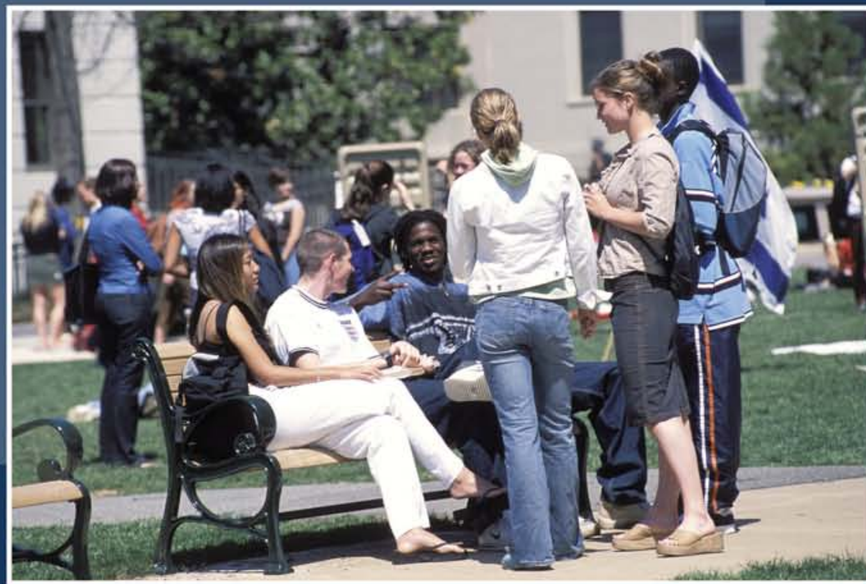

Institute of Education Sciences
Funding Opportunities Webinar Series
Overview of Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training

Webinar Transcript

May 28, 2013

U.S. Department of Education

IES INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

IES Funding Opportunities Webinar Series
Overview of Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training
(Topic 1 under 84.305B)

U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences

Katina Stapleton, Ph.D.
Program Officer

Transcript
May 28, 2013

Slide 1

Hello everyone. I wanted to welcome you to our webinar today on the Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training program. As you will see from the PowerPoint file you received in advance, we have a lot of information to cover today; still, if you have questions at any time, please feel free to submit them and we will respond accordingly.

Slide 2

Today, we are going to cover a few things. First, a welcome, then a background of the training program over the past several years. Then we are going to provide an overview of the current opportunity, followed by a question and answer period at the end.

Slide 3

Again, I'm Dr. Katina Stapleton. I am the Program Officer responsible for the predoctoral training program. I'm part of a team with Dr. Meredith Larson, who is responsible for other training opportunities. For this program, I monitor our current training programs for predoctoral fellows. I also give technical assistance to applicants who are interested in receiving funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2014.

Slide 4

Again, any time during the presentation, feel free to submit questions. Afterward, if you have specific questions for me, please feel free to contact me directly. My e-mail is katina.stapleton@ed.gov; we will repeat that information at the end of the webinar.

Slide 5

Before getting into the nitty-gritty of what is required this year, we wanted to give you some background information about the training program as a whole.

Slide 6

First, who is the funding organization for this opportunity?—the National Center for Education Research. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the federal agency and IES is one of the divisions. Then, within IES, we have NCER. At NCER, we fund research that tries to answer questions about how students learn and how to make sure they learn efficiently, effectively, and to the best of their abilities. It is really important to note that the research we fund spans from early childhood to adult education.

Slide 7

This year, we have both research and research training opportunities for funding. However, we are just going to discuss research training today. By now, you should have had a chance to see the request for applications (RFA), which is called, “84.305B: Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences.” This year, that RFA includes three funding opportunities: the Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Program, which we’re going to talk about today and one on research methods, in which we provide funding for people to provide training on research methods (in the past that has included quasi-experimental design, experimental design, single case studies, et cetera). We also have a relatively new program on training in education use and practice, and this is going to be for training offered to practitioners and policymakers around research. Normally, the RFA also includes an opportunity for postdoctoral research training, but we will not be competing the Postdoctoral Research Training Program this year.

Slide 8

The ultimate purpose of the Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Program in the Education Sciences (which I’m going to call, “Predoc Program” for the rest of the webinar) is to increase the supply of scientists and researchers in education who are prepared to conduct rigorous and relevant education research. What we want is a cohort or multiple cohorts of up-and-coming scholars who have the training to conduct the type of research we fund.

Slide 9

Our program has been around since 2004. We had competitions in FY 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2009. Between those competitions, we funded 18 programs—several of which received multiple grants. At this time, 16 of the 18 predoctoral training programs are still in existence, but they are coming to an end, which is why we are recompeting them. With the exception of one or two programs that might be admitting 2-year fellows, we are closed to new fellows at this time. We expect the current predoctoral training programs to end in or around 2015, depending on when their no-cost extensions expire.

The Predoc Program as a whole has been extremely successful. We have almost 700 fellows to date. We are closing in on 200 graduates—these are fellows who have received their doctorates since 2004—and we hope to continue to expand the training programs in the future.

Slide 10

That brings us to this year's funding opportunity.

Slide 11

We have introduced a few things into the RFA that are new for FY 2014 and I am going to give a summary of them upfront. The first thing that is new is that we are putting in place a maximum number of awards. In the past, there was no maximum. In the first 3 years that we competed we made 5 awards, then in 2009 we made 11, and this year we have a hard maximum of 5 awards for FY 2014.

Another major change is that we are going to be awarding these grants as cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements are a form of grant somewhere in between a normal discretionary grant and a contract. We put these types of agreements in place because we think that IES is going to need to have some input into the training programs.

For example, you will submit your application and we will approve it. However, over the course of the grant, we might want to have some input on a specific issue and then we would negotiate what that would be. We often receive questions like: "What kind of input might that be?" We imagine that for the Predoc Program, we are going to have some pretty strong opinions about recruitment, especially the recruitment of populations that are traditionally underserved in doctoral programs; however, there might be other places where we would like input as well.

The maximum award is the same—5 years—but the maximum award amount has been reduced from $5 million to $4 million. As everyone may know, we are in a tougher fiscal climate than we have been in the past; we have adjusted this program to reflect that. We have set up the funding opportunity such that you suggest the number of fellows you wish to have and how many years you wish to have them, then you multiply that by the fellowship costs. This represents the amount you can request for fellow costs. Then you can include up to an additional $1.11 million for program costs. As we move through the presentation we will talk specifically about how these funds can be allotted.

Slide 12

I received a lot of calls lately about the Predoc Program and one of the most common questions is: “Am I eligible to apply?” So, I thought that this would be a good place to kick-off the conversation about what is required to submit your application. First of all, the institution applying has to be a doctoral institution and it has to grant doctoral degrees in fields relevant to education. It is pretty important to note that these doctoral degrees do not actually have to be in education (that is, you don’t have to have a college of education to apply). The doctoral degree just has to be in a field that might do work relevant to education.

This year, there are two types of predoctoral research training applications: those for institutions applying for new programs and those for institutions applying to renew existing training programs.

New programs include two different types:

(1) If you’re at an organization that has never had a predoctoral training program your application, by definition, would be new; and

(2) There are some institutions that have received training programs in the past that may want to change things. So, if they don’t want to continue the program that they have and just want to try something totally different, then they too would be able to submit as a new program.

Renewal programs:

If you are at an institution that has a current training program or at one of the two institutions that have closed their training program, you can apply to renew.

Slide 13

Throughout the presentation, you will see these extraordinarily large exclamation marks that I have put on a number of the slides to denote something critically important that might affect how your application is reviewed or whether it is reviewed at all. Please do not ignore them. This is the first exclamation mark issue that you are going to see: ***an institution may only submit one application under the Predoc Program topic***. If you submit more than one, someone from IES will contact the institution and ask: "Which one of these do you really want reviewed?" The institution will get first pick; if they can't decide, IES will choose which one is going to be reviewed.

For those of you who are submitting applications, you really want to check in with your sponsored program office to make sure that you are the only one on your campus planning to submit an application. I have received multiple calls from different people at the same institutions who are not speaking to each other and are unaware that there are other teams at their university also thinking of submitting predoctoral training program applications. So, please check with your sponsored program office to make sure that multiple applications do not become a problem when you get to the submission stage.

Slide 14

If you have never had a training program award, the choice is easy; you are a new training program.

Slide 15

If your institution has had a training program award—one that still exists or one that is closed—the question about whether you can apply becomes slightly more complicated. There is a narrative for this in the application, but I have put together a graphic that I hope makes it clearer to you.

The green bar at the top represents the first question you should ask yourself: "What's the status of the current training program on my campus?" This question includes whether you have already received, or are planning to receive, a no-cost extension, because this will make a difference to the type of award (new or renewal) for which your institution can apply.

If your current predoctoral training grant is going to be open during the 2014-2015 academic year, you can apply only to renew the grant that you have. Everyone else can submit either a new grant or a renewal grant application. If you are at a campus that has an existing training program award or training grant award and there is any confusion about this, just e-mail me and we can talk about it.

Slide 16

Here are some other critical things that you need to know about the RFA. The first one is that each training grant can have only one principal investigator (PI). This is going to sound a little strange because I am going to say something in a second that is going to make this sound false. There is a sole person on your campus that is going to be responsible for the award; this is the person who would make contact with the Program Officer, can make decisions about the award, and is responsible for making sure that everything stays on-track. This person is referred to in the RFA as the PI. In practice, they are also referred to as the training director.

People immediately ask: “We have had a co-PI in the past, can we have one in the future?” The answer is yes. You can designate someone to be a co-PI, but they do not have the same responsibility as the PI. They can help manage things on campus, et cetera. However, when the government has a question, we are going to go to the PI—who is ultimately responsible for the grant.

Then the next question comes. “What kind of qualifications do you need to be the PI?” The PI can come from any field, but has to have a background in doing the type of research we fund. The PI needs to be capable of providing the type of training for which your training program is responsible—generally, that is education, research, and statistics. As you decide the purpose of your training program, it will become more obvious that your PI should be someone who has a strong track record in that area.

Slide 17

Here is another huge exclamation point. We have established that you are at a doctoral granting institution and you have identified a PI. Here are the other things that you need to know for your grant application to be responsive. The term, “responsive” is a really important term for applications. When you submit your application, it is very important for you to have met the basic requirements of the RFA. If your application is judged to be non-responsive, your application will not be reviewed; it will be sent back to you. Throughout the presentation, I am going to give you tips on how to ensure your application is responsive.

As a reminder, for your application to be responsive, it has to be from an institution that has doctoral programs. And your proposed training program is going to need to provide research training at the doctoral level, not the master’s level. The proposed training program needs to be interdisciplinary—we will talk about that in a minute, but it is pretty broadly construed. Finally, your proposed training program has to include the required core elements. We are going to review those core elements in a couple of minutes.

There are also some things specific to the application—i.e. the actual document that you are submitting to describe your training program. The application has to be complete. If anything is missing, your application will be rejected. It has to be in the proper format, including the font size and type; if not, your application will be rejected. It has to be submitted on time; if it is submitted at 4:30 and 1 second, it will be rejected. If it is a half-page too long, or $5 over the maximum amount, it also will be rejected.

You want to make sure that you have met all of these RFA requirements. There are a lot of them, so—throughout the presentation—I will try to give you the page numbers where you should look to make sure you have met them. There is a description of the overall requirements starting on pages 9 through 11. Also, new to this RFA is a responsiveness checklist. You actually will be able to go down the list and say: "Have I done this, this, and this?" If your answer is yes to all of those, you should be okay.

Slide 18

There are a number of sections in an application. The core of the application is the Research Narrative, so we are going to talk about this first; then, at the end, we are going to go back through and cover the other documents, like your budget and appendices, et cetera. The Research Narrative is where you describe your training program. You want to be able to provide a clear, compelling, detailed description of your training program that makes it very clear to your reviewers what you are doing and that what you are doing is important. What I did here on this slide was break down a few things you should do and the sections of your Research Narrative where you should do them.

The first this you need to do is establish the need for your training program. We have put out a general call for research training, but it is up to your team to identify gaps in the field of education research that your trainees would fill. Then you want to describe, very, very clearly how your training program is going to solve the problem you identified.

For example, if you feel that there is a need for people who can study English language learners, you would discuss why that was important and then how your training program was going to produce that type of researcher. Then, you would describe a specific plan and show the reviewers that you have the ability to implement it.

Slide 19

When you start writing your narrative, you want to know what it is that IES expects at the end. The first thing, of course, that we expect is that you would have implemented a training program and that you would have educated students. We also want there to be some takeaways upon which others can build. We want a clear description of the training program as you actually would implement it. Because we realize that over time grants, including training grants, often change, we want to know what actually was implemented. At the end of the grant, we are going to want to know the types of measures used to track progress, regardless of whether you were successful in discovering any recommendations for future programs.

Slide 20

Any questions before we move on to the Significance section? Okay.

Slide 21

The general purpose of the predoctoral training grant program is to the left of the slide. The most important part of the Significance section is identifying the need that your training program will address. Therefore, in your application, we want to know specifically what your training program is supposed to achieve. We want you to start by identifying a specific purpose.

Slide 22

After you identify the purpose, you are going to have to attend to another requirement—identifying the specific topic and the specific goal that your training program will address. This, too, is a new thing for the 2014 RFA. In past RFAs, we had applicants address the type of research IES funds, but we were not this specific. This year we require applicants to identify at least one topic from our main education research RFA and at least one goal. I have received a lot of questions about this over the phone; so, I hope the next few slides bring the purpose, topic, and goal together in a way that is easy for you to understand. To recap: you need a purpose, a topic, and a goal; together, these three elements are going to represent the focus of your training program.

Slide 23

Here is the list of goals and topics and you can pull them from the RFA after the webinar. When you are thinking about which goals and topics you want to identify, you should think about the type of researchers you are trying to produce and what type of research they are going to do, then think about the skills they need to fulfill that work. For example: What kind of background knowledge, research experience, and other professional skills will your fellows need?

Slide 24

Now there are some implications of the topic/goal requirements.

The first implication is that the topic/goal requirements are going to make it a bit harder for you to have more general programs where you are just going to train fellows in education research (as a broad content area). You are going to need to identify a specific content area that at least loosely overlaps what we are calling "topics." However, it can address more than one topic. You probably need to address an assortment of research methodologies, but you should focus on those that are required to conduct the studies and the goals you identified.

When I get calls from people, they ask if IES "wants" their type of research program. We really don't have a preference for which topic/goal combination you select. This is in many ways field initiated. In your application, you will let us know what you think the field needs, and then reviewers will make decisions based on whether they think your training program should be funded.

Slide 25

When you are deciding which goal and topic (or multiple goals and topics) your training program will be based on, you want to make sure that they allow your program to be interdisciplinary. This slide has the "caution" exclamation mark because this funding opportunity is for the Predoctoral *Interdisciplinary* Research Training program in the Education Sciences. Being interdisciplinary is a core element of our predoctoral training program.

If you go to the IES website and look under "predoctoral training programs" you can get an idea of the existing programs' interdisciplinary structures [http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/projects/program.asp?ProgID=16].

We expect that your training program would have at least two different disciplines represented. Again, this is very, very loosely defined. Being interdisciplinary could reflect a mix of colleges and schools— e.g., the college of education and the school of arts and sciences partnering. It could be specific departments within schools or colleges partnering. It could refer to programs, special institutes, policy centers, et cetera.

However, you really would need at least two "units" to grant degrees. I believe the RFA used the phrase "in traditional disciplines," and that scared a lot of people. I got a lot of calls asking whether specific disciplines would be considered a traditional discipline. All we need is a discipline that grants a doctorate. As long as you are able to get a doctorate from that discipline it would qualify.

On the fellow side, for a program to be considered interdisciplinary, fellows should come from at least two different degree-granting units. If all of the students were coming from the political science department, your program would not be interdisciplinary, even if the political science department, the economics department, and the school of education were partnered. Lastly, the students are expected to receive a doctorate from the department from which they came.

One question that I have received from a number of people is whether a college of education that has a number of departments within it, could be considered interdisciplinary. This has been responsive in the past, so it would be this time. However, you also would need to make a compelling case to the reviewers that these units/departments/majors within the college were different enough to be considered interdisciplinary.

Question: *"Many institutes don't grant Ph.D.s but support multiple academic programs. These cannot count as participating disciplines; is that correct?"*

Answer*: "That's a two-part question. When people have submitted applications in the past, we considered "institutes" as a different discipline if, in fact, the institute was different from the other units. In this configuration of participating units, two of them need to grant degrees. To recap: you can add as many institutes or programs that don't grant Ph.D.s on top of that, as long as you have the core disciplines that do grant doctorates. The reason why, of course, is because the fellows need to be able to receive doctorates as part of the training program."*

Slide 26

So far, I have covered the requirements for the interdisciplinary structure, topics, goals, and purpose of your proposed training programs. I added this slide to help you figure out how these things relate. If you think of this as a huge funnel, as an applicant, you are going to combine these elements into your training program focus—a cohesive description of what it is that your training program is supposed to do. I included three examples that I hope make this clearer.

Slide 27

All of these are example training programs that I just made up in my head, so we should not consider them to be gold-standards that you have to model your program after. You don't have to make a training program that looks like this. We expect that you will make training programs that address what you think the education research field needs.

However, I did put together these examples based on different questions that I have received over the past couple of weeks. One of the questions was about how narrow the training programs could be. Most of the training programs that we funded in the past have been quite broad in terms of the academic content and the methods that they covered. It would probably be safe to say that all of them addressed experiments and quasi-experiments, but there was a wide range in topical focus and research methodologies.

Here is a hypothetical training program focused on training researchers in the area of education technology. In this example, the training program would produce students that, at the end of their fellowship, might be able to design education technology to gain systems for improving workflow in schools, et cetera. They also might be able to run experiments to see whether these education technologies actually improve student outcomes. This technology could cover an assortment of different student outcomes. I just made up that this one is going to deal with reading and writing, math and science, social/behavioral outcomes, et cetera.

This hypothetical training program would address the need to have researchers that could conduct research on education technology. The topics the training program would cover are these topics that I pulled from the RFA. Education Technology is obvious, because this program is fundamentally about education technology. But we also would assume that these fellows would need to know something about cognition and the content areas in which they were going to be looking at outcomes. As for the IES goal structure, this hypothetical program wants fellows to gain the expertise by conducting research across all of the IES goals. For example, when fellows graduate they might want to be able to design assessments using education technology or be able to develop education technology interventions and/or evaluate them (or be able to conduct a longitudinal goal one-type study on education technology).

To train fellows to conduct research on Education Technology, my hypothetical training program would be drawing on the expertise of a number of different colleges on the campus—again, I made these up—the college of education, human computer interaction, computer science, psychology, and the school of design. I added the school of design because so much of education technology revolves around art. For the actual development of gaming and things like that, it would be helpful to have some sort of training in design. This is a program that has a very narrow topic but is pretty broad in terms of methods and participating units.

Slide 28

The second hypothetical focus is around serving students from populations that are growing. In this case, across the country, schools have issues with how to educate English learners, and I thought it would be interesting if we had a training program that specifically looked at training in that area. Again, here is something with a relatively narrow focus—which is research on English language learners. This hypothetical program would cross a number of topics that we have, all of the goals, and, again, could bring together an assortment of different departments and schools from across campus.

Slide 29

This last hypothetical program is probably closer to the existing training programs that we have, though still a little bit more narrow. I thought of one that really is just going to train fellows in education measurement. I have gotten a number of calls asking: “Can we have a more general program?”—yes. You could, in fact, come up with a research training program in the education sciences that feels much more like a program where the methods are the focus (rather than a research topic), regardless of whether it is about how to create education measures and assessments, or doing longitudinal studies. It could be one where you are really looking at experiments and quasi-experiments. We absolutely encourage people to submit programs like that ***but*** you still have to meet the requirements of the RFA. So you want to make sure that you still address at least one topic and at least one goal.

In this case, my fictional applicant says: “We want to look at education measurement across education, but we think that we really want to make our biggest impact in reading and writing and in math and science. We will probably also look at converting these to assessments that can be done on a computer, so we are also going to pull in cognition and education technology.” In this case, the focus is really the measurement goal, but people develop measures across all of the IES goals, so the applicant might also emphasize the role of measurement across the goal structure. Again, for this example, I have pulled together some possible departments for that focus.

Question: *“You mentioned that these hypothetical research foci are narrow and acceptable. What might be examples of foci which are too broad and not acceptable?”*

Answer: *“There is really nothing that is too broad, as long as you meet the topic and goal requirements. You could say, “I would like to develop a training program in education research that will train a generalist education researcher who is able to study any of these topics with any of these goals.” Your application would be responsive as long as when you submitted your application you wrote, “This is applicable to all topics and all goals.” The question arises, however, will the review panel think that it is actually possible for your training program to do that? To make sure your training program is* *responsive, you just need to have identified one topic and one goal at a minimum, however, you can identify as many topics and as many goals as you like. I would suggest that you don't make your program so broad that it feels like your students won't get any content expertise in any academic area."*

If you have any questions about whether your topic is responsive or even a good idea, feel free to e-mail me. I have had many conversations about these types of questions over the past couple of weeks.

We have some questions that have been coming in about participants, and I don't want you to think we are ignoring them. We are just going to have a discussion specifically about participants in a few minutes and are going to address these questions.

Slide 30

When thinking about putting together your training program, another really useful question to ask is: What type of skills and knowledge will your training program provide? If you look in the actual RFA, the Significance section actually starts with several questions that I have used as the headers of these slides. This is one of them. Think about what the fellows are going to bring to the table, what your training program will provide, and what the ultimate outcome of the training is supposed to be.

I am going to start at the end with the outcome: an employed education researcher. When I first did the draft of this I just had "education researcher," and I went back and added "employed" because, really, in this fiscal environment we don't want to prepare fellows that are going to come out on the market and then not be able to find jobs. You want to make sure your end product is going to be people with doctorates that are highly employable, meaning that they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities, and anything else that is required for them to be employed as an education researcher.

There has been a slight shift in emphasis between this RFA and previous ones. It seems that in previous years people thought that the only acceptable employer was a research university, and that is absolutely not true. We also think it would be a great result for our fellows to end up at research firms, either for profit or nonprofit, where they are conducting education research. We would love to see them working at state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) in research units. We have had some fellows go on to start companies where they developed education technology; that also would be a wonderful outcome. Ultimately what we want is for fellows to be able to utilize their skills and conduct education research in whatever setting they might be.

Now to get there, you are going to start with fellows that have an assortment of different backgrounds. The specific mix is going to depend on what type of training program you have put in place and what type of fellows you have allowed. We are going to talk about this in a few minutes, but this could be 2-year fellows, 3-year fellows, or 4-year fellows; because of that, fellows either could be coming straight out of undergraduate school or coming with master's degrees, or could be on campus already or transfer over.

Once you figure out (in general) who your fellows will be, you need to figure out what skills and knowledge they will lack. The nexus of what your training program is supposed to do is to fill the gaps and turn the promising, yet still raw, fellow that enters your program into someone who is a highly capable education researcher.

Question: *"In the example provided, it looks like the only doctoral degree granting college is education, does this qualify as interdisciplinary?"*

Answer: *"I am going back to the example slides, and I will just pick one."*

Slide 28

"I will just pick this example: "The School of Education."

Slide 29

"OK, I have picked this example where it says, "The College of Education." All of these other departments are in schools that also grant doctorates, so this would be considered interdisciplinary for this RFA.

I split out this example this way, because many past applications described their interdisciplinary programs. Oftentimes, there were a mix of colleges and universities. To recap, this example would be interdisciplinary because, remember, discipline is pretty loosely defined here. Again, if you have any questions about whether your proposed program would qualify, just e-mail me."

Slide 31

We are about 45 minutes in and have not gone through nearly enough slides. I am going to breeze through some. Feel free to submit your questions, but we might have to group them all at the end.

When you are structuring your research training program, the design can vary widely. These can be 2-, 3-, or 4-year training programs, or some combination. In the 18 existing programs that we have, they actually do differ. We have programs that accept students straight from undergraduate school. We have some where they train existing students from their campuses. Then, there are some training programs that combine these models.

What makes this RFA different from previous years is that there is no longer the option of a 5-year IES-funded fellowship. For those of you who want to fund 5-year fellowships, we should have a chat about how that might be possible. Through the IES funds you can only fund up to 4 fellowship years per student. When deciding how long your fellowship should be, you really need to think about how much time the students will need to receive the training to do the work that you think they should be doing.

There are some other restrictions; we have the huge “responsiveness” exclamation mark on this page because there is a cap on the overall number of fellowship years that your training grant can fund: 68. That means that you can have various combinations of fellows (2-year, 4-year, etc.). If you are planning to have 4-year fellowships, this means there would be a maximum of 17 fellows in your program. If you have 3-year fellowships, that would mean a maximum of 22 fellows.

To recap: 68 fellowship years total and the maximum length of a fellowship is 4-years. We also have a minimum of fellows. Your program must support at least 15 fellows that receive 2 years of training. There is no such thing as a 1-year fellowship and no such thing as a 5-year fellowship.

Slide 32

You will see in the RFA that the requirements to being responsive to the Significance section are slightly different for those of you who are trying to renew your programs and those who are fresh applicants. Everyone has to describe how the focus of your training program is a combination of at least one topic and one goal, and how the fellows that come out of your program are going to contribute to the field of education research. Those of you who already have received funding also must talk about how well the fellows from your training program have done.

Question: *“How would new applicant institutions provide a competitive description of the employability of their proposed program when the history of employability has not been established?”*

Answer: *“New applicants are not required to, because that is something that we would only expect from the renewal applicants. For new applicants, establishing “employability” could include making a compelling argument that there is a need in the education research community for the type of fellow that you are going to train.”*

Slide 33

Here are some questions that have come in before this webinar. You have the slides, so I won't go through them word by word.

Question: "*Can you have a 5-year training program?"*

Answer: "*Not if we're paying for it, but if you cost-share the fifth year, yes."*

Question: *"Would IES be interested in the training program you are thinking of?"*

Answer: *"We think that you should put together a training program that reflects the strength of your institution, and it does not have to—in any way, shape, or form—resemble an existing training program or any of the examples that I have put up; it just needs to be responsive and you need to be able to convince that panel that it is worth doing."*

This last question is critically important. We have had a number of calls asking about qualitative research. You could certainly submit a qualitative research program and you would not be screened out as non-responsive, but when the reviewers look at your application, it is going to be very hard for you to make an argument that your qualitative research program actually would train people that could do research in any one of the IES goals. However, a mixed-methods proposal would be very appropriate. In most, if not all, of the training programs we have, in fact, components that are related to qualitative methods.

Slide 34

We are going to get to the research training plan, and I am going to try and move a little bit quicker, but still ask questions and we will break when we can.

Slide 35

In the Significance section you describe why your training program is important and you provide enough information to determine that it is responsive to the RFA. In the research training plan you are getting down to the nitty-gritty. These are the five things that you have to address, and we are going to go through them one by one.

Slide 36

The first one is recruitment. You are going to need to describe in your narrative how you are going to recruit the fellows and, just as important, the types of fellows that you wish to recruit. This is really going to be determined by your training plan. Are you going to be recruiting undergraduates, students that are on campus, graduates of master's programs, et cetera? Then you want to be very clear about how you are going to recruit members of groups underrepresented in doctoral programs.

***Question:** "For recruitment, what groups does IES consider untraditional students?"*

***Answer:** "We actually mean underrepresented, and it is defined in the RFA. This requirement always has been in the RFA, but people did not take it as seriously as we liked, so we are making it clearer that this is something that has to be addressed. We have defined it as American Indian, Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and persons with disabilities. So, again, you have to make it clear in your plan how you are going to reach out to these types of students. With this being a cooperative agreement, this is an area, which if you were funded and we still weren't happy with your plan, IES might intervene."*

The next thing is really important; you have to make your selection criteria clear. How will you decide what types of fellows you will consider?

Slide 37

You want to keep in mind the timing of the recruitment. Even though this is a 5-year grant, there is a 4-year fellowship maximum. We did this on purpose because there is no expectation that you actually would have any fellows the first year of the grant. We are giving you that time to recruit and the budget should reflect that. There are some people who might be ready to hit the ground running, so you should make that argument in the application. For most of you, we believe that the 2015-2016 year is when your actual program is going to start.

***Question:** "Do all funded fellow years need to be delivering formal training, i.e., coursework, or can the final year be a dissertation year?"*

***Answer:** "Yes, the final year can be a dissertation year, but we would assume that those fellows still would be part of other required activities for your program, like attendance at seminars and things like that."*

Slide 38

There are also requirements for fellows. When you are recruiting fellows, you should know that fellows have to meet <u>all</u> of these requirements. They have to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents; they have to be enrolled full time every term that they receive funding; and they actually must be conducting research that is relevant to practical issues in U.S. education. We do check, by the way, to make sure that that is consistently done.

Like all researchers that receive funding from IES, the fellows need to make their research publically available; that is done through Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and is detailed in the RFA. We have an annual fellow survey, and there is an expectation that fellows respond to that survey as well.

Slide 39

We want to make sure that every fellow fully understands what their offer is; so we are asking that programs provide a sample letter of agreement that outlines all of the terms of the fellowship. When you start having your first fellows, the fellow and the PIs would be expected to sign this letter of agreement. Right now we just want a sample copy of it. It is going to be put into Appendix B.

Slide 40

What do the fellows receive? The amount of IES funding that they can receive is $42,500 per year. It includes up to $30,000 for the stipend; up to $10,500 for tuition, health insurance, and normal fees; and up to $2,000 per year for research, travel, and conferences. That is it, $42,500, and no more from IES. Again, the fellows must be enrolled full time. For existing programs, that last line “research, travel, and conference attendance” might represent the significant cut.

Slide 41

Question: *“Can you offer more?”*

Answer: *“Absolutely, but it has to be funds that come from your university and added to the $42,500. We consider this cost-sharing, so you would need to discuss it that way. You can also offer less, if you would like, and that actually has happened by the way. People have offered less.”*

Slide 42

That was the section that has to do with fellows.

Now we are moving on to the training program activities itself. This is where you are going to describe what is actually going to happen during the training grant. My triangle here represents the parts of the training program and how we think they build upon each other.

Slide 43

We believe that all of these things will help fellows build a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are detailed in the RFA. I am not going to cover them now. As you are describing your research training plan you want to make sure you talk about methods, what type of research experience the fellows are going to gain, how they are going to learn to be good communicators, et cetera.

Slide 44

Now people often forget the core part of the training that comes from the fellows' home department. Let's go back for a minute.

Slide 42

The foundation for the training program is really going to be the doctorate that students are receiving from their home department.

Slide 44

When you put together your training program, you want to make it clear that this is something that is building on the requirements that the fellows have anyway.

What is the value-added that your training provides? You are not just supposed to be duplicating something that the university does already. You also want to make sure your plan accommodates obligations and the rhythms of the participating departments. We have had situations in the past where there are some departments that are very hard to recruit from because the training program classes met at times when the home department held their required courses—so fellows couldn't attend. So, you want to make sure that you have accommodated these things.

Slide 45

Once you know what the core academic department is contributing, you want to see what the coordinating curriculum of the training program can add to that. The coordinating curriculum is going to be the primary means in which your training program delivers subject matter expertise and expertise in different methodological areas. Again, this coordinated curriculum should be interdisciplinary. It should specify the courses that are going to be taken from the training program—these are training-program-specific courses, as well as courses that they could take from their home disciplines that fulfill the same requirements. Lastly, the coordinated curriculum needs to be able to prepare fellows to carry out research in your training program's area of focus. You are going to write about this in the narrative, but it is perfectly acceptable and quite helpful if you put a table in the back that explains these things.

Question: *"Can training institutions include non-degree granting institutes outside of the prime that is external to the research university?"*

Answer: *"We are going to talk about this a little later as partnerships, but, yes, it is possible for your training program to include a partner that is not at the university."*

Slide 46

We have home *and* department requirements. We have talked about the coordinated curriculum, which is, of course, the coursework. Now we want to make sure our fellows actually have opportunities to conduct research, as well as opportunities to work with practitioners and policymakers. The research requirement has been central to the training program since the very beginning. That is the purpose of the training program—to train fellows to conduct research—so there has to be opportunities for them to do so. The requirement that fellows also learn how to collaborate with practitioners and policymakers is new. There are, indeed, *two separate requirements*. It is possible that in practice you would be able to combine those two things; for example, partnering with a school district to do research would fulfill these requirements.

Slide 47

When you are describing what these research opportunities and requirements are, the more information you provide the better. You want to be able to say: "A fellow in my training program is required to do this type of research for this amount of time." No vague descriptions like "They'll be in an apprenticeship," with no discussion of what that actually means.

You also want to supply a good deal of information about the types of research projects that will be available to them. This might be research grants held by participating faculty. If you have partnerships with outside resource organizations that will allow your fellows to come work with them, that might be an example. Then you want to make explicit links between these different research activities and how your fellows will develop into independent researchers. It is also helpful if you describe specific opportunities for fellows to do independent research or to collaborate with other fellows.

Slide 48

You want to make sure you describe the specific research project that fellows are going to have access to, what they are about, the topic of the grant (reading or writing, math, science, et cetera) and what types of research methods would be used. This is a lot of information to cram into a narrative, so putting this into a table in your response that summarizes this information would be excellent.

Slide 49

You also are going to have to describe the opportunities for collaboration with policymakers and practitioners. This is a new requirement. Several existing training programs already do this, but it was not required when they were awarded.

We want the fellows to have an opportunity to have some sort of apprenticeship or practical experience with practitioners or policymakers. This could be done directly with a district or state education agency. It also could be through a consortium that works directly with these groups—a regional educational laboratory (REL) or something like that—as long as it is clear that they are going to be able to work directly with schools or policymakers. In the application you are going to have to really describe what this partnership relationship is and what type of opportunities it is going to provide the fellow. If this overlaps the research requirements, you want to show us how these two elements work together. You must provide a letter in Appendix C from your partner that clearly shows they agreed to do this.

Slide 50

We have discussed the core of the training experience, but we also know there are other things needed to really make well-rounded researchers. We would like for there to be an ongoing lecture proseminar series—weekly, every 2 weeks, once a month, whatever you guys think is appropriate—that addresses research topics or other professional development topics, or it could be a forum to allow fellows to present their own work, et cetera. That requirement is described on page 16.

You can include other activities, if appropriate—activities around grant-writing, public speaking, human subjects clearance, whatever you think that the fellows would need to be fully functioning independent researchers at the end of the grant. You want to be able to specify how these particular activities would develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you said your training program is supposed to provide. Then you also need to describe how you are going to monitor whether these things are doing any good.

Slide 51

At the end of their fellowships, we expect that every fellow would receive an Education Sciences certificate. This is a credential that represents or reflects the work that fellows did in the training program. At a minimum, in the application, you want to describe the requirements for receiving the certificate and how you are going to go about establishing the certificate. Programs that are already in existence should have a certificate and they should describe that. If your existing program doesn't already have one, you should describe why not.

Some programs restrict the certificate to just fellows, but others have allowed other students to receive the certificate if they did the same work but without the fellowship money. For example, campuses that wanted students who were not U.S. citizens to participate would allow the students to take the coursework, come to the lectures, et cetera, and still receive the certificate. Other programs made the certificate an academic minor concentration; so it was possible for non-fellows to take the required courses and receive the minor.

Slide 52

We think it is really important that you track the fellows' progress; in the application you need to describe how you are going to do that. This could be annually, biannually, et cetera; at a minimum, you need to assess fellows' progress enough to know whether you are going to give them their money for the next year.

Slide 53

Question: *"Does IES expect there to be an independent evaluation of the program?"*

Answer: *"Not independent, but we do expect for there to be an evaluation. In this PowerPoint presentation you have a description of the types of measures that you might include."*

Slide 54

When you are trying to figure out whether your proposed training plan is responsive to the RFA, you want to make sure that you actually have a recruitment plan and that you have a clear description of the training activities.

Slide 55

You are going to need information about the fellows, as well as your plan to track an individual fellow's progress and the success of the training program.

Slide 56

We have about 15 minutes. We still have a lot of slides, so I am going to hit the ones I think are most important and leave out the ones I think are self-explanatory. We have covered the first two sections of the application and now we are going to move on to the Personnel and Resources sections.

Slide 57

In the application, Personnel is the section where you describe the people that are going to run the training program, and make it clear that they have the skills to do so. You are going to identify all the key personnel (that includes the PI, the co-PI, and all of the core faculty), describe what they are supposed to be doing with their time commitment, and their expertise.

Slide 58

When you do this, you want to make sure that you are describing the fact that the personnel have the ability to do the work and that they have made the commitment. Your training program is going to include a lot of people, so there are going to be a lot of people to discuss in the narrative. When you start discussing their actual research projects, that information can be put into the Appendix.

Slide 59

When you are describing your resources, you want to talk about what is available to fellows on campus—as a whole from the participating departments, schools, colleges, institutes, et cetera, and in particular the resources that they are going to have to conduct research and collaborate with practitioners and policymakers—not just your institutional resources. If you have a partner, you should discuss that institution's resources as well and include their letters of agreement.

Slide 60

To be responsive in this section you need to discuss the key personnel and how their expertise supports the training program. Then, you need to have the letters of agreement from everyone that will be involved.

Slide 61

This is where you also want to start thinking about the money. You are not actually discussing the budget under Resources or under Personnel or training program, but you need to keep the budget in mind as you are designing the program. There is a $1.11 million total cap for program costs. Earlier we discussed fellow costs; these are program costs. Program costs include indirect costs; that is really important. This is where you would put in

- travel to the annual PI meeting that is required for the PI or proxy;
- the 2-month salary per year for the PI, if you have a co-PI it can be split but it can only be 2 months;
- the program coordinator's salary, this can vary but 6 months per year is typical;
- curriculum development; and
- half the salary for a new faculty member.

You may decide that you can’t afford all of these things with $1.11 million; in this case, your university would have to decide what to include. You have to have a PI, and the PI has to come to the meeting.

Slide 62

Funds also can be for these things: visiting faculty, guest speakers, workshops, and recruitment. The tracking of the fellows’ progress and program assessment are also required. There is the expectation that there will be some sort of program website as well.

Slide 63

You cannot use the funds for faculty research, salaries that weren’t listed, or any sort of construction in any way. As many of you are well-aware, because you have grants with us already, there has been a real crackdown on meal costs. You should assume that food should not be included, unless it is an allowable travel cost. If you have questions about other things that you want to include in your budget related to food, please contact us first so we can tell you whether it is allowed.

Slide 64

We have 10 minutes to go through the rest of things. In addition to your narrative there are other application components.

Slide 65

We are going to go through them quickly, one by one.

Slide 66

Appendix A is required; this is where you are going to describe the current education research project that faculty and the PI are doing. This speaks to their ability to be trainers. You can include any figures, charts, or tables that would be helpful.

In places in the presentation where I said, “This might be a good table,” these are the types of things that you could put there. If you have a current grant, you are going to need to include the summary table that describes what has taken place so far. Page 12 of the RFA details those components.

Slide 67

Appendix B is simply the sample letter of agreement, and it is limited to two pages. Here, we just want everybody to be on the same page regarding what is required and what the fellows are going to receive. Again, there are details about that in the RFA.

Slide 68

Appendix C contains your other letters of agreement. One should be from the university saying, "We would love to have this training program and we agree to grant the Education Sciences certificate." Then you want a letter from each of the participating units describing what they are bringing to the table. Then, if you have any outside partners, they need to submit a letter too.

Slide 69

You may need a bibliography. If you cite anything, please include that in the bibliography.

Slide 70

You also are going to need to include a budget and budget narrative. This is usually described in the *Application Submission Guide* but, we had a lot of questions about this, so I wanted to cover it here.

This is a summary of all that has been said before. The maximum grant is $4 million over 5 years. That includes the direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs are part of the program costs and they are limited to 8 percent of allowed costs. There are descriptions of that on page 20 of the RFA. If you have any questions at all, just e-mail us and we can help walk you through that. For the direct support to fellows, there is a maximum of $2.89 million, and that is for up to 68 fellow years.

Slide 71

Question: *"We can't figure out on which line to put things."*

Answer: *"When you go to submit your applications, there is going to be a budget form, the SF424, and there are different sections. If you look to the second column on your screen where it says, "E, H, A" et cetera, those refer to different sections of the budget form. We are just showing you where those costs should go as an example. Not everyone will have all of these things but, if you do, this is a clue to where they go."*

Again, if you have any questions, you can contact me and we will help you.

Slide 72

The nitty-gritty of submitting an application is here. You really should attend the application submission webinar where they will spend an hour-and-a-half discussing this. This is my 30-second version of it.

Slide 73

The applications are due September 4th at 4:30 p.m. and zero seconds, as determined by the grants.gov clock. If your application has not been fully uploaded by 4:30 p.m. and zero seconds, it will be rejected without review. You want to make sure that you submit your application as early as possible, so that if there is an error you will have enough time to correct it.

Letters of intent are due June 6th. They are optional and nonbinding, but please submit them anyway so that I can give you feedback on your ideas. The other thing is the application posting date; you can start applying on June 6th, and then the actual start dates of the grants are next year, between July and September.

Slide 74

To get started you need three things: the RFA, which I am pretty sure all of you have—that is the request for application, 84.305B; a submission guide, which I think should be up on June 6th; and then the application package.

Slide 75

If you don’t have the RFA, you can find it online at the address (on the slide) or just going to ies.ed.gov/funding and following the links.

Slide 76

To find the application package you have to go to grants.gov. It is a little bit harder than you think to locate the RFAs, but these directions (on the slides) will work.

Slide 77

You will see a picture like this (on the slide). Then you go to the left where it says, “Find Grant Opportunities,” and click on it; then type in “84.305.” You will get a list for RFAs, one of which will be this RFA.

Slide 78

When you are submitting, please keep track of the page restrictions. We have increased the size of the training program narrative from 15 pages to 20 pages because we have asked for more information.

Slide 79

We are here to help, so feel free to contact us. It is easier if you send an e-mail—the more thorough the better—and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We can review outlines, drafts, et cetera.

Slide 80

If you are going to send me a draft, I need it at least 30 days before it is due, and I need to know it is coming. So, send me an e-mail well in advance saying that you are going to send me a grant application. You want to make sure to read the RFA very carefully and look at all of the requirements. If you go back and look at the PowerPoint, I have tried to add the huge exclamation point to things that I think will cause you trouble and to things to which you should pay particular attention. Again, you really should attend the application process webinar so that you can understand the technical things needed for submitting—literally “How do I upload form A, B, C, et cetera, as part of my submission?”

Slide 81

Here are a few final tips. Reviewers should not have to guess about what you are trying to do.

Slide 82

What happens next?

Slide 83

Once you have submitted, your application will be reviewed a couple of times. The first quick read is actually by a contractor and that is to make sure it is compliant—is it on time and are all the sections there? Then it is going to be reviewed for responsiveness. Again, in the RFA we have a “responsiveness checklist” and you want to make sure you have done all of those things. If you have, then this will go on to be reviewed by peer reviewers. Two or three panel members are going to do this primary review; then the applications that receive the most competitive ones will go on to a full panel review. Please do not have your otherwise wonderful proposal not be reviewed because it was late or was somehow non-responsive.

Slide 84

Eventually, you will receive an e-mail notification—this will probably be 8 months after you apply—telling you whether you have received the grant and giving you reviewer summary statements. We do anticipate having this competition again next year, though nothing is ever guaranteed. If you don't get the grant the first time, please do consider resubmitting.

Slide 85

We are at the very end, and we are going to have to cut things short.

Slide 86

If you have questions, feel free to e-mail me, at katina.stapleton@ed.gov. You also can call me, but it is better if you e-mail me first. If you have questions about either of the other two training programs being competed, please contact Dr. Larson (meredith.larson@ed.gov).

Thank you everyone for coming today. Again, we look forward to receiving all of your applications. Feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions. Take care.