



Institute of Education Sciences **Funding Opportunities Webinar** Overview – Postdoctoral Research Training Program

May 25, 2012

**IES Funding Opportunities Webinar:
Overview – Postdoctoral Research Training Program
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences**

**Presented by:
Meredith Larson, Ph.D.
Program Officer
National Center for Education Research**

**Transcript
May 25, 2012**

Slide 1

Good morning. My name is Meredith Larson, and I will be walking you through how to think about a postdoctoral training program and how to start forming your application. I will be pausing at certain times to answer any questions that you may have. Today, I have Dr. Wai-Ying Chow with me, and she will be helping to synthesize the questions and address any that you might have. So, thank you very much for coming and let's get started.

I am a Program Officer, and I oversee the research training programs in Education Science. That includes not only the Postdoctoral Research Training Program but also the Researcher & Practitioner Training Program.

Slide 2

Today I'm going to talk about the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Postdoctoral Research Training Program, and we'll look at this funding opportunity and how to form your application. Then, I'll talk about the general submission process and what to expect after you submit.

Slide 3

The mission of IES is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States. There are four centers at IES: the National Center for Education Research (NCER), which is where I'm from; another research grant offering center, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE); and then the National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE); and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Combined, we address this mission and identify the practices that will improve outcomes for students and evaluate the effectiveness of education programs.

Slide 4

Part of what we try to do through IES is to provide training—not only to upcoming researchers but also current researchers and now policymakers and practitioners. For the current training program, our goal is to increase the supply of scientists and

researchers who can conduct the type of research we fund here at the Centers. We want to prepare highly skilled researchers who are able to make these proposals and applications and have both the content and methodological skills necessary.

Slide 5

We have already been funding a lot of training programs at both the predoctoral and postdoctoral level. This year, we are funding only postdoctoral research training programs through NCER. These have historically been offered through NCER and NCSER. Combined, we have about 130 postdoctoral fellows. Some of them are still receiving training. Others have gone on to professional careers.

Slide 6

This leads us to our conversation today, which is about the current Postdoctoral Training Grant opportunities. This year, NCER is the only Center that is offering this opportunity. NCSER is offering an early career training possibility. If you would like to find out more about that, you can look online under our grant opportunities.

Slide 7

If you have applied for previous postdoctoral training programs, I want to highlight a few of the differences that are in this year's Request for Applications (RFA). For those of you for whom this is a new experience, there is nothing to compare these differences to, but we can talk about what these things may mean. So this year, all training programs through NCER are going to be cooperative agreements. This means that the federal government is a bit more involved in the way that the training will occur. We see this as a collaborative activity between us—here at IES—and the training programs. We want to ensure that it's a rich experience and that people are networking and using all of the resources available to them, so we are forming these as cooperative agreements. This year we intend to award no more than five training grants at the postdoctoral level.

I'd like to highlight a couple of things here. Now, the key personnel may work on only one IES postdoctoral training program at a time. That means you can lead your own, but then you cannot be key personnel on somebody else's training program. You would have to choose. If you have a current training program and you would like to apply for another one, you would not be able to do so until the end of that postdoctoral training program.

Also, I'd like to highlight what is now going to be in Appendix B—we are asking for Letters of Agreement (LOAs). These LOAs are different from what you might be expecting, given other applications. Other applications ask for LOAs from research sites and key personnel. We still want those, but this LOA would be an example letter that you and your fellows would co-sign. In this letter, there are certain things that we would like mentioned (e.g., the policies of IES regarding fellows and their programs). There are details about this in the RFA, and they are listed in the back section where the description of the appendices are.

Slide 8

Let's talk a little bit about what IES' expectations are. At the end of the grant, we expect that you will be able to provide us with a description of the program as it was realized. There may be changes that happen over the course of the grant, but at the end of it, we would like to know what features remained constant from the beginning and what things you adjusted along the way and why. We also expect that you will be able to describe the measures that you used to track progress and provide data that demonstrate the program success in recruiting, training, and placing your fellows.

At the end of the program, you should be able to discuss the program's success in preparing fellows for the appropriate skills and knowledge—both content and methodological—to carry out the type of research that you described in your original application.

There are a couple of other points here. You may come up with a “theory of change” of what it would take to get a new, fresh postdoctoral fellow from Point A to Point B—preparing him or her for independent research in his or her career. At the end of your grant period, you should be able to discuss any revisions you made to that theory. For example, you may find that people need more support in professional development or more support in methodological expertise than you originally thought would be necessary.

Also, as far as determining the program's success, we expect you to be able to provide an analysis of the cost per fellow or per training year—this would include recruitment efforts. We also would expect that you could come up with some recommendations for any future training programs (promising practices, if you will).

Slide 9

In general, your postdoctoral training programs should look at general education—education for typically developing students. (Training in the area of education for students with learning disabilities or other disabilities would be funded under the other research center, NCSER.) This training for the general education should focus on a combination of research topics and research goals that are in line with IES, or they can align with specific types of methods research. Of course, you can include methods research if you're going to focus on particular research topics or goals. Likewise, if you're doing methods, methods apply to various topic areas and various goals. So, it's not necessarily either/or.

Slide 10

Here are some of the foci of the research topics that are funded under IES research. We have some that look at content area (e.g., Reading & Writing and Math & Science Education). We have topics that look at domains (e.g., Cognition & Student Learning, Education Technology). We have topics that look at populations (e.g., English Learners, Postsecondary & Adult Education). Then, we have some that look at policy and teachers (e.g., Effective Teachers & Effective Teaching and Improving Education

Systems). If you want a full description of each of these topics, you can look online and read through our current RFA.

Slide 11

We also have five different research goals. We have Exploration, which looks for the malleable factors that predict academic outcomes as well as the mediators and the moderators; Development & Innovation, which looks at developing interventions such as curriculum or policies; Efficacy & Replication, which looks at the impact of programs under supported settings (the developer can be involved in the research); Effectiveness, which looks at program impact under standard normal operations (the developer should not be involved); and Measurement, which looks at developing or validating assessments that would be used not for a particular intervention but for other uses or for developing research tools useful to scientists. Again, descriptions of these goals are in the RFA.

Slide 12

If you are interested in providing training that looks more concretely at research methods, you can build off of the 305D Statistics & Research Methodology in Education. The purpose of this portfolio is to develop new approaches to extend and to improve existing methods as well as to create other tools to enhance the ability of researchers to do the type of research that we would fund. For example, you could have a training that looks at large-scale random controlled trials (RCTs) and meta-analysis. There's another training program that looks at quasi-experimental designs, like interrupted time series and regression discontinuity and focuses primarily on training researchers to conduct that type of research and perhaps even teach others how to conduct it.

Slide 13

Now, even though we are interested in all of the topics, goals, and methodologies broadly construed, we've noticed that some foci are underrepresented in our current portfolio, so we would like to highlight them and encourage people to think of the opportunities that they have to provide people either with practical experiences with these populations or in these domains or with additional theoretical training. For example, it would be nice to fill in gaps for education technology, for English language learners, and for research that would fall into the postsecondary and adult education topic area. Also, as far as the goals, we would like to highlight Development & Innovation and Measurement as they relate to the development or the validation of assessments.

If you have any questions, please let me know. If you want me to slow down or go back over something in more detail, just ask.

Slide 14

The first question you may ask is "Who can apply for these grants?" Any academic institution that grants doctoral degrees can apply. You can also join with other research institutions or other academic institutions, but the grant needs to be awarded to a doctoral degree-granting academic institution. All of the people who will serve as faculty

mentors must have at least one education research grant supported by us here at IES or by other sources. These sources do not need to be federal sources. Regardless, there must be training opportunities (i.e., active grants) for at least the first two years of the training program. We understand that grants come and go and that you will be applying for grants even as you have these training programs, but for the first two years, we want to ensure that the fellows have something to work on. Just as a reminder, the key personnel—including the principal investigator (PI) and the Co-PI—can take part in only one IES-funded postdoctoral training program at a time. This includes those funded through NCER and NCSEER.

Slide 15

Let's go over a couple of the basics for all of the training programs. We'll talk about the maximums, and then I'll give some examples of the training programs we have funded. You can have up to four fellows and you can train each fellow for a maximum of three years. However, you can request only up to eight training years. You can divide those training years as you would like. Some of the models I've seen have included having two fellows for three years and then 1-year fellows. I've seen people requesting four fellows for two years each, with two cohorts of two fellows or a fellow starting each year. There have been some programs that have been smaller in scope, with only one trainer requesting a total of two fellows, each for two years each. The number of fellows that you request and the amount of training that you request should reflect how much training you believe they will need as well as the capacity you have to train them.

Slide 16

To get started, I want to step back and think about the training programs as a whole. When you're thinking about what you want to do and what you want to request, start by thinking of the type of researcher you hope to produce. This type of researcher will probably be very similar to you and to the other members of your team. Think about the type of research that s/he will conduct and the type of experiences that might be necessary to help generate this type of researcher. For example, if you want to help develop a researcher who will have expertise allowing him or her to create online reading tutors for elementary school age children, that is going to entail different experiences than developing the type of researcher who would be ready to evaluate State or local policies.

Think of the type of background knowledge that this sort of researcher would need to have. Think of the practical research experiences that would be useful to guide this person to being able to conduct this type of research independently. Think of the other professional skills that are necessary for a successful researcher (e.g., presentation skills, writing skills) and also think of the researcher entering into his or her own career and the professional development experiences that might be necessary (e.g., job talks and other forms of professional behavior).

Question: *“For this application, do we need to specify a specific research goal? If yes, can we have more than one goal within the application?”*

Answer: *I believe that the person asking the question meant aligning things to the IES topic areas and goals. IES does not expect a training program to offer training across all of the goals. You can focus on one goal, but you could try to provide training across all of the goals. Generally, what I see is that people have two goals that are primary in their research and in their grants. They would focus on Exploration and Efficacy if those are the type of grants that they have. It really depends on what you want. Again, getting back to this idea that you can have different models and building off of this slide—think of the type of researcher that you are trying to develop.*

If you're trying to develop someone who can do policy evaluation, you want to make sure that you focus on the research where that goal coincides with the type of researcher you're trying to produce. If you want a different type of researcher—e.g., someone who can do that online intervention for elementary school readers—you may want someone who has the Development goal and also potentially an Exploration goal and maybe even an Efficacy goal.

When talking about the goals and the topic areas that you would cover, look at the grants that you have, consider the expertise of your team and type of researcher you are trying to produce, and connect them all in the application. We'll come back to this when we talk about writing the Narrative.

Slide 17

So, what's going to go into the actual application? Well, at its very heart is the Training Plan Narrative, and there are four components of this: the Significance, the actual Training Plan itself, the Personnel, and the Resources. We're going to spend the majority of our time on the first two topics.

Slide 18

In the Significance section, you want to describe and justify the focus of your training program. Why is this type of researcher important for the field in terms of practice or policy? How will this program help to refine or improve the fellows' skills to make the researchers more likely to conduct high quality, independent research? This is where I want you to think about that theory of change. At the end of the day, what do we need to do in order to guide this researcher—who already has experience and skills—into a position where s/he can do more? Think about the specific focus of your training programs. Think about the skills and knowledge required and think of the overall importance of your training program. Combined, these are going to make the Significance.

You will want to discuss why this type of researcher and the type of research s/he will conduct is going to be relevant to the field—policymakers or practitioners. Think about how this training will be beneficial to the individual researcher as well.

Slide 19

Now, let's move on to the Research Plan. In this section, you need to detail the actual training experiences. That's going to include everything from the first step (recruitment) through placement and the evaluation of your training.

Slide 20

Within recruitment, IES does have a couple of guidelines. For example, we encourage you to reach out to minority and underrepresented candidates. We also encourage you to reach out to fellows outside of your specific field of study to build interdisciplinary collaborations. When you're thinking of your Training Plan, you want to start off by describing the type of fellows you wish to train and appropriate venues for recruitment.

Again, let's move back to the example of developing a researcher who would be building an online intervention for elementary school readers. If this were your goal, you may reach out to people in computer science, psychology, and education. If you were trying to develop someone who would evaluate policy, you may reach out to a different set of researchers.

I would also like to point out that as you're making this plan and you're thinking of the venues in which you'll advertise, think of the start date for these grants. The earliest start date for a postdoctoral training program would be July 1, 2013. The latest start date would be September 1, 2013. Given that, the fields that you will be recruiting from, and the fields' normal, postdoctoral fellowship or tenure track recruitment cycle, you may need to delay starting your fellows for quite some time—given the natural timeline of other recruitment efforts. It may make sense to begin recruiting in the winter of 2013 with your first fellow beginning in the spring or summer of 2014. Consider that when you're making your plan and detail how your plan fits into the normal life cycle of the academic year.

Slide 21

We also have a few requirements in respect to the fellows. All fellows must be U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents. All fellows must have completed their doctoral degrees prior to beginning the fellowship training. Now, we understand that you will be recruiting people who are probably still working on their degrees and finishing up their dissertations and that is absolutely appropriate. However, they cannot start the actual training until they have completed that degree—until they have confirmation from their universities that they have met all of the requirements and that they basically have that diploma in hand.

If you recruit an IES predoctoral student or someone who has worked with one of your members on your team, you need to get IES permission first. You don't need to discuss this in your actual application. It's just fair warning that if you do get a training program and want to recruit certain people, you may need to get our permission first.

Slide 22

Now that you've described the significance of your training—the type of fellow you will be training, what you believe they will accomplish, the type of researcher they will become, and how you will find these researchers to mold through your recruitment efforts—you need to describe what you're actually going to do with them and link all these things together. You need to detail the specific training activities that will lead people to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you identified in the Significance section.

There are different ways that people can have these activities, the most obvious being through working on grants.

Slide 23

In the training grant application, you should describe the fellows' roles on their mentors' research grants. Will these roles change over the course of their training? Think of the other supporting activities—auditing classes, attending lab meetings, participating in workshops or special training activities. The key here is linking these activities to the Significance section and demonstrating how they will lead to the development of independent researchers. For example, if you propose to have the fellow oversee one of the studies on your grant and the fellow would oversee the work of graduate students, you would want to link that into the development of this individual in becoming an independent researcher. Show how these things will lead back to the type of person you described earlier.

Slide 24

Within training activities and when you're describing the research projects that they will have access to, be sure to talk about what they will learn from their work on the actual grant project—the practical application of these things.

Now, they could also be receiving additional training in classes. For example, if you recruit somebody from a statistics department, perhaps they need less background on the methodology, but they may need to catch up on content area. They will do that both while working on the grant but also potentially through auditing classes. You want to make sure that you give that full picture of how they will build those skills.

When you're describing the research training experiences for trainees, you will need to describe the topical and methodological focus of each grant that you have. This can and should be included in Appendix A using a table. It's also wise to have at least a paragraph or two describing the major research projects in the narrative itself, so that reviewers get an idea of the full scope or depth of your training.

Getting back to the question that came up earlier about the number of goals and the number of topics, you can have breadth or you can have depth. This is a place where you can describe those training opportunities and all of the intricacies of the different grants and what those would provide to the fellows.

Slide 25

You also want to talk about the placement. After you've recruited and trained the fellows, you want to help them move on and find a job. Think about all the professional development experiences that will help them to find the career that is right for them and help them to be competitive. Whatever it is that they choose to do—whether it is to go for tenured faculty or move into research firms—you will help guide them down that track and provide them with needed experiences. It's also useful to think about how to negotiate—how to review job offers. In your Narrative, it would be useful to include a timeline of when you think fellows should start to engage in these activities. It may be from day one, or it may be during the second year if you have a 2-year training. So, lay out exactly how you think this training should occur—how you think the experiences should line up.

Slide 26

Remember I said that at the end of this grant we expect the grantees will be able to evaluate their programs and also the success of their fellows? You will want to think about this. You can think of it as formative information that you can use and also summative information. You may want to set specific goals for the fellows while they are still working with you, so that you can use that to evaluate their progress toward reaching that end goal of being the ideal researcher you proposed. You may want to set up professional development milestones—for example, a certain number of publications per year and presentations. You could think of setting milestones for being involved in grant writing. It would be very difficult for most fellows to get an IES grant within two years, but they can be involved in grant writing and maybe they can apply for smaller grants during the course of their fellowship with you. You can think of those as being milestones that you can use to evaluate internally and use to evaluate the success of the program. Here at IES, we do look at things like publications, grant submissions, and presentations as being markers of a successful program. Keeping track of that would be useful.

Slide 27

We have a few suggestions for how to evaluate the program. Did you recruit the type of fellows you intended? If you intended to recruit fellows from education technology and psychology, were you able to recruit from both of those domains or perhaps just one? Were you able to retain the fellows long enough for them to benefit from the training? It is not always the case that fellows will complete their two years. Sometimes they find tenure track positions before completing. That is success. They have been there long enough to receive the full benefit of the training, but you would want to make sure that you discuss that. Were you able to assist them as they sought their next positions? All of these are things that you should be able to measure.

You can also come up with measures of your own. Again, because you have a clear idea of the type of researcher you're creating and what skills are relevant for that researcher, you may have unique measures. For example, if you're focusing a lot on developing someone who would be a methodologist, perhaps you want to demonstrate that your fellows have worked as consultants because a lot of times methodologists will

consult with the researchers on their designs. That might be a measure that is relevant to some researcher training programs but not others.

As far as analyzing the cost of the fellow per training year including recruitment efforts, those too will be defined by what you said you were going to offer the fellows—the research support and the resources that you would provide to the fellows.

Slide 28

The other two components to the Narrative are the Personnel and the Resources. Under Personnel, you need to identify each of the key personnel. You want to describe their relevant expertise and their backgrounds and what they will actually be doing in the training program. Will they be a primary mentor? Will they be teaching classes? Will they be there to consult with the fellows? You want to list their time commitments. Again, you want to relate this back to the overarching goals of IES.

Talk about how their expertise aligns with the goals of your program—the researcher that you're trying to develop—as well as the goals of IES. Try to show the links between your trainers to those different IES content areas—for example, reading and writing, the early childhood programs—and the type of methods appropriate for IES research (e.g., secondary data analysis, primary data analysis, mixed methods, experimental methods, quasi-experimental)—as they align with the goals of your program.

Also, if you have a mentor who has had previous postdoctoral training grants, you must provide information about the fellows that were trained in a table in Appendix A. If you see page 14 of the RFA, it will detail what to include in that table. It may also behoove you to detail this in the Narrative itself—describing in narrative form how the mentoring occurred. If one of the key personnel received any awards for outstanding training of fellows, go ahead and highlight that especially if it is in postdoctoral training. If people have experience training doctoral candidates, you can highlight that as well. You do not have to put that into Appendix A, but you should highlight that in the Personnel section.

Slide 29

In the Resource section of the Narrative, you want to describe the institutional resources you have. This includes not only your university or other universities that other training personnel may work at but also any participating institution such as the schools that the research is conducted in, any sort of laboratory, and any other partners. So, if you do a lot of work with State agencies, describe those relationships and the capacity of those relationships to accommodate the needs of your fellows.

Slide 30

One of the things that we would like to encourage everyone to do is consider the fellow as a whole person and consider the training as an intervention. Again, think about how your program as a whole will help to develop this individual, how this individual is relevant to education research, how this individual is relevant to IES, and the type of research we want to support.

Slide 31

Appendix A is required. You are limited to 10 pages. As I said, you need to have a couple of tables. You must include a summary table of the education research projects being conducted by the key personnel—those people who may be mentoring. You want to list each grant that the fellow could be working on. You can include in Appendix A any figures, charts, or tables that supplement the training program narrative. Keep in mind that there should be no narrative text in any of the appendices. If such text occurs, the Standards & Review Office will remove it prior to review. Only the figures and charts are allowed. If you have a Gantt chart, you may have an abbreviated form in the Narrative and then a more detailed one in Appendix A.

As I said, if any of the mentors have had previous postdoctoral training grants, either through IES or someone else, you must include information on the postdoctoral fellows in Appendix A.

Finally, if this is a resubmission, you must include a response to the reviewer comments. This response can be no more than three pages.

Slide 32

Appendix B is the new appendix. It is required for postdoctoral training programs. This is where you will put the example of your LOA that the PI and the fellow will sign. The purpose of this document is to clarify what the fellows can expect from the training program, what the training program expects from the fellow, and what IES expects of both the fellow and the program (as specified in the RFA). Some of the expectations that IES has are as follows: the fellow has completed his/her doctoral degree and the fellow is a U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident.

In this LOA, you can specify the level of detail. If you want to talk about the lengths of the fellowship or if you want to talk about the amount of funding available, you can. However, the necessary bits for us are definitely the policies that we have. We have some suggestions in the RFA of what to include in the appendices. Here's a link to that if you need it.

Question: *“Is there boilerplate language to use in the LOA with respect to IES’ expectations?”*

Answer: *It's not exactly a boilerplate in the RFA. I believe it's bulleted. You could just use those bullet points. On page 29 of the RFA, we give some suggestions of what to include. On that page, you'll see a list of the requirements that we have. Now, because this is a cooperative agreement, we would be working with the grantee to make sure that the details are clear and accurate. If there were any things that were incorrect about the IES policies, we would work with the grantee on clarifying them. We just want to see an example of what you would be offering the fellow and what they would know about their positions—almost like contract but not legally a contract.*

Slide 33

Now, let's talk about figuring out your budget. Many of you have probably had education research grants either through IES or some other funding agency. Training grants are different. There are different rules. You put things in different areas of the forms. Different things go into calculating the indirect costs. I want to highlight some of the specific details of these IES training programs. There is a maximum award of \$687,000, and this includes both direct and indirect costs. The grant can be for up to 5 years. There is a limit on how much you can charge for indirect costs—8 percent on all the allowed costs.

For the fellows, you can request up to \$52,500 for a stipend per year and fringe benefits up to \$12,000. If there is other money that needs to be spent on fringe benefits, it must come from another source—not the IES grant. You can also request up to \$12,000 per fellow per year to cover things such as research, travel, and recruitment. You can request up to \$15,000 per year for operating your program. This would cover things such as PI travel to the annual meeting here in Washington, DC. If you had an administrative assistant or were to bring in visiting scholars, that could be funded by the \$15,000. Keep in mind, we expect that PIs are being paid either off of the other grants or from their faculty positions, so they should not be requesting funds from this grant. Your time and efforts should be donated—not funded through this grant.

Slide 34

Here's an example of how to think about your Budget and your Budget Narrative. There are certain funds that go straight to the fellow, and then there are certain funds that go to the program. Each of these may go into a different section of the Budget Form. This is where it can get very confusing, so make sure that you're talking to your Office of Sponsored Projects. If you're filling this out, I can try to help you or point you in the direction to find answers. One way to think about it is that any funds to be spent on actual fellows—after they have been hired—are likely to go into Section E. So the fellows' travel is calculated separate from the PI's travel, separate from the recruitment travel, and separate from the visiting speakers' travel. They are distinct and go into different areas.

You will want to talk with your university to find out what goes into their calculations of the indirect cost rate. At a minimum, the stipend cannot go in. Generally, stipends and benefits are excluded because this is the minimum of what IES says is the fellowship. Some universities will say that fellowships are excluded, so you might want to clarify what that means. It could be the entire package. So, if you promise not only stipends and benefits but also a research allowance, your university may consider that part of the fellowship, in which case it must be excluded from calculations of indirect costs.

Slide 35

How do you prepare and submit an application to IES? This is general information.

Slide 36

The Postdoctoral Research Training Grant (305B) applications are due September 20th. Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due July 19th. I strongly encourage you to submit a LOI for two reasons. Number one: It will alert me to your existence, so that I can find you and we can talk about your program. Number two: Even if I have already talked to you and I know that you're submitting, I still ask that you turn in this LOI because it helps the Standards & Review Office to plan, so they know about how many applications they will receive and can start to look for appropriate reviewers.

As I mentioned before, the earliest start date is July 1st, and the latest start date is September 1, 2013.

Slide 37

When you begin your application, you will need to find three documents. The first is the RFA (305B). You will also need to find the *Application Submission Guide* and the application package. I'm pretty sure the application package has been revised, and the other two are definitely revised annually. So, the RFA has changed significantly. You will want to read it again. Read through the *Application Submission Guide*, even if you have already in previous years.

Slide 38

You can find this information on our website. Here's a link to the RFA. The *Application Submission Guide* and application package are also available online.

Slide 39

The application packages will be posted on July 19, 2012 on Grants.gov.

Slide 40

Here's what Grants.gov looked like. If you have questions or concerns about Grants.gov, I encourage you to contact their Help Desk. We really don't have much control over Grants.gov. I can tell you what I've heard, but I'll probably be directing you back to their Help Desk.

Slide 41

For the actual 305B training grant application, you must have a 1-page abstract. The Narrative itself can be no more than 15 pages, single-spaced. There are requirements as far as font size and type and margins. Appendix A can be no more than 10 pages. Appendix B can be no more than two pages.

Slide 42

If you haven't already contacted program officers here at IES, please do make use of us as a resource. Don't be afraid to call and talk to us about your training program idea or the application. We're here to help you. We do ask that you read the RFA. If you have any questions about it, it's usually useful if you have the RFA with you, so we can figure out what page might be the confusing one. Call or e-mail the program officers early in

the process. You can go ahead and shoot me an e-mail before or after the LOI. Keep in mind that we can provide feedback on the draft of the proposals as well as conduct calls with you and your mentors or co-mentors.

Slide 43

Attend to the following as far as the eligible applicants. Make sure that you know the special requirements for the fellows and for the programs. Then, adhere to the content format, the submission deadlines, and the application due dates. I cannot stress enough: Make sure that you get your application in on time. They are due at 4:30:00 p.m. exactly. If it's 4:30:02, you will be considered late and ineligible. Do not delay. Apply early and make sure that you don't lose out simply because you were a minute late.

Slide 44

Here are just a couple of final tips from the reviewers' perspective about writing grant applications. Write clearly and concisely. Set up the argument. Link things. Address the points in the RFA. You can cite the RFA. Be sure to organize the information in a logical sequence. Use label sections and headers. Number your pages and any figures or charts that you have. You want to make it easy for the reviewers to find the information and discuss it.

Slide 45

What happens next?

Question: *“Given the start date (July 1st or September 1st) for the 2013 Grants would the earliest postdoctoral position be in September 2014?”*

Answer: *Not necessarily—it really depends. Some people have described starting their recruitment process in November or January and doing the interviews and making the offers in the spring—with the expectation that the person would start mid-summer or early fall (in line with the academic year). I've seen that, and it makes perfect sense. They align their budget to that. That first year, they don't intend to have fellows in-house, so they aren't requesting as much money. They're requesting more in program fees, and they will request some money for recruitment efforts, but they won't usually be requesting money for stipends and benefits.*

Other people have proposed models where they believe that they will have people in-house right away—either that winter or even late fall. They plan on recruiting off-season, in which case their budget reflects that. If you do want to hold off and say that the earliest start date for a fellow would be September 2014, that's fine. Just make sure you calculate that into your budget and that you request the appropriate number of years to still provide the amount of training you think the fellows need.

Slide 46

Getting back to the application, after you have submitted your application, it goes to a peer review board. First, each application is reviewed for compliance. This means ensuring all the necessary requirements have been met (e.g., making sure none of the key personnel are on two training grants at the same time). If it is seen as compliant, it is assigned to a review panel. In this case, it would go to the Training Program Review Panel. At this panel, at least two or three panel members will conduct a primary review of the application, and assign it a score. These scores are rank ordered, and the applications that are most competitive will be reviewed by the full panel.

Slide 47

You will receive notification of the status of your application. You should get notification after your application has been received, and it should give you a tracking number. Then, as it's going through the review process, the program officer will not have a lot of information about where it is in the process. We know about as much as you do in regards to that. We can tell you when the review panel will occur—if it's in the fall or if it's in the spring. As far as where the application is in the process, that is beyond our knowledge. However, at the end of the process, you will receive copies of all the reviewer comments. If you are not granted an award this first time or even if this is your second or third submission, we still encourage you to consider resubmitting and talking with the program officer (me) about your application and/or the reviewer comments.

Slide 48

We have time, if there are any specific questions. There was a specific question about notifications. The decisions for the September deadline—the specific notification after Congress and everybody has signed off on it—is July 1, 2013. That would be the drop-dead notification date. It could potentially come sooner but will definitely occur by July 1st, because that's when the grants must start.

If you do have any questions—if you think of anything subsequently—feel free to shoot me an e-mail or give me a call. Thank you very much.

This concludes today's webinar, Overviews for the Postdoctoral Research Training Program in the Education Sciences, 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.