application for the Researcher and Policy Training Application, but each of these trainings must be different. They have to address a different issue or a different method, and they have to have different sets of key personnel. I already mentioned PIs coming from a variety of disciplines.

The team could also be interdisciplinary. You can have a PI in economics and co-PI in psychology, for example. You can have some variety within the training program itself. However, I want to point this out—and this will come up again—you must name all the key training personnel in the application. It will not be acceptable to say that you will hire someone with methodological expertise after the application has been funded.

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The other thing that we need to discuss is who can actually be trained. There are a couple of rules about this, and you want to be sensitive to them both at the time of the application and then also, if you are awarded the grant, during the grant period. It is up to you to ensure that these hold true at all steps of the grant.

Some of the requirements are that the training participants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. There is a preference for the people involved in the researcher training to be primarily people who have received their doctorate and are currently working in the field of education research. For people that are going to take part in the policymaker training, they must be working in the policy or program area covered by the training. I want to make sure that this is clear here. We call this policymaker training, but *policymaker* refers not only to State directors or district-level administrators. We're also including practitioners, so teachers would be captured under this larger umbrella of policymaker. Ultimately, the work of all participants involved, in either the researcher training or the policymaker training, must be relevant to education in the United States.

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If you do have questions, be sure to send them on over. I will try to answer them as we go.

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Let's take a look at the two different types of training programs. The first training programs we'll talk about are the researcher training programs. These projects are intended to help people who are currently conducting research maintain or develop methodological skills.

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We have a couple examples of things that have been previously funded. We've had two grants—as I mentioned earlier—both funded through NCER's Unsolicited Grant Topic. They were both summer training workshops with different time lengths, one was a 2-week workshop, the other was a 1-week workshop. As you can tell, there's a variety of acceptable formats.

The topic areas that they covered include Cluster Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) and Quasi-Experimental Design. This is not meant to indicate that these are the two topic areas that we are most interested in. These are just examples of things that we have already funded. If you would like to see what these research training workshops were like, you can visit our website. There's a link here. You can also navigate to it from our website.

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The policymaker training is really new ground that we're trying to break here for IES. The policymaker training projects are meant to bring together the policymakers and practitioners, as well as researchers, to talk about a specific issue. For example, we could talk about preschool and child development in order to share the latest evidence on the issue and to offer the policymakers and practitioners an opportunity to tell the researchers what they need to know, why they need to know, and how they might be able to use the evidence that the researchers might be producing.

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With the policymaker training program, whatever it is that you propose should reflect the audience that you are trying to target. You can have the same topic area, but whether you are aiming to train people at the State level or maybe at the district level or maybe practitioners will affect your program characteristics. For instance, you would probably adjust the time as well as the content, even if the topic were the same. For example, with English language learners (ELs), State directors may want evidence of the impact of dual language programs, whereas program directors or district supervisors may want more specific evidence about particular practices of promise, effective curriculums, and other things they could introduce to their teachers.

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As I've said before, there are different training models and formats that can be used. You can have one-time short courses, you can have multiple sessions over a longer period, you can go online, or you can use a hybrid model. The training could be provided to one cohort over the course of multiple years or over the course of months, or you could have multiple different cohorts. It really is up to you. It just needs to make sense for your topic and for the number of participants you are aiming to train.

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If you want to conduct the policymaker training, you should really consider working with State education agencies (SEAs) or local education agencies (LEAs), nonprofits, or potentially some of the practitioners themselves at the very early stages (perhaps even now as you're forming your ideas), to make sure that you're going to have buy-in—that

you're going to have interest—and that you will ultimately serve the needs of the people you hope to train.

Whenever possible, we like to have Letters of Support from institutions that would be taking part of your training. They can be put into the Appendix, which I will talk about near the end of the day today. Do try and form those relationships early and have a nice variety.

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Now that we have a general idea of what the researcher training program is, what the policymaker training program is, and some general ideas of the length of time and how much money you can request, let's go ahead and start thinking about the application and what you should be putting into it.

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I always like to start at the end. What do you want to have happened by the end of this training? So, there are some general goals that IES has laid out. We want to help the researchers be able to conduct the type of research we want to fund. We want them to have that strong skill set. We also have a general goal that the policymakers and the practitioners are able to find and use the type of evidence that our research grants are supposed to provide. Beyond that, you should have your own specific goal. I want you to stop and think about the type of researcher or policymaker or practitioner you feel the field ultimately needs. This is your end goal. What do you want this person to be able to do in his or her workplace?

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Now that you have this idea of the type of person you want to have at the end of the day, you can start to think of what activities, what events, and what experiences a person would need to have in order to get to that point. This is kind of like developing a theory of change—if you will—where here you can take, for example, a currently active State director and at the end of the training, this State director will be able to make informed decisions about English language policy. In order to be able to do that, there are certain experiences that the policymaker must have. Your training program should be able to provide those experiences. What sort of tasks must this participant perform? What sorts of skills do they need in order to perform those tasks? What sorts of experiences can your training program provide to help them acquire these skills? Think about the whole person here.

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Now that we have this idea of the type of person we want at the end of the training program and the experiences that a person might need to have in order to get to that point, we can think about the actual Training Plan Narrative and how to structure that—how to get the justification as well as the training plan to be coherent and to be something that will excite the review panel.

There are four main sections to the Training Plan Narrative. They are Significance, Research Training Plan, Personnel, and Resources. We will spend most of our time talking about Significance and the Research Training Plan because these two are kind of the heart of the Training Plan Narrative.

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In the Significance section, you want to build up your argument and your justification for the need for this type of training. You'll need to describe the focus and its importance to the field and especially to the participants. You should be able to clearly state what the issue is, what methodology is, what policy is, etc. *Be specific*. In this, you will need to talk about why this methodology is relevant to researchers and why this policy is important to policymakers. And of course you want to explain the importance of your issue.

You also need to clearly describe who your audience is. At what level do they work? Are they very senior researchers who will then go on and train junior researchers? Are they junior researchers who need to learn this new tool? After you have identified the importance of your issue and who your audience is and why they're important, you need to talk about why the combination of the two is ultimately important, not only for the individual—how having competency with this methodology or having knowledge of this policy will help this person to perform his or her job better—but also what this will mean for the greater field. What will this mean for education research in general? What will this mean for education policy in general?

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Again, highlight the importance of the issue and situate it in the larger field of education. If it really is an important issue or an important policy, there are probably other people that have been trying to provide training in this area. If this is true, you want to identify what these other sources of training may be and justify why your training is either different or necessary, given the fact that there are these similar trainings or at least seemingly similar trainings.

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Let's go ahead and drill down a little bit deeper into justifying your participants and to whom you've chosen to give the training. When you justify your target participants, you want to think about how they will benefit from this training and how they are going to use what they've learned. When you identify education researchers, you want to include their field of expertise and whatever preexisting skills you think they have. You are saying which type of researcher you would like to target. Perhaps you want to target people who are in a similar field or in different fields. Regardless of who you identify, you will want to justify why this particular group is of interest.

Same thing goes for the policymakers and the practitioners. Again, you need to identify who they are, the level that they work at, what their responsibilities are, and what background they may bring with them. You may be expected to have policymakers who have no experience conducting or using research, or you may be working with people who are quite well-versed in a particular topic area. For example, you could be working with State directors who oversee adult education policy. You may want to give an example of the shared background that they might have coming into the training program.

You should also estimate the number of participants you will train and explain why this number is appropriate. Remember, as I said before, bigger isn't necessarily better. If you can train a smaller set of people who will have a large impact on their community—that is significant. So, just describe the number and justify why that number is significant.

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The different training models can vary. Here are some examples of some of the formats. Again, this is not a comprehensive list and the times can differ. It can be 1-week long, a 2-hour online course, or it could meet monthly. You can also think about how the participants will come together. They may take part in in-person meetings, or they might meet indirectly. You can have people that participate indirectly through podcasts or through videos that you have posted online from the in-person training. Regardless of which format you choose, you want to talk about how this format is appropriate for your participants and how it meets your participants' needs. You also want to think about how cost-effective it would be to use one sort of training in respect to another and how this training format will, perhaps, offer opportunities for people beyond the meeting itself.

Question: *“Could you give some examples of how policymakers’ use of research-based information would be included in this training program?”*

Answer: Let's go back to the example I had of the ELs. Let's say you are training State directors about the recent research on dual language programs, and these policymakers would need to go back to their States and argue for or against having dual language programs and could influence the policies. What you might do in that sort of researcher training is not only provide the information—the raw information (the citations and opportunities for discussion)—but you could also provide the State directors with opportunities to collaborate or network with one another so that they can think about how these policies might work in their individual States. There might be other ways that you can help facilitate the policymakers' ability to translate what they're learning into something that they can do—maybe helping them with writing. It's really wide open.

If you wanted to think again about the ELs and perhaps principals (e.g., a collection of middle school or high school principals curious about what the best curriculum to use in EL classes might be), you could present research about which curricula have been developed and which ones seem to be effective in what context. The teachers could turn around, using what they know about the research and what it suggests as far as which curriculum is best suited for what sorts of students, go back to their schools, look at their environments, and then try out the new curriculum.

Question: “For the Policymaker Training Program, does the focus need to be on a specific policy within the topic area or is it identifying the topic itself?”

Answer: I wish I could give a straightforward answer to that. I think it really depends on the scope of the topic area. The example given here was EL achievement. That's a pretty large topic and would probably be beyond the scope of a training program. Now, if you were going to say something about how to measure EL achievement, how you model it based on child development, or something along those lines, I think that that would be narrow enough for an actual training. The pressure here that you're going to find is if you want to strike a nice balance between size and manageability—something that you could provide training on that isn't going to be like a graduate-level course or an undergraduate course, just a training. It needs to be something that's not so big that you can't actually do it or so narrow that you would have only a small impact on the ability of the policymakers to use it. If it's too narrow, then it might not be something that they can transfer into their work or into other situations.

As with all things, whichever you choose, justify it. I'm going to give a little plug for myself here—I can help you with that. Like all the other Program Officers in IES, I am not involved in the review process, so we can all provide you with feedback as you're developing your ideas.

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After you've gone through your Significance section and you've identified the types of people you will train, the types of training you will give them, and why these things are important, it might be useful to summarize your argument. It helps the reviewers to put everything into perspective, and it helps to organize what's going to happen next in the training plan.

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The Research Training Plan is where you lay out some of the activities that you're going to do, the order that you're going to do them, and how you're going to get the participants from Point A to Point B (how you're going to help them become those people you identified in the Significance section).

There are four major components of this section. There's recruitment, there's the actual training, there's offering support to the participants, and then there's evaluating the program. I suggest providing a timeline. You can put that in the Narrative or in Appendix A. That will help people to gauge how much time each activity will need.

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Let's start off with recruitment. Depending on the model that you choose, you may recruit one cohort of people to train, or you may recruit multiple. Just make sure that the recruitment pattern makes sense, given what you have said in the Significance section. You want to make sure that your Recruitment Plan is likely to get the type of people that you feel need your training.

When you recruit for the training, we want you to do outreach to people from different disciplines (as appropriate) if you're doing researcher training. For all things, we want to make sure that underrepresented minorities and underrepresented fields would be involved. Go ahead and do some outreach there.

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When you do your recruitment, you must make sure that your announcements go out to the broader community. For the policymakers, you must make sure that it's announced in the relevant areas for the policymakers and the practitioners. You'll want to demonstrate that for both of those communities you know where to place those announcements. You will need to have a clear timeline and examples of the places where you will do this recruitment effort. For instance, what journals might you advertise in, and what conferences might you advertise at? When you're coming up with this timeline, I do want to point out that the earliest start date for any of the training projects is July 1, 2013, so it might be unreasonable to expect to have the first training course on August 1, 2013, just because you would not have sufficient time to recruit the

participants. Be sure when you're coming up with your timelines for recruitment and for the training that you keep that earliest start date in mind.

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You will need to have a recruitment application process, and this process must be transparent and available to everyone. It needs to be announced. You need to have selection criteria, you need to describe how these criteria will be used, and you should describe how you're going to make this process as fair as possible and how you will avoid any appearances of conflict of interest.

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Again, just keep in mind that there are these requirements about recruitment and about the participants.

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The next major component is the training activities. Now that you have your participants in hand, what are you going to do with them? In this section, you want to detail the specific components of the training, and you want to again link the components back to that Significance section and show how these components are going to help people develop the skills and get the knowledge that you identified earlier.

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Again, make sure that you're linking everything and that you're relating it back to that theory of change that you have. At the same time, you should also predict what could go wrong and how you might be able to fix it. You have this theory that these certain activities will give the experiences that will help the participants perform a certain task that you've identified, but it's very possible that certain problems might arise. It may turn out that the people that you've identified to train don't actually have the background or expertise that you thought they might have had. How could you adjust to compensate for that? You can think here about problems that might arise and things that you might do to make sure that the training is still valuable.

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For the Research Training Program, you will want to describe the methodology you will be training them on. When you're thinking about how you're going to train people in this methodology or in this statistical tool that they'll be learning, you'll want to have some specifics. What are the specific theories that you will be exploring? Can you cite articles? Will the students be using text, articles, or software programs? Be as specific as possible.

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Similarly for the Policymaker Training Program, you should describe the actual policy or practice and then give some examples of the evidence you will draw from—the research you will use—and also, an idea of the conclusions that you think the people will be able to draw from the literature. Again, if you can, cite the specific reports that you might be using, the databases that you might use to train the policymakers, any software programs, etc.

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In the training program, you'll need to reiterate the format of the training and be as clear as possible. How much time will be spent on each part of the content? Will you spend a day talking about measures used for ELs, or will you spend 2 hours doing that? You want to talk about how each component will be taught (maybe they will watch a video on using classroom observations and then the next day have a workshop about it). You want to be very explicit there. Also, if you do intend to have anything online and want to make portions of the training available to non-participants by having podcasts or by having a website, explain how you're going to do that and where it's going to be hosted. Make sure that that information is also reflected in your budget.

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Now, we've got the recruitment, and we've got the training activities. So, now we need to actually bring the people to the training or bring the training to the people. This has to do with providing the support, and this is where the money comes in. You will want to describe the financial support that you will provide to the participants or to the program itself. I'm going to go through some of the restrictions and guidelines that are in the RFA, but I do suggest that you look into them on your own.

Also, one of the things that is important with any sort of training program is that there are guidelines about what direct costs can go into calculating the indirect costs. You will want to talk to your university about that to make sure that you're aligning your expenses with their policy.

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For the Researcher Training Program, the researchers (the participants) themselves cannot receive financial payment. They can't get anything in their pocket from attending the training. They are expected to cover their own travel costs. If you want to make a small number of exceptions you can do so, but you will need to argue for why that would be necessary and have that built in with an explanation. You can pay for the lodging of the participants, just not their travel. However, you would need to make sure that you are attending to the reimbursement rate that the government has set. You can check

out the GSA website here to figure out what that appropriate rate is for a given place at a given time of year.

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There are a few more restrictions or guidelines to keep in mind with the Policymaker Training Program. The policymakers themselves (this includes the actual policymakers and the practitioners) cannot receive financial payment. However, you can reimburse a school or a district for the time that the person was away from his or her regular office. You can cover the travel costs for participants in this program, and you may cover the lodging costs. However, if the policymaker or the practitioner has funds, they should be using those funds in place of the support that you could offer them. Again, with the lodging and travel costs, you should have reimbursement rates in keeping with the federal guidelines.

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There are a few things you can do to help minimize costs. Think about where you're holding this. That's going to affect a lot of things. Try to keep your travel costs low. That can come out in the sites that you choose. Choose locations that are easy for people to fly into or that have good public transportation. You can also consider holding trainings in locations where the participants already congregate. For example, if there's an annual State director meeting in Washington, DC, you could piggyback on that. If you're going to be providing transportation for your participants, think about how you can minimize the cost. This includes not only choosing your location and choosing your time of year but also considering flying economy instead of first-class.

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Another note: You can include meals but only if they are for working sessions. You can have working meals, but you need to clearly describe how this is a working session. There should be something like an agenda. You will also need to have a cost per person, and you want to make sure that it's reasonable. You'll have to explain why the participants couldn't break for lunch or dinner and come back. Meals that are held outside of the formal training hours cannot be included in the budget.

I have a question here, so let's just pause for a second. The question is about the end-product.

Question: *“For the Policymaker Training Program, does the ideal desired outcome need to be change in policy—whether local, State, etc.—or can it be a change in practice?”*

Answer: *Either one is appropriate. You should identify which one you think the policymaker or practitioner is likely to pursue. You don't necessarily have to come in with a full agenda of "I think every State director should support dual language programs, so I'm going to make sure that that's what they all walk away with." You could say, "I want all State directors to understand the research about dual language programs and be able to make informed decisions about what is best for their State."*

As far as a change in practice, you could think about professional development. You could think about if you want to treat it like a professional development, trying to train teachers or principals to do something specific in their classrooms or in their school that might be appropriate. Or you could think about providing information about different types of professional development and what research suggests is the best professional development design. From this, they may learn that sustained professional development is better than something else and will then establish a new approach. Again, as long as you can justify it, the review panel will take it seriously, consider it, and give you feedback.

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Now, we've recruited our people, we've decided how we're going to train them, we've told them how we're going to support them to come to the training, and we're giving the training—how do we evaluate it? This is the fourth component of the training plan. When you evaluate your program, there are some basic measures that IES believes you should be able to do. You should be able to determine whether you recruited the right type of participants and whether you were able to keep them long enough so that they could benefit from the training, and we think that you should be able to follow up with them after the training to see if they were able to use some of the things that they learned and if they were able to apply them in their offices or in their research.

If you plan on repeating this training, you could also discuss how you could use this feedback to help refine your delivery, if possible. It's almost like an iterative process, in that you will take this insight and then perhaps add other experiences. However, if you have a model where you're only going to do one training, this sort of information about what you might do to refine it would be part of the feedback you provide about best practices for future training rather than something that you would apply yourself during the current training grant.

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There are other potential measures, and for these we're thinking about the type of measures that the researchers and trainers would identify as relevant. You could propose measures that match what you said the training program should do and what

you would value from the training program and you should also be able to give an analysis of the cost per participant.

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The Personnel section is where you identify all the people who are going to be giving the training (the PI, the co-PIs, etc.), and you want to link each of these people and his or her expertise to the training program itself. You'll want to talk about the qualifications they all have and how these qualifications are relevant to the focus of the training. You want to talk about what the people will do and how they are going to be involved. You will also need to talk about how much time they will be involved and any previous experience they may have in training researchers, policymakers, or practitioners.

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Again, you cannot propose to hire someone after the training application has been accepted. You need to name the people who will give the training in the application. You will want to have a Letter of Support from this person saying, *"I will give [this sort of training] and fulfill [these sorts of goals]."*

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The fourth section of the Research Narrative is Resources, and here you should describe the actual training institution—whether it's a university or a research firm. You can talk about things such as the technological support that might be on campus or in the meeting rooms, how much space you have, other facilities in the area (you could think about public transportation if you think that's relevant), and all of the things in the situation that would support the ability for you and your participants to have a successful training.

Slide 50

After the Research Narrative, there are a couple of appendices and the Budget and the Budget Narrative sections. These must be included in the application. I'll talk about them quickly. As I said before, when in doubt, go back to the RFA, and you'll find more details there about both the Research Narrative and these sections.

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In Appendix A, you can include any figures, charts, or tables that will supplement the Research Narrative. You do not want to have elements of the Research Narrative in the appendix. If they are there, they will be removed prior to review. Things like a timeline for the training program or the recruitment, examples of the syllabus, and examples of the application form would all be appropriate for Appendix A. There is also a limit of 10 pages.

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Appendix C has no page limit, and this is where you would have Letters of Agreement from the research and training partners. You want to make sure that these letters reproduce well. If there are colors, keep in mind that they will be printed in black and white.

Slide 53

As far as the Budget and the Budget Justification go, there is a maximum for these. Remember it's a 3-year, \$1 million maximum. As I mentioned earlier, you should match the size of the award that you're requesting to the type of research you're proposing to give.

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You'll need to provide detailed justification in the Budget Narrative that explains each of the costs, and you want to make sure that you're consistent (any of the personnel that you discuss in the Research Narrative should be reflected on the SF 424 Budget Form and in the Budget Justification (Budget Narrative). The same personnel should be mentioned throughout. If you say that you're going to recruit online, then you should probably have costs for web hosting. Then, you should have an explanation in the justification that links that all together.

One way to do this is to categorize things so that you have the program/trainer costs and the participant costs. Remember, the reason you want to do that is because there are certain participant costs you can pay for and you need to separate those two categories. It's good to separate those things because, depending on your university, some of the training costs—like stipends—must be excluded from calculations of indirect costs. You want to make sure that you're separating these things from the start.

All funds that are used on the participants themselves—such as their travel, lodging, and stipend—must be in Section E of the SF 424. The people in your business office will probably know what to do with that. The idea here is to separate what is going to the actual participants and what is going to the program.

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If you do have any questions, feel free to send them in.

Slide 56

This competition is for the September deadline, so you have some time. The applications are not due until September 20. The Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due July 19, and the application package is posted on the same day. One quick thing here about the LOIs, we do ask that you turn in a LOI even if you later decide not to apply to the

program. These LOIs are useful for planning purposes here at IES. It helps the Standards & Review Office get an idea of how many people they might need to review the applications. It helps Program Officers like me know whom we should reach out to. If you decide later not to apply, that's fine. If you decide to apply but about a different topic area, that's fine. These letters do not enter into the official review process. They're simply for planning purposes.

Again, let me point out the start dates here. Remember, the earliest start date is July 1, 2013, and the latest start date is September 1, 2013.

Slide 57

There are three things that you will need for submitting an application. There's the RFA, the IES [Grants.gov](#) *Application Submission Guide*, and the application package itself.

Slide 58

You can find this information about the RFA and the *Application Submission Guide* on our website here at IES: <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/13rfas.asp>.

Slide 59

The application package is on a different website, the [Grants.gov](#) website, and it will be available on July 19.

Slide 60

Here's what the [Grants.gov](#) website looks like. If you go to the website, you can find the application package here online.

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When you're making your application, there are a couple of things that you should remember about page limits. Let me just talk about this quickly, and then I'm going to come back to the Abstract. You have the Abstract that's one page. You have the 15-page Training Program Narrative, which includes the four sections that we talked about (i.e., the Significance, the Training Plan, the Personnel, the Resources). If you have a bibliography, there's no page limit on that. You need to have Biographical Sketches for each of the key personnel. These can be no more than four pages long. You will need a Budget Justification, and there's no page limit on this. There's a page limit of 10 pages for Appendix A and no page limit for Appendix C.

I want to come back to the Abstract. There's information about what should occur in this Abstract in the RFA. At a minimum, you need to identify which competition, which topic area, as well as the specific issue—methodological or policy—that you are going to identify. Currently, there are no examples online of the Researcher or Policymaker

Training. You might be able to find something for the unsolicited grants, and I can help you. Again, if you are going to be submitting something for one of these awards, you can contact me, and I can help clarify some of the information that should go into that Abstract if you still have questions after reviewing the RFA.

Slide 62

Ultimately, the Program Officers and I are here to help you. We ask that you read the RFA and make sure that you're going to generally the right Program Officer. If it's training, it's probably going to be me. Do call or e-mail me early in the process. I can give you feedback and review drafts. I will give you as much assistance as I can. Don't be afraid to contact me or the other Program Officers. We look forward to the opportunity to help you because by helping you we help improve the research and we help to train people, and that is ultimately our goal.

Slide 63

When you're reading the RFA and the applications, make sure that you're paying attention to who is eligible and any special requirements that are listed in the RFA. You must attend to any content or formatting restrictions and requirements. If you violate them, if you have extra pages for example, those pages will be removed before things are reviewed. Also, make sure that you are very conscious of those due dates and times. If it says 4:30:00 p.m., it means 4:30:00 p.m.—not 4:30:10, which is deemed late. So start early. Make sure that everything is online. Do not wait until the last day to upload things. It can be disastrous.

Slide 64

These are just some general comments that we've heard from the people that have served on our review panels. *Write clearly and concisely.* I suggest that you follow the format of the RFA—follow the pattern, identify section topics (Significance, Training Plan, Personnel, Resources), and use the topic headings.

Try to address any specific points that are raised in the RFA. Organize things, label sections, use page numbers, make it easy for the reviewers to find the information. If you want to use tables or charts, or graphs, feel free to do so. And strike a balance between what you put in that 15-page Narrative and what you put into Appendix A. Make good use of them both.

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What happens after you have submitted your application?

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The application is first reviewed for compliance—does it fit with all the restrictions for a Researcher and Policymaker Training Application? If it is deemed compliant, it is assigned to a review panel. Two or three of the panel members will do a preliminary read of the application and give it a raw score. The applications that have the most competitive scores are then reviewed by the full panel at a panel meeting. At this meeting, the panel confers, and the members come up with independent scores. Then, it goes back to the Standards & Review Office.

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All applicants will receive notification of the status of their application after the review process is over. When you receive your notification, you will have copies of the reviewer comments, regardless of whether you are funded. If you are not granted an award the first time, I strongly encourage you to resubmit or at least talk to me about your idea to see whether there's something that useful for a future application or for a different type of research grant.

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It's only May, and you don't have to turn in your LOI for weeks now. Don't lose this information if you want to pursue it.

If any questions arise later, feel free to send me an e-mail. I'd like to say thank you for sitting with us today, and I hope that you found it informative.

This concludes today's webinar, Overview of the Researcher and Policymaker Training Program, part of the Research Funding Opportunities webinar series. Copies of the PowerPoint presentation and a transcript from today's webinar will be available on the IES website shortly.

Thank you and have a wonderful day.