



# Institute of Education Sciences **Funding Opportunities Webinar** Application Process

**May 23, 2011**

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**IES Funding Opportunities Webinar: Application Process  
U.S. Department of Education  
Institute of Education Sciences**

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**Transcript  
May 23, 2011**

**Slide 1**

Hello and welcome to our webinar today. My name is Emily Doolittle, and today I'll walk you through the process of putting together an application for submission to IES through the Grants.gov website. I just want to remind you, please do submit questions as they come up, and I'll be able to answer those as we move through the slides today. There will probably be some time at the end if there are any lingering questions that you might have. But please do feel free to submit questions as we go along.

**Slide 2**

Today you will learn about how to find the materials you need for putting in an application. You'll learn about how to use Grants.gov. We'll talk about what goes in an application, all the different components. We'll also cover formatting of the application. And finally, I'll go over some program-specific information that may be important for you to know.

**Slide 3**

All right. So finding application materials:

**Slide 4**

You need three things to put an application into IES. The first is the Request for Applications; the second thing you'll need is the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide; and then finally, you'll need the Application Package itself. Now the Request for Applications describes the substantive requirements of an application, including different sample and content requirements, and methodological requirements that you'll need to meet in terms of preparing your proposal.

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The IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide covers much of what I'm going to talk about today in the webinar: how you find the application package; how you complete all the forms in the package and so on; including, importantly, how you upload the application into Grants.gov; and then finally, that application package. I will go over today with you all the different components of the package itself.

## **Slide 5**

The Requests for Applications that are relevant to our current competitions for fiscal year 2012 and the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide can be found on the IES Funding Opportunities webpage. One thing I wanted to point out to you here is that IES also provides an e-mail alert system called the "IES NewsFlash." If you have not yet done so, I encourage you to sign up for the NewsFlash, and you can receive important updates via e-mail about funding opportunities at IES, and any other kinds of information that may be of interest to you, you can pick and choose different options for the NewsFlash.

## **Slide 6**

So here is a screen shot of the homepage for IES, and you can see here at the top I've circled in red the tab for the NewsFlash and the Funding Opportunities page.

## **Slide 7**

Once you've clicked on the Funding Opportunity link you come to this page, and here you have, really, all the information that you'll need for submitting an application to IES. At the very top, the very first "Click here" tab is where you'll find the fiscal year 2012 Requests for Applications and the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide.

## **Slide 8**

What I want to talk about today is information that's important for those who are submitting applications due for our first competition deadline of June 23rd.

## **Slide 9**

Application Packages are located on Grants.gov. You can also find instructions for preparing applications on Grants.gov, including instructions that Grants.gov prepares, and instructions that I mentioned, the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide.

## **Slide 10**

Here's a screen shot of the Grants.gov homepage, and you see on the left-hand side of the screen I have circled the tab for applicants, and below that in red are several fields that are important for those who wish to put in an application through Grants.gov.

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## Slide 11

Now once you go to the Grants.gov website, it's very important to understand how to find that application package. What I'm going to describe for you now is a way to find the package by searching according to the CFDA number. CFDA stands for Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, and different grants programs offered through the Department of Education have unique CFDA numbers that identify them.

For Education Research, the competition offered through NCER, the CFDA number is 84.305, and for programs competing through NCSER, the special education research center, the CFDA number is 84.324.

## Slide 12

So on the Grants.gov page, click on the tab in red, "Find grant opportunities," and then when you come to this screen you will do a basic search. You click that tab that I've circled there in the middle of the page.

## Slide 13

That will open up, take you to this screen, and here you can search by CFDA number, the bottom of the field. Here I'm going to show you a search for Special Education Research Grant application packages. I have entered 84.324 in the search field.

## Slides 14-15

Once I enter that CFDA number, I get a list of results, different packages that are available for NCSER. And notice here that four packages have come up. All right. There are four separate competitions that are being competed this year within the National Center for Special Education Research. You need to pick the package that is unique to the competition and the deadline that you would like to apply to. So for example, what you'll need to do is look at the opportunity titles. I've circled opportunity title in red, and below that, I have circled the two competitions with deadlines in June.

So the very first search results here is for the Special Education Research Program, CFDA number 84.324A-1. The A designates the Special Ed Research Program, and the 1 signifies that this is the first competition deadline in this fiscal year. And then the third opportunity listed is the Special Education Research Training Program, and notice that that CFDA number is 84.324B. The B designates the training program. There's no number associated with this training opportunity title because there's only one deadline for the training program this year.

All right. So what we're going to show you is how to find the application package for the Special Education Research Program CFDA number 84.324A-1.

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## Slide 16

When I click on that title it takes me to this page. You see at the top the CFDA number 84.324A-1. You can also check that it's the correct package by looking at the closing date, which I've circled sort of at the middle of the page there, June 23rd. This is the package that you use for applications due on June 23rd, 2011. And the top right tab there that I've circled in red, "Application," is what you need to click to get to the application package itself.

## Slide 17

So, again, just to reiterate, the application packages have unique titles that include the title of the program, in this case Special Education Research, and that CFDA number that's unique to the competition, 84.324A. And then if there's more than one deadline for in competition in a given fiscal year, it would be followed by a number 1 or number 2 to signify which deadline this package is for. And the 1 here signifies the first deadline within fiscal year 2012, and that's the deadline of June.

## Slide 18

Now I've clicked on the application tab, and this page comes up. And you see here at the bottom CFDA number, the opportunity number, and the competition title, special education research. Finally, all the way down there at the bottom right, "Instructions and application", there's a link there that you click for downloading.

## Slide 19

This page comes up, and here you can download two things. Number one, you can download the application instructions, and that's the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. That document, by the way, is also available on the IES website, so you can get that in two different places. And then finally the second download option here is for the application package itself.

## Slide 20

Once I've clicked "Download application package", the application package itself will open up, and here you have descriptive information, which is another good way to check that you have the correct package. So we have the CFDA description, which is Research in Special Education. We have the competition ID, 84.324A. We know that's Special Education Research. 2012, which is the fiscal year, and the 1 is the first competition in this fiscal year, and that deadline is June 23rd.

## Slide 21

Now at the bottom of the screenshot that I have here you see where you access the forms that you need to download and complete for your application package. There's a field listing mandatory documents, and below that, I'll show you later, there's a field listing optional documents. What you need to do is select each of those documents that are mandatory, click the arrow in the middle to move them to the right where you can then access open them to complete for submission.

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## Slide 22

Now before we get into the contents of the application package itself, I wanted to go over a few more things that are relevant to Grants.gov.

## Slide 23

First and foremost, it's very important that you are registered with Grants.gov before you submit an application. It's really important that you start this registration process early. Initial registration typically takes five or more business days to complete, and Grants.gov recommends that you allow up to four weeks because there are multiple steps. You need to make sure that you've completed all these steps in order for your registration to be complete and active on Grants.gov. So for example, if you are planning to submit an application for our June deadline and you're not registered yet on Grants.gov, I encourage you to, as soon as you're done with the webinar today, go and begin that process.

Even if you are already registered with Grants.gov, you also need to update that registration annually, and that also can take three or so days to complete. So the registration process is an important first step in submitting an application.

## Slide 24

In terms of software requirements, you will need Adobe software to read and complete the application forms and the application package, and you'll need Adobe software to convert any Word, Excel, or other documents to PDF documents because you need to attach certain things to the forms for submission of your application. Grants.gov says that you'll need at least Adobe Reader 8.1.2. Grants.gov has some very helpful information that allows you to check your software and make sure that you have the correct version, and you can also download the version you need through Grants.gov, and I provided that link here.

## Slide 25

For submission of your application to IES, please know that you must submit your application electronically using Grants.gov. So for example, you cannot e-mail a copy of your application to a program officer here at IES. This is not an official application, and that would not be sent forward for peer review.

## Slide 26

Also, another important piece of information about the submission process, when you upload your application through Grants.gov, the Grants.gov system provides a date and a timestamp for your application. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and have a date and timestamp by the Grants.gov system that is no later than 4:30 and zero seconds p.m. Washington, D.C. time on the application deadline date. Late applications will not be considered. This is a very firm deadline. So for example, if you upload your application and Grants.gov gives it a timestamp on June 23rd of 4:30 and 20 seconds p.m. Washington, D.C. time, this is going to be considered late, and it will not

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be sent forward for review. So it's very important that you submit your application on time with a date and timestamp that's no later than 4:30 and zero seconds.

### **Slide 27**

Now if you are not able to submit your application electronically, you are eligible to submit it in paper format, but you need to be careful because you need to make sure that you qualify for one of the following exceptions. One, you don't have access to the Internet; or two, you don't have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system. Those would be the only cases in which you would not be required to submit your application electronically through Grants.gov.

### **Slide 28**

But please note that if you think you qualify for one of these exceptions you need to submit a written statement to IES describing this exception that you're eligible for, and that written statement needs to be received no later than two weeks before the deadline date.

### **Slide 29**

What do you do if you're having problems submitting through Grants.gov?

If you experience any kind of a technical problem with completing forms and uploading things through the Grants.gov system, you must contact the Grants.gov support desk either at the 800 number that I have listed here or via e-mail. And when you contact the support desk at Grants.gov they will give you a case number, and it's very important that you keep that case number as a record of this problem that you experienced and that you attempted to address the problem by contacting somebody at the support desk.

Once you reach out to someone at Grants.gov for assistance with these technical problems, also let the program officer at IES know and provide the explanation of the technical problem that you've had.

### **Slide 30**

If we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit the application by the deadline of 4:30 and zero seconds, then we would accept your application. This is why it's so important that you document any technical problems that you're having by contacting the Grants.gov support desk and letting the program officer at IES know.

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## Slide 31

When you upload your application through Grants.gov, you will receive confirmation of your submission. This confirmation comes by e-mail, and you're going to get four e-mails in total. It's very important that you look for all four of these e-mails and pay close attention to what you're being told in the e-mails. The first three e-mails come from Grants.gov, and the fourth e-mail comes from the U.S. Department of Education.

## Slide 32

From Grants.gov you will first receive an e-mail that confirms that you have attempted to upload an application into the Grants.gov system. This e-mail is basically telling you that Grants.gov notices you're trying to do something, you're attempting to upload, and at this point, the Grants.gov system will assign a tracking number to your application. The tracking number begins with the word "Grant" and followed by a series of digits.

The second e-mail that you get from Grants.gov tells you whether the application was successfully validated by Grants.gov, or it will tell you that your application has been rejected with errors. It's really important to look for this second background e-mail.

And then finally, once those two e-mails come through, and assuming that second e-mail tells you that your application was successfully validated, at that point you will receive a third e-mail stating that the U.S. Department of Education has retrieved your application from Grants.gov. So notice if you get an e-mail after you've been assigned a tracking number, that tells you that your application was rejected with errors. You're going to have to go back and figure out what the problem was and try again to upload the application.

## Slide 33

Once you receive these three e-mails, you will then receive confirmation from the Department of Education. So the fourth e-mail comes from the Department, and this e-mail assigns a PR/award number that is unique to your application, and this is an example of what that PR/award number looks like. It starts with the letter "R," followed by the digits of the CFDA number that are unique to the center that you've applied to, so 324 here tells you that you're submitted it to the Special Education Research Center. The letter A tells you it's to the Special Education Research competition. The 12 tells you the fiscal year. And then the last four digits are those that are unique to your application.

This number is important. This is the number that you use to track your application from this point forward. If your application is late, as determined by Grants.gov, the e-mail will tell you that it was late, and your application will not be given further consideration. So at this point, once you've gotten this fourth e-mail from the Department with the PR/award number, your Grants.gov tracking number is no longer useful. If you need to contact a program officer with questions about your application, you need to reference the PR/award number at this point.

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## Slide 34

One final thing, after you've uploaded an application into Grants.gov and until you receive that fourth e-mail saying it's at the Department of Education, you can also track your application in the Grants.gov system using the "Track my application" link. So in addition to those three e-mails that you get from Grants.gov, we also encourage you to use the "Track my application" link to make sure that things have been received on time. All right. So I have a question that has come in.

**Question:** *"If your application is rejected due to errors after the submission deadline has passed, can you fix the errors and still be considered in the competition, or must your application be accepted without errors before the deadline?"*

**Answer:** *The second. Your application must be accepted without errors before the deadline in order for it to be considered. Let me give you this scenario. It's 4:00 o'clock on June 23rd, Washington D.C. time and you upload your application. At 4:10, you get an e-mail, that second e-mail, and it says your application has been rejected with errors. You would need to figure out what the error is, fix it, and re-upload the application without the error in it, all before 4:30 and zero seconds Washington, D.C. time. If you don't do that, the application will not be accepted because it will be late. So we recommend trying to upload your application even three to four days before the deadline just so you don't hit a time crunch there in terms of any potential problems that there might be with your application.*

Let's see. I have a couple more questions that have come in. Excuse me.

**Question:** *"There is a five-year IES grant that is due in September that would be perfect to research the effectiveness of an intervention program implemented by an LEA. We are winners of a phase-one SBIR grant, have a research partnership with professors at a university, and are implementing our intervention program in two school districts in two different states. We are a private company. In this situation, who would apply for the research grant, the LEA, the university, or our company?"*

**Answer:** *That's a great question, and I would encourage you to reach out to the program officer who is in charge of the program that you're submitting to and have a conversation with them about strategically who it makes most sense to be the lead on that particular grant proposal. There are lots of different decision points that go into that, and there are a lot of different things that may be relevant to making that decision. Any of those three would be eligible to be the prime or the lead on that application. So that's the kind of conversation that would be helpful with a program officer.*

Let's see. And then I have one more question here.

**Question:** *"After submitting the application, how long does it typically take to receive confirmation e-mails?"*

**Answer:** *That's a great question. Grants.gov states that it's somewhere within about a 48-hour window. So right there you know that if you're trying to submit the day of the deadline, there is a chance that you won't receive the e-mail stating that there's an error in the package until two days later. Hence, you should really try to submit earlier.*

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*Now in reality, I think these e-mails come pretty quickly and so, I would expect them to come to you fairly quickly with that confirmation. But I do know that as we get closer to that 4:30 deadline on the due date it gets a little bit backlogged, and so it could take longer and that might hold things up. So, again, it is important to try to submit well before that deadline date if at all possible.*

## **Slide 35**

Oh, here we go, this is a screenshot of the “Track my application” page where you can enter the Grants.gov tracking number to see where your application is in Grants.gov prior to it being transmitted to the Department of Education.

## **Slide 36**

Now we’ll move onto going over the contents of an application.

## **Slide 37**

Your application consists of the research and related R&R forms that come out of the SF 424 form family that are included in the application package. You will also prepare a project summary/abstract, a project narrative, up to three separate appendices, a bibliography and references cited, a human subjects narrative, a narrative budget justification, biographical sketches of key personnel, and lists of current and pending funding for key personnel on the project.

Now I’m going to move into a discussion of each of these elements of the application.

## **Slide 38**

First, starting with the R&R forms. Within that application package that you download from Grants.gov there are separate forms that you need to fill out. Most are mandatory. There are a few optional forms. On these forms, fields that are required are marked in three ways. There’s an asterisk next to them, the field is highlighted in yellow, and the field is outlined in red. So it’s pretty obvious what you need to fill out in these packages and in these forms within the package.

I also encourage you to use the “Check Package for Errors” button that’s located at the top of the application package. It’s also really helpful to complete the SF 424 coversheet form first, because that form pre-populates other forms.

## **Slide 39**

So here is the application package, and I’ve circled at the top there the button, “Check Package for Errors.” This is very useful. If you are missing something in a form it will take you right to that missing information. I have a question here:

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**Question:** “Can you give an example at some point today of some of the most common errors?”

**Answer:** Absolutely. And I’ll highlight those as we go through what goes into each form. Typically it’s forgetting to fill in one of these mandatory required fields, and some of the fields are highlighted sort of like a decision point. For example, if you said yes to something a certain field will pop up as being required. So I will definitely, as we go through this today, talk to you about common errors that occur within the package.

I guess I just should again say the “Check Package for Errors” button is really helpful. It will take you right to the point in the package where something is missing or filled out incorrectly.

## Slide 40

Here’s a screenshot of the SF 424 coversheet, and you can see here from the screenshot certain fields that are highlighted in yellow, outlined in red with the asterisk. But I did, at this point, want to point out to you one item that if you don’t fill in this field, the thing will not be rejected with errors. Okay? It would go through and be uploaded successfully into Grants.gov, and that’s the item at the top right of the coversheet, Item 4b, Agency Routing Identifier.

## Slide 41

Although this is not a mandatory field in the SF 424 coversheet, it is a really important field for IES. We use this item to screen applications for responsiveness to competition requirements and to make decisions about how applications are assigned to peer reviewers. If you don’t fill this field in or you fill it in incorrectly, your application could be rejected as non-responsive or assigned to the wrong kind of scientific review panel. So it’s really important that you fill this field in correctly, Item 4b, Agency Routing Identifier.

What goes into this field are topic and goal codes. These codes help identify what competition you’re submitting to and in the case of things like education research, special education research, and R&D Center competitions, it’s very important that you identify topics that you’re applying to within those competitions.

## Slide 42

For example, in considering the Education Research Program, which is CFDA 84.305A, there are ten topic areas within this education Research Program. It’s very important that you include the code that designates the topic area you’re submitting your application to.

For example, if you are submitting an application to the Effective Teachers and Effective Teaching topic within Education Research you would need to put NCER-teach in the field for Item 4b. In addition within the Education Research Program, applicants need to select a particular goal to apply to. There are five goals, ranging from exploration to scale up, and including and then measurements there as well.

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You also need to put a code that tells the goal that you're applying to. So if you are applying to conduct an efficacy evaluation of an intervention to help teachers, then you would also need to put efficacy in Item 4b, along with the code NCER-teach.

### **Slide 43**

Similarly, the Special Education Research Program has different topic areas and the five goals. So, again, you need to select the code that designates the topic and goal area. For example, the Special Education Research Program has a Cognition and Student Learning in Special Educational topic. If you would like to apply to that topic you need to be put NCSE-CASL in Item 4b and then, likewise, you need to select a goal category. So if you're developing an intervention you would put development there.

### **Slide 44**

Moving on to the other project information form, this form is important. This is where you provide information about the involvement of human subjects in your research and where you attach many of the really important content-related PDF files for your application, things like the project abstract and the project narrative.

### **Slide 45**

The project summary abstract is attached to the other project information form. It's limited to one single-spaced page. You add it as an attachment, a PDF file to number seven of the project information form, and you need to make sure that this follows all the margin, format, and font size requirements for PDF attachments, which I'll describe later in the webinar today. It's also really important that you put the research topic and goal in the abstract and that those agree with what you put down for Item 4b of the SF 424 coversheet form.

### **Slide 46**

The project narrative is also attached to the other project information form at Item Number 8. There are page limits for project narratives. You need to check out the relevant RFA to see what those page limits are, and, again, the project narrative is attached as a PDF file.

### **Slide 47**

Just quickly, you should know that the project narratives have specific components that are described within the relevant RFA.

The project narrative typically consists of four sections -- significance, research plan, personnel, and resources. Some RFAs ask for a fifth section, so definitely check out the RFA to find out what needs to go in our RFA project. And what needs to be provided under each section is detailed in the RFA under Part Two, Research Grant Topics, and Part Three, Requirements of the Proposed Research.

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## Slide 48

It's really important to make sure the project narrative is concise because there are page limits. You need to have no grammatical errors. It's also really helpful to use page numbering, and, again, there are certain type or font size requirements and format specifications that you need to follow with the project narrative that I will describe in a little bit.

## Slide 49

Appendix A is limited to 15 pages single-spaced. It's optional, but many folks include this appendix in their applications. And if you do include an Appendix A, it needs to be put at the end of your project narrative and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment. Appendix A also needs to follow margin, format, and font size requirements.

## Slide 50

Appendix A is where you can put things like figures or tables or charts, information that is supplementing what's in the research text of your project narrative. You could also include things like examples of measures that you might be using in your project in Appendix A.

Also, for those of you who may be putting in a resubmission or have an application that was submitted to a prior competition, you can use up to three pages of Appendix A to describe how you are responding to prior reviewer feedback in this revised proposal. It's also helpful if you include that prior application number in that three-page description.

## Slide 51

Appendix B is a ten-page appendix that you can include in your application. You put it at the end of Appendix A and submit it as part of the same PDF file attachment, again, following margin, format, and font size requirements.

## Slide 52

Appendix B is a place for you to include things like curriculum materials, computer screenshots, test items that you might be developing, or any other kinds of materials that are being used in the intervention or assessment that is the focus of your research. Let's see, I have a couple questions that have come in here, so I'm going to pause and look at those.

**Question:** *The first one is, "Would timelines for projects be part of the narrative or Appendix A?"*

**Answer:** *That's a great question. You could put the timeline in either place. So if you're running out of room in your project narrative, that could certainly go in Appendix A.*

**Question:** *"Can you please clarify if the page numbers should be included in the one-inch margin or outside the one-inch margin."*

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**Answer:** *Oh. Okay. What I would recommend is putting a page number in the footer or the header part of the page. But I believe that's outside the one open inch margin, so it can be there. That's a good question.*

**Question:** *And then finally, "Should we put title pages on the appendices? Do those title pages count as part of the page limits and should we number the pages on appendices separately?"*

**Answer:** *Excellent question. Here is my advice. Don't include title pages because it could count against your page limit, and so don't waste a page making a title page. I would recommend numbering Appendix A as like A1, A2, A3, and on up to A15, so it's clear that that's part of Appendix; same for Appendix B, B1 through B10.*

## **Slide 53**

Finally, we have a new appendix this year, Appendix C. This one does not have any page limits. It's to be included at the end of Appendix B and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment, same margin, format, and font size requirements.

## **Slide 54**

Appendix C is where you can include the letters of agreement that you have from research partners, so for example, letters from schools or districts or consultants, so it's nice. You don't have any page limits here, so you can include all your letters of agreement if you'd like. You also shouldn't feel the need to reduce the size of the letters in any way. So make sure you keep them in their original size so that they're easy to read.

And really important, it's important that the letters clearly indicate that that research partner really understands what's expected of them in terms of their time devoted to the project and the resources that they will be bringing to the project. So for example, if you're doing a study where you want the randomly assign teachers to an intervention condition, then the letter should indicate that the school or the district or whomever understands that teachers are going to be randomly assigned to something and what that something is and that they understand that they could be randomly assigned to a control condition where they wouldn't receive an intervention. So it's really important that those letters clearly indicate an understanding of what being a research partner means for this particular project.

## **Slide 55**

Also attached on the other project information form is the bibliography and references cited. This doesn't have a page limit. It's recommended that you follow APA style. It's attached as a PDF file at Item Number 9 of the other project information form, also following margin, format, and font size requirements. Importantly, make sure you check that you have complete citations.

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## Slide 56

Also included on the other project information form is the human subjects narrative which has no page limit and is also attached as a PDF file. It goes at Item 12, which is called “Other attachments” of the other project information form. And you will need to include an exempt research narrative or a non-exempt research narrative.

## Slide 57

If you think that the research you’re planning is exempt from IRB approval, check out the six exemptions that are listed in the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide and make sure you’re including all the information relevant to the involvement of human subjects so that a review can be done to determine whether exemptions are, indeed, appropriate.

## Slide 58

A non-exempt research narrative needs to include a description of how human subjects are involved and the characteristics of those human subjects, materials, the recruitment and informed consent procedures you’ll follow, any potential risks and how you will protect your subjects against risk, the importance of the knowledge to be gained and information about any collaborating sites.

## Slide 59

We are going to move on and talk about another form in the application package that is mandatory, the research and related budget form. Again, you see here the yellow fields that are highlighted, things you must be filling out.

## Slide 60

Now here are some common mistakes that occur when applicants are filling out the budget form. I’ll point out to you if any of these are ones that would lead to an application being rejected with errors.

These are more mistakes that I’m going to talk about now that people make on the budget form that either cause confusion or would need clarification later if you were to be considered for funding. These are things that are easy to address correctly here at this point of putting in the application.

## Slide 61

The first is a specific category in the budget form called “Participant/Trainee Support Costs.” This is Section E of the budget form.

You only use the Participant/Trainee Support Cost category if you’re submitting a training grant application. So those of you submitting to the special education postdoctoral training program, you would use this category in the budget form. Folks putting in applications to the Education Research Program or the Special Education Research Program do not put costs in the Participant/Trainee category.

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## Slide 62

I should point out, this wouldn't cause your application to be rejected with errors, but it would be something that would have to be fixed later if you were to be recommended for an award.

## Slide 63

The other thing that's important in terms of the budget is clearly articulating the time commitment of the senior key personnel working on the project. On the budget form you can fill in calendar months or you can fill in academic months and summer months.

## Slide 64

So you decide. Either put in the calendar month time commitment of these senior key personnel or put in their academic and summer month commitments, again, for each key person working in each project year.

IES needs to know the calendar months, the FTE calculated over a 12-month period, so it's really important that you get that information in correctly. And when we talk about the narrative budget justification, I'll describe for you how to describe the FTE there as well. Okay. So I have a few questions that are coming in, so I'm going to pause here to take those.

**Question:** *“Should we include the IRB approval form from the university we work in?”*

**Answer:** *If you already have approval, you would indicate that on the other project information form, and you would not need to submit that at the time that you put in your application; however, if you are recommended for funding and you were to get a grant, at that point, you would be contacted and asked to provide that IRB approval form. Let's see, second question.*

**Question:** *“Are letters of agreement schools a mandatory part of the proposal or is it something we can provide if we are funded?”*

**Answer:** *Great question. They are not mandatory; however the reviewers who evaluate your proposals for them will look very carefully at whether you include letters of agreement or not, and they'll look very carefully at what's described in that letter of agreement. So if you say that you're going to be working in ten schools developing a new math intervention, you need to include a letter that shows, one, that you've contacted those schools and two, that these schools would be willing partners in the research. This is an important kind of resource question, and so if you're going to go do research in schools, you need to show that you actually have the ability to do that, and these letters of agreement are an important way to provide that information to reviewers. So, yes, while they're not mandatory, they're really important and they're a very important part of the scientific review of your application.*

**Question:** *And so, again, another question here. “How specific should the letters be?” Could they say they give full agreement?”*

**Answer:** *I would encourage you to craft a letter and have a letter from these partners that is highly specific and very detailed. The more detailed the better. You want it to be very clear in the letter that these partners understand what*

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they're going to have to do. So to get back to this math curriculum you may be developing, if you want teacher input and you're going to need teachers to work with you, let's say, five hours a week during a specific time period on the project, you want the letters to say that. We understand that teacher will need to work with the researchers for X amount of time and that we're willing to have our teachers do that. So I would say be as specific as you possibly can. All right, another question.

**Question:** "What constitutes a key person for the budget forms?"

**Answer:** Great question. That is typically somebody at the institution represented for that budget, so let's say the primary applicant institution. It's the principal investigator, any co-principal investigators, any co-investigators, that's typically how we think of key personnel on a project. So for example, if you have undergraduate research assistants working on the project, they would not be listed there, they would be list in the next section, other personnel. Let's see here, another question.

**Question:** "Should we include information in the footer other than page numbers; for example, title of proposal, proposal piece like this is the references or the human subjects?"

**Answer:** That's a really good question. You should really only put a page number in that footer. Primarily, because once you submit your application and it's assigned that PR/award number by the department, that PR/award number goes in, I believe it's the footer, and so it might mask other information there. So, yeah, I would encourage you to just put the page numbers there. The rest of it's not important.

**Question:** And then finally, "Is there a limit on the number of months the PI could be committed to the project?"

**Answer:** The short answer is, no; however, it would be need to be clear that the PI has the ability to put in the amount of time that they're proposing. So if you have a PI coming in, let's say, with a half-time commitment, so 50% FTE over a calendar year on the list of current and pending funding, you can't have other grant commitments that would put that person over 100%.

So there's no maximum level of effort that IES cares about, but key personnel need to make sure that they actually have the time to commit that they're planning for in this proposed project. This is something that the peer reviewers will look at. Is this person, A, putting in an adequate amount of time given what they say they'll do on the project, and B, do they actually have that time to give? Are they over committed?

## Slide 65

Turning to the narrative budget justification, there's no page limit to this justification. It's added as an attachment, a PDF file to the R&R budget form. It needs to follow format and font-size requirements. What you'll need to do is to create a single document that provides a budget justification for all years of the entire project. So if you're putting in, let's say, a four-year exploratory project, your budget justification needs to talk about the money you're asking for in each of those four years, and the single document for the budget justification needs to be attached at Section K of the first budget period.

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## Slide 66

The reason this is important is because if you don't attach a narrative budget justification here for the first budget period at Section K. I have screen shot of that. If you don't attach the narrative budget justification there, subsequent budget period will not open up. So attaching the budget justification there opens up budget period two and so on, as you need it for your particular project.

## Slide 67

The narrative budget justification is a really important piece of your application. It provides sufficient detail to both reviewers and to IES to judge whether the costs are reasonable. So it's really important that the narrative justification aligns with the budget, so you break the justification down according to either those categories within the budget or within category by year. So for example, you could go year one and do each category, year two and do each category, or, say, stay within a particular category, like key personnel, talk about costs in each year.

## Slide 68

It's also important in the narrative budget justification that it's clear that any subaward costs are not being duplicated and the cost budgeted for the main award. Also important to talk about the time commitments of key personnel as calendar year percentage effort and then to carefully describe what those key personnel are doing on the project. The narrative budget justification is also a good place to talk about any cost shares for your project like donations of personnel time or lab space.

## Slide 69

The narrative budget justification is also where you can describe your institution's indirect cost rate. You need to use your institution's negotiated federal indirect cost rate and you're encouraged to use the off-campus indirect cost rate when it's appropriate. Make sure in your budget that you're not including things as direct costs that may really be part of your indirect costs. Again, consult with your associated agreement to make sure of that.

Also know that an indirect cost rate agreement needs to be in place at the time of an award to claim indirect costs. So for example, for your application, if you don't have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, you can establish a temporary indirect cost rate of 10%, and then use that rate until the negotiated rate is obtained.

## Slide 70

Now here is a place that can lead to problems with the grant application, and this is one of those common errors or mistakes that could really cause the application to be rejected. This is important. For those grants that may include a subaward or more than one subaward, a budget needs to be provided for each subaward included, and the R&R subaward budget form is what needs to be used to include a subaward budget. Now this form is listed under "Optional documents" because not every project has a subaward. This form is what allows you to extract and attach a budget form, which is essentially a PDF document for each institution that will hold the subaward on the grant.

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Separate budgets like this are required only for subaward organizations that are performing a substantial portion of the project.

## Slide 71

Here is a screen shot of the form, and you can see here circled at the top, “Click here to extract the R&R attachments,” and then once you’ve extracted that budget form it needs to be filled out by the subaward institution, saved with a file name that includes the subawardee organization, and then attached to this form.

The budget that is extracted here looks just like the budget form I showed you earlier, but this is the one, then, that you fill out to include the subaward budget information. This is where applications can be rejected with errors. If you tried to attach a PDF file here that was not extracted from this form that would cause your application to be rejected with errors, so it’s really important that if you have subaward on your project, this form is what you use to put in the subaward budget information.

## Slide 72

All right, moving on, “Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel”: These are attached as individual PDF files for each key person on the project. Each biographical sketch is limited to four pages, so it’s essentially an abbreviated CV. It needs to follow margin, format, and font size requirements, and each biographical sketch is attached using the “Attach Biographical Field” of the Research and Related Senior Key/Person Profile expanded form.

## Slide 73

Here is a picture of that form. This is also included under mandatory documents in the application package. You can see here that the first one is a field for the project director principal investigator, and down towards the bottom I have circled the attached Biographical Sketch field. That’s where you attach the four-page CV.

## Slide 74

New this year for IES applicants, we’re asking you to attach a list of current and pending support as a single PDF file for each key person that is no more than one page, and you would attach this at the “attach current and pending support” field of that same form.

## Slide 75

So it’s right below the biographical sketch. Notice that that’s not a required field, so it’s not highlighted in yellow, but IES does want this information. It’s something that you need to include. I have a couple questions that have come in.

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**Question:** *“Please clarify the difference in listing an organization as a co-investigator versus a subaward.”*

**Answer:** *All right. A co-investigator is a person, so somebody who is listed as a key personnel, and so if you are listed as, let’s say, a co-investigator in a budget, you’re a person who’s at that institution that is submitting the application. Now if you’re a co-investigator but you’re located at a different institution, that’s the most likely scenario for including a subaward to the project. So that person who is a co-investigator is at their own separate institution. They’re a key person on the project, so they’re listed as key personnel in the subaward budget. So that’s the most likely scenario for including somebody as a subaward on a project.*

All right. So I have another question.

**Question:** *“Can you work on these components piecemeal and save over a period of days without actually submitting yet, or must you do all of these forms and screen entries in one sitting when you are prepared to submit the entire package?”*

**Answer:** *Great question. No, you can do it over time. Once you’re downloaded the application package onto your computer you can fill it out and save it and work on it over a period of time and then upload the completed package when you’re finished.*

**Question:** *And then I have another question about the subawards. “Can you provide an example of when a subaward budget would be submitted?”*

**Answer:** *Well there are lots of different scenarios, but it might be when you have an investigator at a different institution who is really kind of at that co-investigator level. It might be if there is another institution where a lot of data collection is occurring.*

*For specific guidance, if that’s not answering the question, I would encourage you to contact a program officer to consult specifically about whether there is needs to be a subaward. Another example is a contractor. Typically contractors would get a subaward on a grant.*

Somebody has asked:

**Question:** *“What constitutes current and pending support? If I am a professor at a university, would I have to include that salary or just other grants I work on?”*

**Answer:** *Oh, good question. This is just to list other grants that you’re currently working on, so which you currently are being supported by, and to list any pending grant applications you have out there.*

One more question.

**Question:** *“We would be using a subcontractor; can we list the head of this organization in key personal profile? This person would be key on the project; however their budgeted time would be included in the subaward budget form. Also, is a separate budget justification narrative required?”*

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*Answer: Good. This person would be listed in the key personal profile, so they would be put here on this form that I have up on the screen right now. They would get a biographical sketch, but they would be listed in the subaward budget, and, yes, subaward budgets also require separate subaward budget justification narratives following the same procedures, attach it at Section K of the first project period.*

*Question: And then, “Is there a standard IES form for current and pending like NFS has?”*

*Answer: No. IES doesn’t have a standard form like that. You can really format this any way you want. Something like a table is typically helpful, but, no, we don’t have a specific form here at IES.*

## **Slide 76**

Moving right along. Just quickly, other mandatory reforms included in the package include the “Project/Performance Site Location” form. This allows you to enter up to eight sites that might be used for the research. Also, there are the SF 424B form, the assurances for non-construction programs, and then finally, a department of Education combined assurances form.

## **Slide 77**

Just so you can see these forms, here is the Project/Performance Site Location form. Notice things highlighted in yellow again, outlined in red. Notice for this form that a DUNS number is not required but you do need to enter things like the congressional district code.

## **Slide 78**

Here is the non-construction programs form.

## **Slide 79**

And then finally, the combined assurance form.

## **Slide 80**

Moving onto formatting requirements.

## **Slide 81**

All of these format requirements that I’ll describe now apply to the abstract, the project narrative, the three appendices, the bibliography, the human subjects narrative, the narrative budget justification, the biographical sketches, and the lists of current and pending funding. For all of these PDF files, it’s considered a page of 8-and-a-half-by-11 inches on one side only, with one-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

## **Slide 82**

The height of the letters can’t be smaller than a 12-point font, and with all these type size/font size requirements. In general if you do something like a Times New Roman 12-point font that would meet all of these requirements.

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## Slide 83

Please know that text is to be single spaced, so don't do double spacing.

## Slide 84

In terms of things like graphs and diagrams and tables that might be in Appendix A or in your project narrative, just make sure that these are things that would reproduce well in black and white, because if hard copies are printed out for folks to look at they would be in black and white, not in color. And you just want to make sure you're not going to lose any important information if this is reproduced in black and white. In general, follow the same type size requirements. We do say, though, that things like figures and legends, can be smaller in size, but, again, make sure they are legible. The reviewers need to be able to read this information.

## Slide 85

As a reminder about page limits, the project summary abstract is limited to one page. The project narrative has page limits but this varies by RFA, so you need to check out the RFA. Appendix A is 15 pages. Appendix B is 10 pages. Each biographical sketch is limited to four pages, and each list of current and pending funding is limited to one page.

## Slide 86

There are no page limits for Appendix C, which is where you put your letters of agreement. There's no page limit on bibliography, there's no page limit for the human subjects narrative, and there is no page limit for the narrative budget justification.

## Slide 87

There is just some general program information to go over quickly here.

## Slide 88

We define eligibility fairly broadly. You as an applicant need to demonstrate that you have the ability and the capacity to conduct the research you're proposing. Also know that for IES grants we don't require any cost sharing or cost matching.

## Slide 89

In terms of making awards, awards all depend upon availability of funds, but the number of awards that IES makes depends very much on the quality of applications that are received, and the size of the awards that are given out really depends on the scope of the projects proposed. Decisions about funding are based upon the review of the proposal by the scientific peer review panel, and the size of the award really depends upon the kind of project you're putting in. So the dollar amounts for different goals vary quite a bit. For example, the amount of funding given to a Development project will differ than the amount for an Efficacy project.

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## Slide 90

Please note that new this year IES has set a maximum dollar amount for total funding. Please check the relevant request for applications to check out what those dollar amounts are.

## Slide 91

Here are some final reminders as you're preparing you application:

## Slide 92

Here is an application checklist. We provide an application checklist in the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide, and you are strongly encouraged to use that because there are multiple components to the application. Using the checklist, you can make sure that you have provided all the required information for each mandatory form in the Grants.gov Electronic Application Package. You can use the checklist to make sure that you have attached the correct PDF files to the proper forms. You can use the checklist to make sure that all certifications and assurances are completed.

## Slide 93

And then there are additional things to make sure you've done. First, use the "Check Package for Errors" button on the application package. Make sure that you upload your application and confirm the validation by Grants.gov well before 4:30 and zero seconds p.m. Washington, D.C. time on June 23rd. You can use the Track My Application link on Grants.gov to do this, in addition to paying attention to your e-mail, you're going to get four in total that will tell you finally the PR/award number that's assigned and the date and time stamps.

## Slide 94

And then finally, please remember to register for Grants.gov early. That's really important. It can really take up to four weeks. There are many steps to registration. Also, please review the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide for all this information that you've heard about today on filling out the forms and uploading your applications. You can find that guide on the Funding Ops page where the RFAs are listed. And then very important, make sure you download the application package that's designated for your competition and you deadline.

## Slide 95

Also, really important, if at all possible, submit your application early. Try to upload it three or four days before that deadline date. Verify the submissions okay using the "Track My Application" link.

## Slide 96

And last but not least, contact the relevant program officer. IES program officers are here for technical support, and you can learn more about substantive requirements for a proposal and you

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can get help completing forms in the application package. So it's really important that you feel free to reach out to program officers for help.

## Slide 97

And then finally, I have up here the two important web pages, the IES Funding Opportunities page and then the web address for Grants.gov.

So we have some questions that have come in, and so we'll go through those now. And then we have about ten minutes or so for any final questions that you may have, so please feel free to submit those. All right, so performance site questions, we have a few of those.

**Question:** *"Would I have to fill out this form for each school in which we are conducting the research?"*

**Answer:** *That's a good question. You could. I don't think that you have to. The Project/Performance Site form, when you open it up, there is a spot for eight Project/Performance Site locations. I believe that's the maximum number of performance sites that you can list. You always have the option of adding information about additional sites in the narrative budget justification. So if you're running out of room and you want to list more performance sites than you can fit there in that form, feel free. I would recommend using the narrative budget justification because you don't have a page limit to worry about there.*

**Question:** *Let's see. And then another question here, "If the project data collection will be taking place at school sites but we don't know which schools yet, how would we manage that in the application?"*

**Answer:** *That's fine. In that case don't worry about putting schools in the Project/Performance Site Location. But, again, kind of getting back to this resource section of the project narrative and the narrative budget justification, you should definitely specify how many schools you plan to be working in, and in terms of letters of agreement, if you don't know specific schools yet, it would be very important to include something from a letter from a district where you would be recruiting schools in Appendix C.*

Let's see here. I'm just waiting to see if we have anymore questions. We're not seeing any right now, so I think that will do it for us today. Thank you really very much for joining the webinar. If you have any additional questions about how to apply, the application package or how to fill out forms, the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide has all of this information included that we went over in the webinar today.

Feel free to send me a follow-up e-mail if you need to. My contact information is on the website and at the backend of the RFA and in the Grants.gov Submission Guide. And, let's see, it looks like we might have one question coming in, so I'm going to hold just a moment here.

Okay. If we don't get to the question, and if we missed any of your questions coming in today, do feel free just to send them to me directly after the webinar by e-mail. But otherwise, it looks like we are done with questions for now, and so that will conclude the webinar for today.