ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

Request for Applications

Research Training Programs in Special Education
CFDA Number: 84.324B

Letter of Intent Due:	July 11, 2019	iesreview.ed.gov
Application Package Available:	July 11, 2019	Grants.gov
Application Due:	**No later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time August 29, 2019**	Grants.gov
Possible Grant Start Dates:	July 1-September 1, 2020	

Released: June 20, 2019

IES 2019   **U.S. Department of Education**

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Part I: Overview and General Requirements

A. Introduction

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides scientific evidence to improve education practice and policy and shares that evidence in a way that can be used by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. Within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) sponsors research (1) to expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities in order to improve the developmental, educational, and transitional results of such individuals; and (2) to improve services provided under, and support the implementation of, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

1. Research Training Programs in Special Education (CFDA 84.324B)

In this Request for Applications (RFA), IES invites applications for the Research Training Programs in Special Education (Training) (CFDA 84.324B). For FY 2020, IES is accepting applications under three programs: (1) Postdoctoral Research Training in Special Education and Early Intervention (Postdoctoral Training), (2) Early Career Development and Mentoring (Early Career), and (3) Methods Training Using Single-Case Designs (Single-Case Methods Training).

IES training programs prepare individuals to conduct special education and early intervention research that advances knowledge within the field and addresses issues important to education policymakers and practitioners. The Postdoctoral Training and Early Career programs seek to build the next generation of special education and early intervention researchers. The Single-Case Methods Training program supports advanced methodological training in the single-case research designs often used to conduct rigorous research in special education and early intervention.

IES will consider only applications that are responsive and compliant to the requirements described in this RFA and the online IES Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) *and* submitted electronically via Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov) on time.

- Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training awards will be made as cooperative agreements in order to support involvement by IES in the planning and implementation of the training program and coordination across programs. Early Career awards will be made as grants.

- Separate funding announcements are available on the IES website (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/) that pertain to other discretionary grant competitions funded through the National Center for Special Education Research (https://ies.ed.gov/ncser) and the National Center for Education Research (https://ies.ed.gov/ncer). An overview of IES research grant programs is available at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/overview.asp.

2. RFA Organization

This RFA is organized as follows. Part I sets out the general requirements for your grant application. Part II provides further detail on the specific requirements of each program. Part III provides information on the appendices and other narrative content. Part IV describes the competition regulations and review criteria. Part V provides a checklist that you can use to ensure you have included all required application elements to advance to scientific peer review. A glossary of important terms is located at the end of this RFA.

3. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES provides technical assistance to applicants that addresses the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition and methodological and other substantive issues concerning research and training. IES Program Officers work with applicants through a variety of formats up until the time of Grants.gov

submission. If you submit a Letter of Intent at https://iesreview.ed.gov/, the Program Officer will contact you regarding your proposed project. IES also provides Funding Opportunities Webinars (live and on demand at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp) that include advice on choosing the correct competition, grant writing, and submitting your application.

B. General and Applicant Requirements

1. Programs

Your application must be directed to one of the three training programs listed below and described in Part II.

- The Postdoctoral Training program funds programs to prepare researchers with a doctoral degree to conduct high-quality, independent special education or early intervention research that advances knowledge within the field and addresses issues important to education leaders and practitioners.

- The Early Career program provides support for an integrated research and career development plan for investigators in the early stages of their academic careers who have established an interest in special education research, with the ultimate aim of launching independent research careers focused on infants, toddlers, children, and youth with or at risk for disabilities. The award will provide support for research (including salary for protected time to conduct research) and career development that includes training under the guidance of an experienced mentor or mentors.

- The Single-Case Methods Training program funds a program to help current education researchers maintain and enhance their research and data analysis skills related to single-case designs for use in research focused on children with or at risk for disabilities.

2. The Principal Investigator and Authorized Organization Representative

The Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator/Training Director (PI) is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research and/or training, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports.[1] Your institution is responsible for identifying the PI on a grant application.

- For the Early Career program, the early career researcher should be the sole PI. No other PIs or Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) may be identified.

- For the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training programs, your institution may elect to designate more than one person to serve as PI. In so doing, your institution identifies these PIs as sharing the authority and responsibility for directing the training project intellectually and logistically. All PIs will be listed on any grant award notification. However, institutions applying for funding must designate a single point of contact for the project. The role of this person is primarily for communication purposes on the scientific and related budgetary aspects of the project and should be listed as the PI. All other PIs should be listed as Co-PIs.

The Authorized Organization Representative

The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the applicant institution is the official who has the authority to legally commit the applicant to (1) accept federal funding and (2) execute the proposed project. When your application is submitted through Grants.gov, the AOR automatically signs the cover

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[1] IES uses the uniform format for reporting performance progress on federally-funded research projects, the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rppr/) for these reports.

sheet of the application and in doing so, assures compliance with IES policy on public access to scientific publications and data as well as other policies and regulations governing research awards (see Part IV).

C. Award Limits

Applications to the Research Training Programs in Special Education must conform to the following limits on award duration and cost for the specific training program.

Program	Maximum Duration	Maximum Cost
Postdoctoral Training	5 years	$766,000
Early Career	4 years	$500,000
Single-Case Methods Training	3 years	$700,000

D. Changes in the FY 2020 Request for Applications

All applicants and staff involved in proposal preparation and submission, whether submitting a new or revised application, should carefully read all relevant parts of this RFA. Major changes to the Research Training Programs in Special Education (CFDA 84.324B) competition in FY 2020 are listed below and described fully in relevant sections of the RFA.

All Training Programs

- In FY 2020, IES is competing the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training programs in addition to the Early Career program.

- IES created a separate application submission guide that provides information about required electronic submission of applications through Grants.gov and an overview of the general IES funding process. Please see the IES Application Submission Guide at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf for important information about submitting your application on time through Grants.gov.

- IES has changed its nomenclature for what used to be known as Research Goals. They are now called Project Types and are no longer numbered.

- To encourage rigorous education research that is transparent, actionable, and focused on consequential outcomes, all applications are expected to address the IES-wide Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER), as applicable. These principles include pre-registering studies; focusing on outcomes meaningful to student success; documenting intervention implementation to inform use in other settings; identifying core components; analyzing costs; facilitating generalization of study findings; making research findings, methods, and data available to others; and conducting research in a way that informs the future scaling of interventions. Expectations regarding SEER for each of the training programs are described in Part II.

Postdoctoral Training Program

- Language was revised to expand the types of knowledge and skills that postdoctoral fellows are expected to master. Specifically, in addition to research and professional skills IES recommends that Postdoctoral Training programs train fellows to obtain skills related to the SEER standards as well as leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

- Language was revised to emphasize that Postdoctoral Training programs should be designed to provide fellows with meaningful opportunities to make industry connections and explore careers outside of academia, if applicable.

Eary Career Program

- IES has made several major changes to the FY 2020 Special Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.324A) competition that are relevant for applications to the Early Career program. These changes are listed below and described in more detail in the 84.324A RFA.

    - IES will not accept Replication project applications for the Special Education Research Grants program (84.324A) competition in FY 2020 as it is initiating a more targeted strategy for supporting replication - a research competition focused on systematic replications ([84.324R](#)). As such, Replication projects are not described under the FY 2020 84.324A RFA, but can still be conducted as part of an Early Career project. For guidance on what to include in a Replication project application, please see the [last year's 84.324A RFA.](#)

    - IES has added a requirement for a [cost analysis](#) plan to Measurement projects to provide helpful information to schools, districts, and states on the cost of administering the assessment. Early Career measurement projects are not required to specify a cost analysis plan; however, it could strengthen the application if included.

    - IES seeks to increase its investment in postsecondary research for students with disabilities in the following topics: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education, Technology for Special Education, , Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities, and Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities. NCSER now supports research in postsecondary settings for researchers interested in exploring, developing, or evaluating programs, practices, and policies for postsecondary students with disabilities. In addition, you may now follow students from secondary to postsecondary settings to examine education outcomes in postsecondary settings. If you propose an Early Career project under one of these topics, you may conduct research in postsecondary settings or follow students from secondary to postsecondary settings.

- Appendix A: Dissemination Plan will now be considered by the scientific peer reviewers as part of their review of the Personnel section, in addition to the Significance and Resources sections of your Training Program Narrative. Reviewers will consider team members' qualifications for disseminating research findings to a range of audiences as part of their review of the Personnel section of the Training Program Narrative.

Single-Case Methods Training Program

- Beginning in FY 2020, applications to the Single-Case Methods Training program must include a Dissemination Plan in Appendix A and a Summary of Research and Training Grants in Appendix C. This is in addition to the other required appendices.

- Appendix A: Dissemination Plan will now be considered by the scientific peer reviewers as part of their review of the Personnel section, in addition to the Significance and Resources sections of your Training Program Narrative. Reviewers will consider team members' qualifications for disseminating training materials to a range of audiences as part of their review of the Personnel section of the Training Program Narrative.

E. Getting Started

In order to submit a compliant, responsive, and timely application, you will need to review two documents:

1. This RFA to learn how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements.

2. The IES Application Submission Guide[2] (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure your application is complete and received without errors on time through Grants.gov.

We strongly recommend that both the Principal Investigator (PI) and the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) read both of these documents, whether submitting a new or revised application.

Only compliant and responsive applications received before the date and time deadline are peer reviewed for scientific merit. The PI and the AOR should work together to ensure that the application meets these criteria.

- **On-time Submission** (see the separate IES Application Submission Guide at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf)
    - o Received and validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 29, 2019.
- **Compliance**
    - o Includes **required Training Program Narrative** (see Part II).
    - o Includes all **required Appendices** (see Part III).
        - Appendix A (Early Career and Single-Case Methods Training Applications)
        - Appendix B (Resubmissions Only)
        - Appendix C (All Applications)
        - Appendix D (Postdoctoral Training and Early Career Applications)
        - Appendix E (All Applications)
- **Responsiveness** (see Part II)
    - o Meets general **Program requirements.**
    - o Meets **Training Program Narrative requirements**.

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[2] Please note that the IES Application Submission Guide includes application submission information that used to be included in the Request for Applications, but has now been pulled out as a separate document.

Part II: Program Requirements

A. Applying to a Training Program

For the FY 2020 Research Training Programs, you must submit to one of the three programs described in this section. The programs differ by eligible applicants, individuals being trained, the training to be provided, and the outcomes expected. You must identify your chosen program on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance form (Item 4b) of the Application Package (see the IES Application Submission Guide), or IES may reject your application as nonresponsive to the requirements of this RFA.

The following pages describe the purpose of each training program as well as the Requirements and Recommendations for a Strong Application.

- The requirements for each program are the minimum necessary for an application to be sent forward for peer review. **Your application must meet all requirements listed for the program you select in order for it to be considered responsive and sent forward for peer review.**

- In order to improve the quality of your application and its peer review, IES offers Recommendations for Strong Applications. **IES strongly encourages you to incorporate the recommendations into your Training Program Narrative.**

In addition, each program name is linked to a page on the IES website where you can find more information about the program and view abstracts of previously funded projects.

IES strongly encourages you to contact the Program Officer listed under each program if you have questions regarding the appropriateness of a project for submission under a specific program.

All applications for the FY 2020 Research Training Programs are expected to address the new IES-wide Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER). Expectations regarding SEER for each of the training programs are detailed below.

1. Postdoctoral Research Training in Special Education and Early Intervention

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. (202-245-6716; Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The [Postdoctoral Research Training in Special Education and Early Intervention](#) (Postdoctoral Training) program supports training programs that prepare education researchers to conduct high-quality special education and early intervention research that advances knowledge within the field and addresses issues important to education policymakers and practitioners.

Postdoctoral Training programs are intended to support the training of fellows who have high potential but may need more research experience and mentoring before launching their careers. IES encourages recruitment of fellows from groups underrepresented in education research (for example, racial/ethnic minorities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, veterans, and individuals with disabilities).[3]

Upon completion of the award, all grantees under the Postdoctoral Training program will provide the following:

- A description of the training program as realized over the course of the grant including descriptions of all key components presented in the original application, such as research projects, professional development opportunities, and methodological workshops;

- A description of the fellows accepted to the program, identification of completers and non-completers, and a listing of their research products, including presentations, publications, and other work, such as web-based tools, mobile apps, or patents;

- A description of the measures used to track the progress of fellows through the training program as well as data demonstrating the program's success in recruiting, training, and placing fellows in jobs following their program participation;

- A determination of the program's success in preparing fellows with the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out the type of research described in the original application;

- An analysis of the cost per fellow, including recruitment efforts, by training year; and

- Recommendations for future Postdoctoral Training Program projects.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the Postdoctoral Training program **must** meet the requirements for the **(1) Training Program Focus, (2) Eligible Applicants, (3) Key Personnel, and (4) Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices** in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

(1) Training Program Focus

- The training program **must** focus on special education or early intervention research similar to what is funded through the Special Education Research Grants Program (84.324A).

(2) Eligible Applicants

- The applicant **must** be an academic institution located in the United States and its territories that confers doctoral degrees in fields relevant to special education or early intervention.

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[3] Please note that IES **does not directly fund individuals** seeking postdoctoral support through 84.324B. Individuals seeking such support are encouraged to contact the directors of current IES training programs (https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/program.asp?ProgID=57).

- The applying academic institution may hold more than one Postdoctoral Training award from IES and may submit more than one Postdoctoral Training application as long as each funded or proposed training program has **a different focus and no overlap of key personnel** (PI, Co-PI, and other mentors).

- The applicant may partner with another institution that will provide fellows with research opportunities aligned with the training program focus.

(3) Key Personnel

- The PI, Co-PI (if there is one), and all other mentors are considered key personnel and **must** be named and listed as key personnel in the application.

  o Mentors are key personnel (the PI, any Co-PIs, and other mentors) who are also PIs and Co-PIs on the research projects on which fellows will work. Mentors will work with and supervise the fellows.

  o Co-PIs and other mentors can be from nonacademic settings, including companies or institutions, like nonprofit and for-profit organizations, public and private agencies, with a focus on special education or early intervention research.

- All key personnel **must** be working on at least one special education or early intervention research project currently supported by IES or another funding source. These projects should be appropriate for postdoctoral-level research training, and all projects, combined, **must** provide training opportunities for fellows for at least the first 2 years of the training grant.

- Key personnel can take part in **only one IES-funded postdoctoral training grant at a time**, regardless of whether that Postdoctoral Training grant is funded by the National Center for Special Education Research (under CFDA 84.324B) or the National Center for Education Research (under CFDA 84.305B).

  o Key personnel on ongoing IES-funded Postdoctoral Training grants **may not apply** for another Postdoctoral Training grant nor be included on an application as key personnel for a Postdoctoral Training grant with a start date before the end of their current award. For example, if a PI has a FY 2016 Postdoctoral Training grant with an end date of July 30, 2020 and wishes to submit a proposal for a FY 2020 Postdoctoral Training grant, the new grant must have a start date between August 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020.

(4) Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices

The Training Program Narrative (recommended length: no more than 20 pages) for a Postdoctoral Training application **must** include four sections – Significance, Research Training Plan, Personnel, and Resources – and meet the requirements for each section in order to be responsive and sent forward for scientific peer review.

a. **Significance** – The purpose of this section is to describe the focus of your training program and how it will develop researchers capable of conducting and communicating high-quality scientific research that addresses issues important to education policymakers and practitioners.

   Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Postdoctoral Training program **must** describe:

   (i) The focus of the training program. You must identify which of the following topics and project types listed in the table below will be the focus of your program. Your focus may include more than one topic and more than one project type.

Research Topics	Project Types
1. Autism Spectrum Disorders	1. Exploration
2. Cognition and Student Learning in Special Education	2. Development and Innovation
3. Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education	3. Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up
4. Families of Children with Disabilities	4. Replication
5. Professional Development for Educators and School-Based Service Providers	5. Measurement
6. Reading, Writing, and Language Development	
7. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education	
8. Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning	
9. Special Education Policy, Finance, and Systems	
10. Technology for Special Education	
11. Transition Outcomes for Secondary Students with Disabilities	
12. Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Students with Disabilities	
13. English Learners with Disabilities	
14. Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities	

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

Training Program Focus and Framework:

- Describe the focus of your training program and the need for researchers prepared to do research within that focus.

- Demonstrate how your training program's focus aligns with the Special Education Research Grants program (84.324A).

- Avoid an overly broad focus that includes too many topics or project types.

- Describe how your training program will provide opportunities for fellows to work in partnership with education policymakers and practitioners in designing, conducting, and communicating research.

- If applicable, describe how your training program will provide opportunities for fellows to make industry connections and explore careers outside of academia.

- Discuss what distinguishes your program from other postdoctoral training programs.

- Describe a framework that ties together the training needs of fellows, the training to be provided, and the specific skills and knowledge they are to learn. Explain how these training elements will lead to their development as researchers capable of carrying out rigorous applied research in special education or early intervention.

Skills and Knowledge:

- Describe the skills and knowledge fellows are expected to master and explain their importance to special education or early intervention research and practice. These should include:

  o Research skills and knowledge, such as developing a research agenda and gaining specific content and methodological expertise.

  o Leadership and entrepreneurial skills, such as networking, conducting needs assessments and market analyses, developing and testing products,

communicating and collaborating with stakeholders, forming and working with teams, and training and mentoring others.

- o Skills related to the [Standards for Excellence in Education Research](#).

- o Professional skills, such as preparing grant applications; collaborating with other researchers and with education practitioners and policymakers; writing articles for publication; managing research projects and grants; and disseminating research findings to a wide audience including policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

Postdoctoral Fellows:

- Discuss the characteristics, interests, and needs of fellows that you are likely to recruit, including their fields, existing skills and expertise, and gaps in skills and knowledge. By describing the fellows you intend to recruit, you will be better able to discuss the training needed to produce the intended type of researchers.

b. **Research Training Plan** – The purpose of this section is to outline the specific activities and mentoring your training program will provide.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Postdoctoral Training program **must** describe:

(i) A recruitment plan (see the section on [Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements](#) for eligibility requirements/considerations for fellows);

(ii) The research training activities;

(iii) The financial support to be provided to individual fellows and to the overall training program; and

(iv) A plan for tracking fellows' progress and determining the success of the training program.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

Recruitment Plan:

- Identify the underrepresented groups you intend to recruit (for example, racial/ethnic minorities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, veterans, and individuals with disabilities) and describe your plan to recruit fellows from these groups.

- Describe how your recruitment plan will locate fellows who have high potential but need more research experience and mentoring. In particular, IES encourages you to consider fellows who may come from smaller or less well-known doctoral programs, including minority-serving institutions (MSIs) in order to build capacity and provide opportunities to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- If applicable, describe how you will recruit candidates from multiple disciplines, such as education, economics, sociology, psychology, health, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer science.

- Discuss the criteria you will use to select fellows.

- Provide a timeline (either in the Research Training Plan or [Appendix F](#)) that shows when you expect to recruit and train each fellow.

o Postdoctoral Training grants can begin between July 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020. If this start period poses recruitment problems, consider using the first year for recruitment purposes with fellows starting in 2021.

Research Training Activities and Mentoring:

- Describe the specific training activities as well as how they align with the program's focus, how they will contribute to the development of the fellows' skills and knowledge, how you will decide which fellows will participate in them, and how the program will monitor their contribution to the fellows' professional development. Applicants are expected to provide fellows with the following opportunities:

  o Research training through participation in the following: (1) research grants or contracts funded by IES or other sources; (2) research that involves working with education policymakers and practitioners; and (3) other opportunities provided within or outside the academic institution.

  o Experience disseminating research to a wide audience, including non-researchers.

  o Training and experience developing, scaling up, and commercializing interventions and other products.

  o Independent research.

  o Lead authorship on articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

  o Completion and submission of manuscripts for publication based on fellows' dissertations, if applicable.

  o Training in career opportunities and support for transition to new positions outside the organization/institution after the fellowship ends.

- Describe the ongoing special education research projects led by the mentors that fellows are likely to work on, including the topical and methodological focus of the projects, possible roles fellows could have, and competencies they could potentially gain through working on the project.

- Describe the plan for mentoring fellows.

Financial Support:

- Describe the allocation of funds for directly supporting the fellows and the specific uses of the funds by each fellow. Be sure to meet the [Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements](#).

- Describe how the program funds (up to $16,000 a year) will be used to support program expenses, such as recruitment and administrative support. Be sure to meet the [Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements](#).

- Specify the length of the fellowship for each fellow.

  o Fellowships can last from 1 to 3 years per fellow. A Postdoctoral Training grant is permitted to support at most 8 fellowship years (for instance, 4 fellows at 2 years each or 3 fellows at 2 years each and 2 fellows at 1 year each).

- Note if your institution is providing supplementary funding and, if so, how it will be used.

Tracking Fellows' and Program Success:

- Discuss how you will identify each fellow's strengths and needs upon entry to the program, and how opportunities will be aligned with those strengths and needs.

- Describe how you will track each fellow's progress.

- Describe the measures you will use to determine that the training program is developing researchers who can conduct high-quality research that is important to children and youth with or at risk for disabilities, their families, practitioners, and policymakers.

    o Measures should also assess the cost per fellow by training year, including recruitment efforts.

c. **Personnel –** The purpose of this section is to describe your training team, including their relevant expertise, responsibilities, and time commitments.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Postdoctoral Training program **must** describe:

(i) All key personnel on the project team including the PI, Co-PI(s) (if applicable), and the other mentors.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Identify and briefly describe the following for all key personnel:
    o Qualifications to carry out the proposed work.
    o Roles and responsibilities within the project.
    o Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project.
    o Past success at mentoring postdoctoral fellows.
    o Past success at collaborating on research with and disseminating findings to policymakers and practitioners.
    o Past success at disseminating research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

- Discuss how the collective research and training expertise and experience of your team (including non-key personnel, visiting scholars, etc.) align with and support the content and methodological foci of your training program and the expected training outcomes for your fellows.

d. **Resources –** The purpose of this section is to describe your access to institutional resources and to schools and datasets where applicable.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Postdoctoral Training program **must** describe:

(i) The institutional resources of both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe the institutional resources available to support the training program at the participating institution(s), including research collaborations with state and local education agencies and other institutions.

- Describe your access to field settings, such as schools and districts, or data sources that may be used to support fellows' research projects.

- Describe partnerships you have with schools or organizations that would provide fellows opportunities to work with education policymakers and/or practitioners and discuss how these partnerships align with the focus of your training program.

- Describe the success of any previous Postdoctoral Training grants you or the other mentors have had from IES. Also, describe any lessons you learned from these grants and how you incorporated them into the proposed training program.

    o Describe their success in traditional academic terms through publishing in peer-reviewed journals and applying for and receiving grants.

    o Describe previous fellows' other accomplishments as evidence of their success. Examples include developing and sharing programming code, acquiring patents, creating videos or multimedia dissemination products, and blogging.

   e. **Appendices** – Certain materials **must** be provided in the appendices to support the Training Program Narrative. See the discussion of each appendix provided in Part III for additional information.

   - Appendix A (Not Applicable)

   - Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (**Required for Resubmissions**)

   - Appendix C: Summary of Research and Training Grants (**Required**)

   - Appendix D: Example Letter of Agreement for Fellows (**Required**)

   - Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Training Partners (**Required**)

   - Appendix F: Examples of Training Materials (Optional)

(5) Awards

A Postdoctoral Training application **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:

- The maximum duration of a Postdoctoral Training project is 5 years.

Cost Maximums:

- The maximum award for a Postdoctoral Training project is $766,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).

- The award can be used to support a maximum of 8 fellow years. Your requested budget should depend upon the number of fellows to be supported, the number of years of support for each fellow, and the training program support funds requested.

- For Postdoctoral Training grants, indirect costs cannot be applied to Participant Support Costs but only to program expenses (both are described in the next section on Additional Budget Parameters). U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or 8 percent of a modified total direct cost base (MTDC) whichever amount is less. MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and subawards and subcontracts up to the first $25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards and subcontracts under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental

costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-sec200-68.pdf).

Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements:

The following requirements for Postdoctoral Training applications will not be used in determining responsiveness to the RFA, but applications recommended for funding will be required to adjust their plans and budgets, if necessary, to meet them before receiving grant funds.

- If you receive an award under the Postdoctoral Training program, fellows must meet the following requirements (grant funds expended on fellows who do not meet these requirements must be returned):
  - o Postdoctoral fellows' research must be relevant to special education or early intervention in the United States.
  - o Postdoctoral fellows must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.
  - o Postdoctoral fellows must have received their doctorate prior to beginning the fellowship.
- In any of the following cases, IES must approve a candidate for a postdoctoral fellowship before an offer is made:
  - o The candidate has received postdoctoral support through any other federal training programs.
  - o The candidate has received support through an IES Predoctoral Training Program.
  - o The candidate has or had a professional or personal relationship with key personnel.
- Postdoctoral fellows are expected to respond to periodic surveys and other requests for information from IES.
- Participant Support Costs: Direct support of fellows is contingent on fellows' making satisfactory progress in their research activities. Grant funds provided for direct support of fellows may include the following:
  - o A $60,000 (maximum) stipend per fellow per year (12 months) for up to 3 years. This is maximum contribution IES will make towards the stipend.
  - o Up to $25,000 per fellow per year for additional support to cover the following:
    - Fringe benefits: The fellowship **must include fringe benefits**, such as health insurance, at the level afforded to other employees of the applicant institution who are at a similar level as the fellows.
    - Support for other training activities, including fellows' independent research; membership in professional organizations or societies; and registration and attendance at workshops, seminars, and professional meetings that complement the training provided at the academic institution.

- Travel to the Annual IESPI Meeting in Washington, DC: Each fellow should have sufficient funds to cover a 3-day meeting each year of their fellowship.
    - The academic institution may supplement the direct support of fellows. Such a supplement would be considered cost-sharing and should be described in your Training Program Narrative and noted in your budget and budget narrative. Although cost sharing is allowed, it is not taken into consideration during the review of the application, nor does it influence the funding decision.
- Program Expenses: You may request up to $16,000 per training program year (not per fellow year) to support program expenses. Examples of allowable expenses include:
    - Recruitment of fellows, including advertising, campus visits, and other expenses;
    - The PI's travel to the Annual IES PI Meeting;
    - Tracking fellows' progress and the success of the training program;
    - Administrative support for the postdoctoral fellowship program;
    - Honoraria for speakers for the fellows;
    - Convening events for the fellows that include researchers, education practitioners, and/or policymakers; and
    - Indirect costs.
- Grant funds **must not** be used for the following:
    - Tuition for semester/quarter-based, credit-bearing courses offered by the grantee institution. Fellows are expected to audit any courses that are part of their training. Grant funds may be used for fellows to attend workshops or courses at other institutions;
    - Faculty research;
    - Facility construction, renovation, or maintenance; or
    - Travel funds for key personnel other than for the Annual IES PI Meeting.

2. Early Career Development and Mentoring

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. (202-245-6716; Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The [Early Career Development and Mentoring](#) (Early Career) program supports grants that prepare researchers to conduct independent rigorous and relevant early intervention and special education research. The intention is to support researchers who are addressing issues that are important to children and youth with or at risk for disabilities, their families, practitioners, and policymakers, and whose research contributes to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education.

The program aims to prepare researchers to collaborate with education stakeholders to develop and evaluate new products and instructional approaches that are grounded in a science of learning, to design and validate [assessments](#), and to address applied research problems in special education or early intervention using sophisticated statistical methods. One of the goals of IES is to prepare researchers who are able to conduct the type of research that IES funds and to prepare competitive proposals that address relevant special education topics and meet the methodological requirements and recommendations specified for IES research grant competitions.

At the end of the award, grantees under the Early Career program will provide a description of:

- The training received over the course of the grant including descriptions of all key components discussed in the original application, such as professional development opportunities, collaborations with education stakeholders, and methodological workshops;

- The completed research plan, with outcomes and products relevant to the specified project type (for example, a demonstrated understanding of the relation between factors under the control of the education system and learner outcomes for Exploration projects; a developed intervention with pilot data on its [feasibility](#), promise, and [cost](#) for Development grants; findings regarding the impact and cost of a fully developed intervention for [Initial Efficacy](#) or [Efficacy Replication](#) projects; and a validated assessment with data on the cost of administering the assessment for Measurement projects); and

- Major accomplishments, such as:

  o Conducting a project that follows the principles outlined in the [Standards for Excellence in Education Research](#);

  o Taking on leadership roles related to special education or early intervention research;

  o Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with districts, schools, and/or education practitioners;

  o Developing research products that are of use to practitioners and policymakers in improving outcomes for children with or at risk for disabilities;

  o Disseminating findings that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education or early intervention and that have practical implications for education practitioners and policymakers; and

  o Submitting a federal research grant to continue research undertaken as part of the early career award.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the Early Career program **must** meet the requirements set out under **(1) Principal Investigator, (2) Mentors, (3) Focus on Children With or At Risk for Disabilities, and (4)**

Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

(1) Principal Investigator (PI)

- They PI may be from a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education provided that the focus of their research and mentoring is in the field of early intervention or special education for children with or at risk for disabilities. Such fields may include general education, human development, political science, psychology, sociology, and statistics.

- The PI **must** have completed a doctoral degree or postdoctoral program no earlier than April 1, 2016 and no later than the start of the award period. Please note that IES will use the date on which the University granted your doctoral degree. For example, if you defended your dissertation on March 25, 2016, but your University granted the degree on April 2, 2016, you would be eligible to apply.

- The PI **must** hold a tenure-track position or research scientist position (not a visiting faculty or adjunct position), at an institution of higher education, or must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the award. In the latter case, you must include a letter of support in Appendix E from the future home institution indicating that an offer has been made and accepted. The position must be a regular, salaried position paid by the institution of higher education without a focus on training (not a postdoctoral fellowship).

- The following eligibility criteria will not be used in determining responsiveness, but if an application is recommended for funding, the PI must meet the following criteria:
  - The PI must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States and
  - The PI must not have served as a PI or Co-PI on a research grant from IES.

(2) Mentors

- Training **must** be provided under the guidance of a mentor. Applicants may have co-mentors depending on their training needs and location. The term "mentors" includes both primary and co-mentors.

- One mentor should be designated as the primary mentor.

- At least one mentor (primary or co-mentor) **must** be at the PI's home institution.

- Mentors may be from academic or nonacademic institutions, such as nonprofit and for-profit organizations or public and private agencies, that conduct rigorous special education or early intervention research.

- Mentors **must** include only individuals who have not served as the PI's primary graduate school advisor, dissertation advisor, or postdoctoral supervisor. A faculty member who served on a dissertation committee but did not have a direct advisor-advisee relationship with the PI is eligible to serve as a mentor.

(3) Focus on Children and Youth With or At Risk for Disabilities

- Research supported under the Early Career program **must** focus on children and/or youth with or at risk for disabilities and/or families, educators, or other professionals who support the development and education of these individuals.
  - For the purpose of this RFA, a child with a disability is defined in Public Law 108-446. *Risk* for a disability is identified on an individual basis. You should clearly identify the disability or disability categories that your sample is at risk of developing and present research-based evidence of an association between risk factors in your proposed sample and the potential identification of specific disabilities.

▪ The determination of risk may include, for example, factors used for moving children and youth to higher tiers in a Response to Intervention model. Evidence consisting only of general population characteristics such as labeling children and youth as "at risk for disabilities" because they are from low-income families or are English language learners is not sufficient for this purpose.

(4) Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices

The Training Program narrative (recommended length: no more than 25 pages) for an Early Career application **must** include five sections – Significance, Research Plan, Career Plan, Personnel, and Resources – and meet the requirements for each section in order to be responsive and sent forward for scientific peer review.

The narrative should clearly demonstrate the integration of your research and career plans. Please note that the research and career plans may influence one another bi-directionally, as the proposed research conducted may inform which skills need enhancement just as the training and mentoring will provide those needed skills to conduct successful research.

a. **Significance –** The purpose of this section is to explain why the proposed research and career development plans are important.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications to the Early Career program **must**:

(i) Describe your need for further career development;

(ii) Provide an overview of the proposed research project; and

(iii) Identify a research topic and project type from the table below and the rationale for your selected topic and project type. The topic specifies the field of research and the project type identifies the type and purpose of the work you will be doing within the topic-defined field. In general, the cost maximums may not be sufficient for conducting rigorous efficacy studies. However, there may be instances given characteristics of the intervention research methods where these studies are possible. For instance the intervention being evaluated is short-term and inexpensive and/or the evaluation utilizes data from administrative records.

Research Topics	Project Types
1. Autism Spectrum Disorders	1. Exploration
2. Cognition and Student Learning in Special Education	2. Development and Innovation
3. Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education	3. Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up
4. Families of Children with Disabilities	4. Replication
5. Professional Development for Educators and School-Based Service Providers	5. Measurement
6. Reading, Writing, and Language Development	
7. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education	
8. Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning	
9. Special Education Policy, Finance, and Systems	
10. Technology for Special Education	
11. Transition Outcomes for Secondary Students with Disabilities	
12. Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Students with Disabilities	
13. English Learners with Disabilities	
14. Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities	

Review these topics and project types as you plan the research portion of your training program application. (See the FY 2020 Special Education Research Grants (84.324A) RFA for a detailed description of the project types and research topics. If you propose a Replication project, which is allowed under the Early Career program, you should refer to last year's 84.324A RFA for information on what to include in a Replication application.)

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe the specific issue or problem your work will address, including the overall importance of this issue or problem to education stakeholders, such as practitioners and policymakers, and how its resolution will contribute to the improvement of learner education outcomes.

- Describe the research study, including the theoretical and empirical rationale for the study and its practical importance.

- Describe current typical practice and its identified shortcomings in your area of research, and how the results of this work will inform the next step in the research process, such as the future development of an intervention or assessment or evaluation of an intervention.

- Describe your planned program of research, specifically the progression from prior research to the research that will occur over the award period to the line of independent research that will be developed.

- Describe your current levels of knowledge and skills, the proposed career development activities (mentoring and training activities) aimed at enhancing your knowledge and skills, and how these career development activities will lead to the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the proposed research activities.

- In Appendix A, discuss how you will make the results of your proposed research available to a wide range of audiences in a manner that reflects the purpose of the particular project type.

b. **Research Plan –** The purpose of this section is to describe the aims and methodology for the proposed research.

Please note that certain aspects on which the PI proposes to receive additional training, such as the research design and/or data analysis plan, may be described in less detail compared to proposals submitted to the Special Education Research Grants competition. IES anticipates that there will be further development of these plans based on the PI's training experiences and guidance from the mentor(s).

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications to the Early Career program **must**:

(i) Describe the research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data analysis procedures; and

(ii) Measure education outcomes of learners with or at risk for disabilities. IES is interested in developmental outcomes, school readiness, academic outcomes, social and behavioral competencies and functional outcomes that support success in school and the transition from high school to postsecondary education, meaningful employment, or independent living. IES also supports research on postsecondary outcomes and employment and earnings outcomes, such as hours of employment, job stability, wages, and benefits (as appropriate).

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe the aims of the research project, including, as appropriate, your specific research question(s) and hypotheses. The Special Education Research Grants RFAs (84.324A) may be helpful as a guide for the types of research activities that would be appropriate under your specified project type.

- Propose a research plan that is feasible to carry out within the context of an Early Career grant and provide a justification for its feasibility.

- Describe how you will follow the principles outlined in the Standards for Excellence in Education Research to ensure that research is transparent, actionable, and focused on meaningful outcomes that have the potential to dramatically improve education.

Research Design
- Describe a research design that is directly linked to your research questions.

    o Provide a level of detail that aligns with your expertise and proposed training activities. For example, if your career development plan includes training in single-case experimental design, IES would not expect a detailed description of the design requirements. However, you should describe the type of single-case design you propose to conduct and how it is an appropriate design to address your research questions.

Sample
- Describe your sample, what population it represents, its size, and its relation to addressing the overall aims of the project.

- Describe your criteria for defining disability or risk for disability. Although the focus of your research must be on learners with or at risk for disabilities, learners without disabilities may be included in your sample if appropriate for your research questions. For example, learners without disabilities may be part of the comparison population or part of your research sample for assessment development and validation.

Setting
- Describe the education setting where your research will take place (for example, child care, homes, classrooms, schools, or districts).

Measures
- Describe the measures you will most likely use to assess variables of interest, including learner outcomes.

- Include information about the reliability and validity of your proposed measures.

- If extant data will be used, name and describe the dataset(s), including the measures and that will be used for analyses. If applicable, note whether a restricted use license is held or if you plan to obtain one.

Data Analysis
- Explain your proposed analyses and how they will address your research questions.

    o The level of detail in the data analysis plan should align with your expertise and proposed training activities. For example, if you have expertise in analyzing data from single-case experimental designs, IES would expect a detailed description of the approach to analyzing this data. On the other hand, if your career development plan includes additional training on analyzing data from single-case

experimental designs, IES would not expect a detailed description of the analytic approach.

Timeline
- Provide a timeline for each step in your project including, where applicable, such actions as sample selection and assignment, the development process, validation activities, data collection, data analysis, cost analysis, and dissemination. The timeline may be discussed in the project narrative and/or presented in Appendix F.

c. **Career Development Plan –** The purpose of this section is to describe the process for mentoring and additional training. The Career Development Plan should not focus on activities that are expected of any early career researcher, such as attending and presenting at conferences. Training plans should go beyond the typical career development activities expected of every new research scientist/assistant professor.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications to the Early Career program **must** describe:

(i) A training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities to extend your expertise.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe your training goals and how the activities and mentors will help you reach these goals.

- Specify how the mentors will guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan. Also describe how your mentors will aid you in acquiring new expertise and guide your development as a scholar.
  - Mentoring activities may include regular meetings (primary mentors are expected to communicate with PIs at least once per month); review of your career development plan; and additional guidance that will be useful for your development as a scientist, including reviews of manuscripts for publication, development of grant applications, and development of a plan to disseminate results to a wide range of audiences.

- Describe a plan for coordinating mentoring activities among the mentors if there are co-mentors.

- Describe your planned training activities and specify whether they are campus-based or external to your home institution. For example, these might include a summer institute, a grant-writing workshop, an advanced statistical course, etc.

- Describe how the content and timing of activities in your career development plan are integrated with the research plan. A timeline may be discussed in the project narrative and/or presented in Appendix F.

d. **Personnel –** The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise, responsibilities, and time commitments of the PI, mentor(s), and any other personnel.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications to the Early Career program **must**:

(i) Describe your expertise as the PI as well as the expertise of your mentor(s) and, if applicable, other personnel, such as consultants;

(ii) Specify the date on which you were granted your doctoral degree and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program; and

(iii) Specify the names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if relevant) the postdoctoral supervisor in order to demonstrate that the mentors have not served as your primary graduate school or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral supervisor.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe your qualifications to be the PI, specifying your accomplishments and experience conducting research related to infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disabilities.

- Specify the percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) you will devote to the project. Explain how you will have time to conduct your proposed research and accomplish your training plan given your other responsibilities as a faculty member.

  o IES anticipates that you will allocate a minimum of 20% and maximum of 50% of calendar year time to manage your research training project, with the specific amount depending on your course load and other sources of salary funding.

- Describe the qualifications of your mentors, their proposed roles in training, and how their expertise reflects the specific topic and/or project type you have identified.

  o Identify which mentor is the primary mentor if there is more than one mentor.

  o Include mentors with appropriate expertise in research with infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disabilities, and/or their families or educators.

  o If proposing multiple mentors, include mentors with a variety of areas of expertise. For instance, one mentor may have expertise in the relevant content area and the other may have expertise in another aspect of your proposed research plan, such as the statistical methods.

  o Specify a mentor at your home institution who can help guide your career development there (for example, by helping you navigate the institution's procedures for grant submission), as well as provide additional content and/or methodological expertise.

  o Describe your mentors' prior experiences mentoring early career researchers (including faculty or postdoctoral fellows).

  o Summarize the special education research projects conducted by the mentors and include:

    ▪ Their role in the project (PI, Co-PI, Co-I, consultant);

    ▪ A brief description of the research project, including methods used; and

    ▪ The funding source, if applicable.

- Specifiy the time commitments of your mentors. Mentors' time commitments should be commensurate with the mentoring activities and reflect the time they will actually devote to the project (including donated time).

  o IES anticipates that your mentors' combined time commitment to the project will be at least 5% per calendar year.

- Describe other personnel (if applicable), including their proposed roles, qualifications, and time commitments. Other personnel, such as consultants, can be used to provide

support on specific aspects of your research plan or to fill gaps in your mentorship and training (for example, by providing consultation on statistical analyses). These personnel should have unique and specific roles that are different than those served by the mentors.

- For all personnel, describe their experience disseminating research findings to a range of audiences, including in peer-reviewed scientific journals and to policymaker and practitioner audiences.

e. **Resources –** The purpose of this section is to describe the institutional resources to support the PI in successfully completing this project and disseminating the results.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications to the Early Career program **must** describe the resources to:

(i) Support you in conducting the proposed project.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

Resources to support the PI in conducting the project:

- Describe your institution's capacity to support early career researchers in managing grants and monitoring spending.

- Describe your institiution's experience supporting early career researchers through training workshops, seminars and/or discussion groups with senior researchers.

- Describe any facilities, such as computers or labs, and resources for new faculty, such as "start-up packages," provided by your institution that are relevant for the successful completion of the project.

- Describe your access to resources available at your mentor's institution, if different from your own, to support your research, your training, or both.

- Describe your plans for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project, such as equipment, test materials, curricula, or training materials.

- Describe your resources to carry out your plans to disseminate your results, as described in the required Appendix A.
    - Describe any offices or organizations that are expected to take part in the dissemination plan.
    - Describe resources to support dissemination through electronic means such as a website, social media account(s), electronic newsletter, listserv, or other electronic dissemination approach.

f. **Appendices –** Certain materials **must** be provided in the appendices to support the Training Program Narrative. See the discussion of each appendix provided in Part III for additional information.

- Appendix A: Dissemination Plan (**Required**)

- Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (**Required for Resubmissions**)

- Appendix C: Summary of Research (**Required**)

- Appendix D: Letters of Agreement from Mentors (**Required**)

- Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners (**Required**)

- Appendix F: Supplemental Tables/Charts and Examples of Research and Training Materials (Optional)

(5) Awards

An Early Career project **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:
- The maximum duration of an Early Career award is 4 years.

Cost Maximums:
- The maximum award for an Early Career award is $500,000 (total cost = direct + indirect).

Additional Budget Parameters:
The following requirements for Early Career applications will not be used in determining responsiveness to the RFA, but applications recommended for funding will be required to adjust their budgets, if necessary, to meet these requirements before receiving grant funds.

- Funds should be used for the costs of conducting the proposed research and executing the career development plan. This may include such costs as research and administrative staff salary, research supplies and equipment, participant compensation, local travel for data collection, and registration for training workshops or institutes.

- The budget may include:

  o Up to 50% of the PI's salary to be used for academic year support and/or summer salary.

  o **Up to $5,000 per year for mentors**. If there are co-mentors, this maximum allowable sum must be divided among all the mentors. Institutions may have different ways for allocating $5,000 across mentors. Mentors may be compensated using honoraria, salary including fringe benefits, or cost sharing or in-kind contributions. Regardless of compensation method, the Federal government contribution cannot exceed $5,000. Although in-kind contributions and cost sharing are allowed, they are not taken into consideration during the review of the application, nor do they influence the funding decision.

- Funds may be requested for the following travel activities:

  o Travel for the PI or mentor(s) to meet when they are not at the same institution;

  o Travel and registration for the PI to participate in professional research conferences; and

  o Travel and registration for the PI to attend specialized training workshops available through other entities, such as summer institutes in methodology or statistical analysis.

- Grant funds must not be used for the following:

  o Facility construction, renovation, or maintenance;

  o Support for graduate students beyond their direct work on the grant. For example, grant funds should not be used to support graduate student research or travel to conferences; or

  o Mentors' research.

3. Methods Training Using Single-Case Designs

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. (202-245-6716; Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)

a) Purpose

The [Methods Training Using Single-Case Designs](#) (Single-Case Methods Training) supports the training of researchers to maintain and enhance their methodological skills related to the use of rigorous single-case designs and associated data analysis techniques.

Under the Single-Case Methods Training program, IES is interested in supporting a training program that provides researchers with intensive, relevant training that can be immediately applied in their work. IES is not interested in supporting broad methodological education of the type provided by certificate or degree programs.

Projects under the Single-Case Methods program will result in the following:

- A description of the training program as realized over the course of the grant, including descriptions of all key components discussed in the original application;

- Data demonstrating the program's success in recruiting and training participants and participants' perceived value of the training;

- A summary of feedback from training participants on their experience and recommendations for future single-case design trainings;

- A determination of the program's success in preparing participants with the skills described in the original application;

- Opportunities for non-participants to benefit from the project (for example, through online videos of the training and availability of comprehensive training materials);

- An analysis of the cost of training per participant, including recruitment efforts; and

- Recommendations for future training programs.

b) Requirements and Recommendations

Applications under the Single-Case Methods Training program **must meet the requirements set out under (1) Institutions and Key Personnel and (2) Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices** in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

(1) Institutions and Key Personnel

- Applicants, located in the territorial United States, who have the expertise and capacity to conduct training in single-case design research methods and associated data analysis techniques are eligible to apply.

- All key training personnel **must** be named in the application.

  o Applications proposing to identify experts to provide the training once the grant is received will not be accepted for review.

  o In addition, Letters of Agreement from key training personnel **must** be included in Appendix E.

(2) Training Program Narrative and Supporting Appendices

The Training Program Narrative (recommended length: no more than 20 pages) for a Single-Case Methods Training application **must** include four sections – Significance, Research Training Plan,

Personnel, and Resources – and meet the requirements for each section in order to be responsive and sent forward for scientific peer review.

a. **Significance –** The purpose of this section is to describe the focus of your training program and justify why this focus is important for improving the field of research on single-case research designs and data analysis.

   Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Single-Case Methods Training program **must** describe:

   (i) The specific single-case methodologies that will be the focus of your training program; and

   (ii) The intended participants.

   Recommendations for a Strong Application:

   - Detail the specific single-case methods that the training will teach and their importance in improving research using single-case designs.

   - Describe the type of participants that you intend to recruit, noting their fields of work and pre-existing skills and expertise.
     - Justify why this is an important group to train in these methods.
     - Note the number of participants to be trained and whether there will be one or multiple cohorts of participants.

   - Identify any existing sources from which potential participants could currently obtain the training you propose and how your training will be different from or supplement these resources.

   - IES views the Single-Case Methods Training program as professional development, akin to professional development provided to teachers and school leaders. It can be helpful to provide a conceptual framework that ties together the training needs of the participants to be recruited, the training to be provided to them, the specific skills and knowledge they are to learn, and how these will improve their ability to carry out rigorous applied research using single-case designs.

   - In Appendix A, discuss how you will provide opportunities for non-participants to have access to the training.

b. **Research Training Plan –** The purpose of this section is to describe the training to be provided, including recruitment for and outcomes of the training.

   Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Single-Case Methods Training program **must** describe:

   (i) A recruitment plan;

   (ii) The training content, format, and activities; and

   (iii) A plan to track participants' progress and determine the success of the training program.

   Recommendations for a Strong Application:

   Recruitment Plan, Eligibility Requirements, and Selection Criteria:

   - Discuss how the recruitment plan addresses the type of participants you intend to recruit, as described in the Significance section.

- o Remember that the focus of the Single-Case Methods Training is on participants who have received their doctorate prior to beginning the training and are currently working on research in early intervention, education and/or special education.
- o Note that eligibility is limited to citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

- Describe how you will announce the training opportunity and how you will specifically target education, special education and early intervention research communities (training cannot be restricted to only the members/employees of a specific organization).

- Describe the application process and how it will be open to the education, special education, and early intervention research communities.

- Describe the selection criteria, how these will be applied to the applicants, and who will make the decisions regarding admission to the training. Discuss how you will make the selection process fair and avoid any appearances of conflict of interest.

- Discuss your explicit strategies for recruiting individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the field of education research (for example, racial/ethnic minorities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, veterans, individuals with disabilities).

- Provide a timeline (either in the Research Training Plan section or Appendix F) delineating when the expected recruitment and training of each participant will take place.
    - o The training should be provided at least once in each year of the project.
    - o Note that the earliest start date for the Single-Case Methods Training grant is July 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020 is the latest start date.

Training Activities:

- Detail the format of the training.
    - o Identify the number of participants to be included.
    - o Discuss how the proposed format provides the training in a cost-efficient way.
- Describe the specific training activities for teaching the uses of rigorous single-case research designs and data analyses.
- Describe the specific content to be taught within each activity and how it will develop the expected knowledge, skills, and abilities in the participants.
    - o Identify who will lead each activity and how long it will last (a detailed syllabus should be provided in Appendix F).
- Describe how the training structure and delivery are organized to reflect adult learning theories. For example, training should engage participants in activities that are relevant and timely, linked to their work, and applicable to

Examples of Training Activities:
- Introduction of participants to single-case designs
- Lectures or webinars on single-case designs
- Readings of and discussion on single-case designs and their application
- Small group or individual applications using single-case designs
- Applications of single-case designs to participants' own research
- Ongoing opportunities to consult with experts
- Presentation and review of participant work (e.g., presentations or posters)

the real-world problems of their field.

- Note whether the format of the training is intended to build networks among the participants and, if so, how joint learning and collaboration will be encouraged both during the training and afterwards.

- Indicate whether participants will bring a specific research issue to work on during the training or will work on developing a plan to further their understanding of single-case research designs.

- Describe the website that you will develop for researchers that includes training materials, tools, and resources focused on single-case research designs and analyses.

- Describe how you plan to solicit and respond to feedback from participants.

- Describe how you plan to support participants in learning about and conducting research that aligns with the [Standards for Excellence in Education Research](#) in that it is transparent, actionable, and focused on meaningful outcomes that have the potential to dramatically improve education.

Tracking Participants' Progress and Program Success

- Discuss how you will identify the strengths and needs of participants upon their entry to the program, and how you will provide opportunities for participants to apply their strengths and address their needs.

- Describe the measures you will use to determine that the training program is having the intended impact.

- Describe how you will estimate the cost of training per participant, including recruitment efforts.

c. **Personnel** – The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, the responsibilities of each team member, and the time commitments of each team member.

   Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Single-Case Methods Training program **must** describe:

   (i) All key personnel on the project team, including the PI, Co-PI (if there is one), and other trainers. Applications must name the experts in specific methodologies who will provide the training. **IES will not accept applications proposing to identify experts to provide the training once the grant is received**.

   Recommendations for a Strong Application:

   - Describe the PI's qualifications and experience for managing a research training grant of this size.

   - Briefly describe the following for each key personnel:
     - Qualifications and how these contribute to the focus of the training program;
     - Roles and responsibilities within the training program;
     - Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the training program;
     - Previous experience providing training for education researchers; and

o Expertise in disseminating information to a range of audiences. For example, if key personnel have previously received a Methods Training grant, discuss how training materials were made accessible to non-participants.

- Discuss how the combined expertise of the key personnel reflects the methodological focus, format, and activities of the proposed training program.

d. **Resources –** The purpose of this section is to describe your institutional resources to conduct the training program and provide opportunities for non-participants to access the training.

Requirements: In order to be responsive and sent forward for peer review, applications under the Single-Case Methods Training program **must** describe:

(i) Your institutional resources to conduct the single-case methods training.

Recommendations for a Strong Application:

- Describe your institutional capacity and experience to manage a training grant of this size.

- Describe your access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions (including the partner organization).

- Describe your plan for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project, such as equipment or training materials.

- If applicable, describe your access to any datasets that you will require for training purposes.

- Describe the success of and lessons learned from any previous Methods Training grants you or the other key personnel have had from IES (these are to be detailed in your Appendix C).

- Describe in Appendix A the resources you have to implement your dissemination plan to provide opportunities for non-participants to have access to the training.

e. **Appendices –** Certain materials **must** be provided in the appendices to support the Training Program Narrative. See the discussion of each appendix provided in Part III for additional information.

- Appendix A: Dissemination Plan (**Required**)
- Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (**Required for Resubmissions**)
- Appendix C: Summary of Research and Training Projects (**Required**)
- Appendix D (Not Applicable)
- Appendix E: Letters of Agreement (**Required**)
- Appendix F: Examples of Training Materials (Optional)

(3) Awards

A Single-Case Methods Training project **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

Duration Maximums:

- The maximum duration of a Single-Case Methods Training project is 3 years.

Cost Maximums:

- The maximum award for a Single-Case Methods Training project is $700,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).

  - For a Single-Case Methods Training grant, indirect costs cannot be applied to Participant Support Costs (such as training participants' travel, lodging, and per diem). U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or 8 percent of a modified total direct cost (MTDC) base, whichever amount is less. For the purposes of this competition, MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-sec200-68.pdf).

Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements:

The following requirements for Single-Case Methods Training applications will not be used in determining responsiveness to the RFA, but applications recommended for funding will be required to adjust their plans and budgets, if necessary, to meet them before receiving grant funds.

- The budget must include potential costs of accommodations for trainees with disabilities; for example, a sign language interpreter and/or assistive listening devices. These costs should be reasonable given the duration and format of the training and should be budgeted for each training.

- Under the Single-Case Methods Training program, you must certify that your training participants and support you provide to them meet the following guidelines. Grant funds proposed to be expended on participants in ways that do not meet these guidelines will be disallowed (your institution will have to return such expended funds).

  - *Participant Characteristics*

    - Training participants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

    - Training participants should have received their doctorate prior to beginning the training and are working in the field of early intervention, education, and/or special education research.

    - Participants' research must be relevant to education in the United States.

  - *Participant Support*

    - Single-Case Methods Training participants and their institutions cannot receive financial recompense for attending a training program.

    - Participants are expected to cover their own travel costs; however, with IES approval, exceptions are permitted when participants are accepted to the training but lack travel funds.

    - Lodging and per diem can be covered by the grant but must not exceed federal government reimbursement rates for place and time of year (see https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287).

- In general, grant funds may not be used to pay for food. However, under limited circumstances grant funds may be used to cover the costs of working lunches for attendees of training activities. If you are proposing to use grant funds for working lunches, you should include a clear description of the work to be accomplished during the meal as well as the per person cost. IES will determine whether these working lunch costs are allowable if the grant is awarded. Other meals or snacks should not be included in the grant budget.

Part III: Appendices and Other Narrative Content

A. Required and Optional Appendices

The required Training Program Narrative that is described for each program (see Part II) is followed by several appendices. Some of these appendices are required and some are optional. When you submit your application through Grants.gov, you will create a single PDF file that *contains the Training Program Narrative and all appendices* and include it as an attachment in the application package. Include appendices in alphabetical order and simply skip an appendix if it is not required for your application or if you choose not to include an optional appendix. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/).

1. Appendix A (Required for Early Career and Single-Case Methods Training Programs)

Applications for the Early Career and Single-Case Methods Training programs **must** include a dissemination plan in Appendix A. We recommend that Appendix A be no more than two pages.

Early Career Program

Appendix A must include a description of your plans to disseminate the findings from the project. Dissemination plans should be tailored to the audiences that may benefit from the findings and reflect the unique purpose of the particular project type.

- Identify the audiences that you expect will be most likely to benefit from your research, such as federal policymakers and program administrators, state policymakers and program administrators, state and local school system administrators, school administrators, educators (including teachers and other school staff), parents, learners, and/or other education researchers.

- Discuss the different ways in which you intend to reach these audiences through products, publications, and presentations.

- Specify dissemination products and activities that reflect the purpose of your specified project type. For example, findings from Exploration projects are likely to be most useful in pointing out areas for further attention rather than providing proof or strong evidence for taking specific actions.

Single-Case Methods Training Program

Appendix A must include a discussion of how you will provide opportunities for non-participants to have access to the training. IES encourages posting the following:

- Video recordings of those portions of the training of use to those not participating in the actual training (be it in person or online);

- The materials used in the training; and

- User-friendly manuals.

The dissemination plan is the only information that should be included in Appendix A.

2. Appendix B (Required for Resubmissions)

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix B. We recommend that Appendix B be

no more than three pages. Use Appendix B to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments.

If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should use Appendix B to provide a rationale explaining why the current application should be considered a "new" application rather than a "resubmitted" application. This response to the reviewers or justification to be considered a new application is the only information that should be included in Appendix B.

3. Appendix C (Required for All Training Programs)

All applications **must** include Appendix C. We recommend that Appendix C be no more than 15 pages.

Postdoctoral Training Program

Appendix C must include a summary of research and training grants.

- A summary table of the ongoing special education or early intervention research projects for which mentors serve as PIs or Co-PIs and on which fellows may work. In the table, include the following for each project:
  - PI and other key personnel;
  - Brief description, including the topic addressed and methods used;
  - Brief explanation of where it would fit within the research topics and project types under the Special Education Research Grants program (84.324A);
  - Funding source;
  - Duration; and
  - Outcomes and products.

- If the PI or any key personnel on this application have had or currently have an IES-funded Postdoctoral Training grant, a summary table of each training program that contains the following information:
  - Title and award number of the grant;
  - Mentors who are also key personnel on the current application;
  - Number of fellows admitted to the program;
  - Percent of fellows who successfully completed the program;
  - Research projects that postdoctoral fellows completed or are currently conducting;
  - Research methods used or learned by fellows;
  - Publications by fellows (both peer reviewed and other types);
  - Titles of research grants received by fellows; and
  - Current positions of former postdoctoral fellows.

Early Career Program

- Appendix C must include a summary table of ongoing (and recently completed) special education research projects that you have conducted in addition to special education research projects conducted by your mentor(s). In the table, include the following for each project:
  - PI and other key personnel;
  - Brief description, including the topic addressed and methods used;
  - Funding source;
  - Duration; and
  - Outcomes and products.

Single-Case Methods Training Program

Appendix C must include a summary of research and training projects.

- A summary table of ongoing (or recently completed) research projects of the key personnel that demonstrate the expertise of the personnel with single-case design methods. In the table, include the following for each project:
  - o PI and other key personnel;
  - o Brief description of the research project;
  - o Brief explanation of where the project would fit within the IES research programs;
  - o Funding source;
  - o Duration;
  - o Outcomes and products of the project; and
  - o Relevance to your Single-Case Methods Training application.

- If the PI or any key personnel on this application have had or currently have an IES-funded Methods Training grant, a summary table of each training grant that contains the following information:
  - o Title and award number of the grant;
  - o Key personnel who are key personnel on the current application;
  - o Number of participants admitted to the program;
  - o Number of participants who successfully completed the program;
  - o Research methods learned by participants;
  - o Participant ratings of the training program; and
  - o Results from the follow-up with participants.

These are the only materials that should be included in Appendix C.

4. Appendix D (Required for Postdoctoral Training and Early Career Programs)

Applications for the Postdoctoral Training and Early Career programs **must** include Appendix D. There is no recommended page length for Appendix D.

Postdoctoral Training Program

Appendix D must include an example of the letter of agreement that the PI and each postdoctoral fellow will sign prior to the fellow's acceptance of the position. This letter should outline the conditions of the fellowship.

Early Career Program

Appendix D must include letters of agreement from the mentor(s), including the primary mentor and any additional co-mentors. The letter(s) should include enough information to make it clear that the mentor understands the nature of the commitment of time, resources, and mentoring activities that will be required if the application is funded.

These are the only materials that should be included in Appendix D.

5. Appendix E (Required for All Training Programs)

All applications **must** include Appendix E. There is no recommended page limit for Appendix E.

Postdoctoral Training Program

Appendix E must include letters of agreement from the training partners, including (if relevant):

- Letters of agreement from any involved departments showing their agreement to be part of the training program; and

- Letters of agreement from outside partners providing research opportunities for fellows.

Early Career Program

Appendix E must include letters of agreement from your institution and research partners. Ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters. See the [IES Application Submission Guide](#) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

- Letters of Agreement from your institution: The letter should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands and agrees to the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources that will be required if the application is funded. If you have not yet started your faculty or research scientist position by the due date of the application, you must ensure that the letter of support from your future institution clearly indicates that there has been an offer, an offer acceptance, and an agreed upon start date.

- Letters of Agreement from partners, such as schools or districts; data sources, such as state agencies holding [administrative data](#); and consultants: Letters should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. A common reason for projects to fail is the loss of participating schools and districts. Letters of agreement regarding the provision of data should make it clear that the author of the letter will provide the data described in the application for use in the proposed research and in time to meet the proposed schedule.

Single-Case Methods Training Program

Appendix E must include the following letters of agreement:

- Letters of agreement from all key training personnel;

- Letters of agreement from all institutions that will take part in providing training; and

- If applicable, letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing MOUs in documenting access to any datasets to be used in the training.

These are the only materials that should be included in Appendix E.

6. Appendix F (Optional for All Training Programs)

If you include Appendix F, we recommend it be no more than 15 pages.

All Training Programs

Appendix F may include examples of training materials and tables/charts that support the training program narrative, such as a project timeline, syllabi, course descriptions, and/or a description of mentoring activities or seminars.

Early Career Program

If you are proposing to explore, develop, evaluate, or validate an intervention or assessment Appendix F may also include examples of curriculum materials, computer screen shots, assessment items, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment to be explored, developed, evaluated, or validated. You may also include figures, charts, tables (such as a timeline for your research and career development plans), or measures (including individual items, tests, surveys, observation and interview protocols) used to collect data for your research project.

These are the only materials that should be included in Appendix F.

B. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the Training Program Narrative (see Part II) and required and optional Appendices (see above), you will also prepare a Training Program Summary/Abstract, a Bibliography and References Cited, and an Exempt or Non-Exempt Research on Human Subjects Narrative to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition on Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/).

1. Training Program Summary/Abstract

You must submit the Training Program Summary/Abstract as a separate PDF attachment. We recommend that the Training Program Summary/Abstract be one-page long and include the following information:

- A distinct, descriptive title of the training program

- The RFA (Research Training Programs in the Special Education) and the program to which you are applying (for examle, Early Career Development and Mentoring)

- Name and affiliation of the Principal Investigator

- A brief description of the proposed training and its purpose

- For the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training programs: The expected number of fellows or researchers to be trained and the length/format of training

- For the Postdoctoral Training program: A brief description of special education or early intervention research currently conducted by the proposed key personnel, opportunities for fellows to be involved in special education research projects, and opportunities for fellows to collaborate with practitioners and policymakers

- For the Early Career program: A brief description of the purpose that addresses the research and career development plans; a brief description of the research plan including research questions/hypotheses, sample, intervention (if applicable), measures, and data analysis plan; and a brief description of the proposed training and mentoring activities

- For the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training programs: The expected number of fellows or researchers to be trained and the length/format of training

See the IES online search engine of funded research grants for examples of the content to be included in your Training Program Summary/Abstract.

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You must submit the Bibliography and References Cited as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a page length for the Bibliography and References Cited. You should include complete citations, including the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), titles of relevant elements such as the article/journal and chapter/book, page numbers, and year of publication for literature cited in the Training Program Narrative.

3. Human Subjects Narrative

You **must** submit an Exempt or Non-Exempt Human Subjects Narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a page length for the Human Subjects Narrative. See Information About the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by the Department of Education for more information about what to include in this narrative.

The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit your application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human

subjects research is recommended for funding, the designated U.S. Department of Education official will request that you obtain and send the certification to the Department within 30 days of the formal request.

Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications (RFA) for the Early Career program and cooperative agreements pursuant to this RFA for the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training topics. Through the terms of the cooperative agreements, grantees will work with IES to plan and implement their activities.

2. Funding Available

Although IES intends to support the programs described in this announcement, all awards pursuant to this RFA are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications. IES makes its awards to the highest quality applications as determined through scientific peer review, regardless of program.

The size of the award depends on the program and scope of the project. Please attend to the duration and budget maximums set for each program. IES will not make an award exceeding the relevant maximum grant duration and/or award amount as set out below.

Program	Maximum Duration	Maximum Cost
Postdoctoral Training	5 years	$766,000
Early Career	4 years	$500,000
Single-Case Methods Training	3 years	$700,000

IES intends to award no more than one grant under the Single-Case Methods Training program, pending the results of scientific review.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

Indirect Cost Rate

U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or 8 percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. For the purposes of this competition, a modified total direct cost base is defined as total direct costs less stipends, tuition and related fees (including fellows' benefits), and capital expenditures of $5,000 or more. Questions about indirect cost rates should be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Indirect Cost Group (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgindex.html).

Institutions, both primary grantees and sub-awardees, not located in the territorial U.S. cannot charge indirect costs.

Meetings and Conferences

If you are requesting funds to cover expenses for hosting meetings or conferences, please note that there are statutory and regulatory requirements in determining whether costs are reasonable and necessary. Please refer to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR, §200.432 Conferences.

In particular, federal grant funds cannot be used to pay for alcoholic beverages or entertainment, which includes costs for amusement, diversion, and social activities. In general, federal funds may not be used to pay for food. A grantee hosting a meeting or conference may not use grant funds to pay for food for conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business. You may request funds to cover expenses for working meetings, such as working lunches; however, IES will determine whether these costs are allowable in keeping with the new OMB Uniform Cost Principles. Grantees are responsible for the proper use of their grant awards and may have to repay funds to the Department if they violate the rules for meeting- and conference-related expenses.

4. Program Authority

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq., the "Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002," Title I of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

5. Applicable Regulations

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99 and 2 CFR 3485. In addition 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

B. Additional Award Requirements

1. Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting

On all Training grants, the PI (and fellows on Postdoctoral Training grants) is required to attend one meeting each year (for up to 2 days) in Washington, DC with other IES grantees and IES staff. The project's budget should include this meeting. Should PIs not be able to attend the meeting, they may designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

2. Public Availability of Results

PIs and fellows on Postdoctoral Training grants are required to submit the electronic version of their final manuscripts upon acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly publication to ERIC, a publicly accessible and searchable electronic database of education research that makes available full-text documents to the public for free. This public access requirement applies to peer-reviewed, original scholarly publications that have been supported, in whole or in part, with direct funding from IES, although it does not apply to book chapters, editorials, reviews, or non-peer-reviewed conference proceedings. **PIs and fellows on Postdoctoral Training grants must submit any peer-reviewed scholarly publications to ERIC**.

The author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all modifications from the peer review process. Submission of accepted manuscripts for public accessibility through ERIC is strongly encouraged as soon as possible but **must occur within 12 months of the publisher's official date of publication.** ERIC will not make the accepted manuscripts available to the public prior to the end of the 12-month embargo period, unless specified by the publisher.

The ERIC website includes a homepage for the Grantee and Online Submission System, as well as a Frequently Asked Questions page. During the submission process, authors will submit bibliographic information from the publication, including title, authors, publication date, journal title, and associated IES award number(s).

3. Special Conditions on Grants

IES may impose special conditions on a grant if the grantee is not financially stable, has a history of unsatisfactory performance, has an unsatisfactory financial or other management system, has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant, or is otherwise not responsible.

Training grant recipients who have not successfully recruited the number of fellows/participants for whom they requested funding will have their continuation funding adjusted.

4. Demonstrating Access to Data and Education Settings

The research and training you propose to do will likely require that you have (or will obtain) access to education settings, such as classrooms, schools, and/or districts; secondary datasets; or studies currently under way. In such cases, you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include letters of agreement in Appendix E from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, **IES will require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds**. If you cannot provide such documentation, IES may not award the grant or may withhold funds.

You will need supporting evidence of partnership or access if you are doing any of the following.

- *Conducting research and/or training in or with education settings* – If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the scientific peer review panel and your research and/or training relies on access to education settings, you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary settings in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to IES indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research and/or training before the full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, IES may ask you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.

- *Using secondary datasets* – If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the scientific peer review panel and your research relies on access to secondary datasets (such as federally-collected datasets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary datasets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed datasets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to IES from the entity controlling the dataset(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed dataset prior to submitting your application, IES may ask you to provide updated documentation indicating that you still have permission to use the dataset to conduct the proposed research during the project period.

- *Building off of existing studies* – You may propose studies that piggyback onto an ongoing study, which will require access to those subjects and data. In such cases, the Principal Investigator of the existing study should be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

In addition to obtaining evidence of access, IES strongly advises applicants to establish a written agreement, within 3 months of receipt of an award, among all key collaborators and their institutions (such as the PI, Co-PIs, and mentors) regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

C. Overview of Application and Peer Review Process

1. Submitting a Letter of Intent

Letters of Intent (LOI) are submitted online at https://iesreview.ed.gov. **Select the Letter of Intent form for the program under which you plan to submit your application**. The online submission form contains fields for each of the seven content areas listed below. Use these fields to provide the requested information. The project description should be single-spaced and is recommended to be no more than one page (about 3,500 characters). The LOI is non-binding and optional, but strongly recommended. If you submit a LOI, the Program Officer will contact you regarding your proposed research. IES staff also use the information in the LOI to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Elements of the Letter of Intent

- Descriptive title

- Topic that you will address

- Brief description of the proposed project

- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number and email address of the PI and any Co-PIs

- Name and institutional affiliation of mentors and any key collaborators and contractors

- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the Duration maximums for each program)

- Estimated total budget request (attend to the Budget maximums for each program)

2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to one of the previous IES competitions but that was not funded, you must indicate on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance Form in the Application Package (see IES Application Submission Guide) that the FY 2020 application is a resubmission (Item 8) and include the application number of the previous application (an 11-character alphanumeric identifier beginning "R324" entered in Item 4a). Prior reviews will be sent to this year's reviewers along with the resubmitted application. You **must** describe your response to the prior reviews using Appendix B. Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2020 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past and did not receive an award but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should indicate on the application form (Item 8) that the FY 2020 application is a new application. In Appendix B, you must provide a rationale explaining why the FY 2020 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision. If you do not provide such an explanation, then IES may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year's reviewers along with the current application.

You may submit applications to more than one of the IES FY 2020 Training Grant programs and to multiple programs within the Research Training Programs in Special Education competition, so long as you meet the requirements below.

- An institution may submit multiple applications to the Postdoctoral Training program **only if** they are substantively different from one another **and** do not include key personnel that are also on another application to the Postdoctoral Training Program.

- An institution may submit multiple applications to the Early Career and Single-Case Methods Training programs if they are substantively different from one another.

If you submit the same or similar applications, IES will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

3. Application Processing

Applications must be submitted electronically and received no later than 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Time on August 29, 2019 through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/). You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) and on Grants.gov https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

After applications are fully uploaded and validated at Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Education receives the applications for processing and transfer to the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO) system (https://iesreview.ed.gov/). PRIMO allows applicants to track the progress of their application via the Applicant Notification System (ANS).

Approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the application deadline, invitation emails are sent to applicants who have never applied to IES before to create their individual PRIMO ANS accounts. Both the PD/PI and the AOR will receive invitation emails. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks after the application deadline, all applicants (new and existing ANS users) will begin to receive a series of emails about the status of their application. See the IES Application Submission Guide for additional information about ANS and PRIMO.

Once an application has been submitted and the application deadline has passed, you may not submit additional materials or information for inclusion with your application.

4. Scientific Peer Review Process

IES will forward all applications that are compliant and responsive to this Request for Applications to be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Scientific reviews are conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below and the review procedures posted on the IES website, https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/application_review.asp, by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and Request for Applications (https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/reviewers.asp).

At least two primary reviewers will complete written evaluations of the application, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to each of the review criteria. Primary reviewers will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score, for each application they review. Based on the overall scores assigned by primary reviewers, IES calculates an average overall score for each application and prepares a preliminary rank order of applications before the full peer review panel convenes to complete the review of applications.

The full panel will consider and score only those applications deemed to be the most competitive and to have the highest merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank order. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any application that they believe merits full panel review but that would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

5. Review Criteria for Scientific Merit

The purpose of IES-supported research is to contribute to solving education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. The specific purpose of IES-supported training programs is to support this contribution by furthering the training of special education and early intervention researchers. In doing so, IES aims to increase the quality, accessibility, use, and relevance of special education research. IES expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an

application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed training program will have a substantial impact on that purpose. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in Part II.

Review Criteria for the Postdoctoral Training and Single-Case Methods Training Programs

a) Significance
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

b) Research Training Plan
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Training Plan section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

c) Personnel
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

d) Resources
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Resources section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

Review Criteria for the Early Career Program

a) Significance
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the Early Career program?

b) Research Plan
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan section for the Early Career program?

c) Career Development Plan
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Career Development section for the Early Career program?

d) Personnel
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section for the Early Career program?

e) Resources
Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Resources section for the Early Career program?

6. Award Decisions

The following will be considered in making award decisions for responsive and compliant applications:

- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review;

- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award;

- Contribution to the overall program of research training described in this RFA;

- Ability to carry out the proposed research training within the maximum award and duration requirements; and

- Availability of funds.

D. Pre-Award Requirements

Applications that are being considered for funding based on peer review may be required to provide further information on their proposed research activities before a grant award is made. For example, you may be required to provide updated letters from partners showing their agreement to be part of the training program or from outside partners providing research opportunities for fellows. You may be required to provide updated letters of agreement showing access to the education settings where your work is to take place or to the secondary datasets you have proposed to analyze. In addition, you may be required to provide greater detail regarding your proposed work. Significant revisions to the project that arise from these information requests will have to be addressed within the original budget.

Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

Only compliant and responsive applications will be peer reviewed. Use this checklist to better ensure you have included all required components for compliance and that you have addressed all general and training program narrative requirements for responsiveness.

See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for an Application Checklist that describes the forms in the application package that must be completed and the PDF files that must be attached to the forms for a successful submission through Grants.gov.

Compliance
1. Have you included a Training Program Narrative?
2. Have you included all the Required Appendices?

• For Postdoctoral Training applications, have you included the following Required Appendices?
  o Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application)
  o Appendix C: Summary of Research and Training Grants
  o Appendix D: Example Letter of Agreement for Fellows
  o Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Training Partners?

• For Early Career applications, have you included the following Required Appendices?
  o Appendix A: Dissemination Plan
  o Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application)
  o Appendix C: Summary of Research
  o Appendix D: Letters of Agreement from Mentors
  o Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners

• For Single-Case Methods Training applications, have you included the following Required Appendices?
  o Appendix A: Dissemination Plan
  o Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application)
  o Appendix C: Summary of Research and Training Projects
  o Appendix E: Letters of Agreement

Responsiveness
3. Have you identified a single Training Program for your application?
4. For Postdoctoral Training applications, did you meet the Program Requirements under (1) Training Program Focus, (2) Eligible Applicants, and (3) Key Personnel?
5. For Early Career applications, did you meet the Program Requirements under (1) Principal Investigator, (2) Mentors, and (3) Focus on Children With or At Risk for Disabilities?
6. For Single-Case Methods Training applications, did you meet the Program Requirements under (1) Institutions and Key Personnel?
7. Does your Training Program Narrative include the required sections? Did you describe the elements required for each section? (See below.)

	Postdoctoral Training	Early Career	Single-Case Methods
Significance	• Focus of the training program, including the topics and project types it will cover	• Need for further career development • Overview of the proposed project • Research topic and project type and rationale for each	• Single-case methodologies that will be the focus of the training program • Intended participants
Research/ Research	• Recruitment plan • Research training	• Research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data	• Recruitment plan • Training content,

Training Plan	activities • Financial support for fellows and the overall training program • Plan for tracking fellows' progress and determining the success of the training program	analysis procedures • Plan to measure education outcomes of learners with or at risk for disabilities	format, and activities • Plan for tracking participants' progress and determining the success of the training program
Career Development Plan	n/a	• A training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities	n/a
Personnel	• Key personnel on the project team	• Expertise of the PI, mentor(s) and (if applicable) other personnel • Date you were granted your PhD and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program • Names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if applicable) your postdoctoral supervisor	• Key personnel on the project team
Resources	• Institutional resources to conduct the training	• Resources to support you in conducting the proposed project	• Institutional resources to conduct the training

Glossary

Administrative data: Information that is routinely collected about learners, educators, schools, and districts by state and local education agencies to assess progress, monitor programs, or adhere to reporting requirements. Examples of data include learner enrollment, class schedules, grades, and assessments; educator assignments and schedules; electronic communications with learners, parents, and educators; reports completed for EDFacts, Civil Rights Data Collection, and other federal initiatives; and fiscal records. Administrative data also include non-routine special data collections, for example, on a specific agency program, project, or policy or on a specific type of learner, educator, school, or district. Secondary data (also historical data) are a common form of administrative data.

Assessment: "Any systematic method of obtaining information, used to draw inferences about characteristics of people, objects, or programs; a systematic process to measure or evaluate the characteristics or performance of individuals, programs, or other entities, for purposes of drawing inferences; sometimes used synonymously with test" (AERA, 2014).

Compliant: The part of the process of screening applications for acceptance for review that focuses on adherence to the application rules, such as completion of all parts of the application and inclusion of the required appendices.

Cost analysis: An analysis that can help schools, districts, and states understand both total and per learner monetary costs of implementing an intervention or administering an assessment. Example costs include expenditures for personnel, facilities, equipment, materials, training, and other relevant inputs.

Development process: The method for developing the intervention to the point where it can be used by the intended end users.

Education outcomes: IES is most interested in outcomes that support success in school and afterwards, including:

- Developmental outcomes: Outcomes pertaining to cognitive, communicative, linguistic, social, emotional, adaptive, functional, or physical development.

- School readiness: Pre-reading, language, vocabulary, early STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics), and social and behavioral competencies that prepare young children for school.

- Academic outcomes: Learning, achievement, and higher-order thinking in academic content areas of reading, writing, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics) and progression through education as indicated by persistence and completion of high school course credits in content areas, high school graduation, certificates, and/or dropout.

- Social and behavioral competencies: Social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that may be important to learners' education and post-school success.

- Functional outcomes: Skills or activities that are not considered academic or related to a child's academic achievement; "functional" is often used in the context of routine activities of everyday living and can include outcomes that improve educational results and transitions to employment, independent living, and postsecondary education for learners with disabilities.

- Postsecondary Outcomes: Access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education, which includes programs that lead to occupational certificates or associate's or bachelor's degrees; as well as learning, achievement, and higher-order thinking in postsecondary courses.

- <u>Employment and Earnings Outcomes</u>: Long-term, post-school outcomes that include indicators such as hours of employment, job stability, wages and benefits.

<u>Education settings</u>: Proposed research must be relevant to education in the United States and must address factors under the control of U.S. education systems. Education for children and youth with disabilities in the United States is delivered in a wide range of settings, including homes, natural settings for early childhood special education services, child care centers, preschools, public and private K-12 schools and colleges/universities. In addition, there are also formal programs under the control of education agencies that take place out of school including after-school, distance learning, or online programs. IES does not support research that occurs in informal contexts outside of education systems and outside the control of education agencies.

<u>Efficacy replication</u>: A study that evaluates the impact an intervention with prior evidence of efficacy when it is implemented under ideal conditions with or without an independent evaluator.

<u>Feasibility</u>: The extent to which the intervention can be implemented within the requirements and constraints of an education setting.

<u>Initial efficacy evaluation:</u> A test of the impact of an intervention that has not been rigorously evaluated in a prior causal impact study.

<u>Intervention</u>: The wide range of education curricula; instructional approaches; professional development; technology; and practices, programs, and policies that are implemented at the learner, classroom, school, district, state, or federal level to improve education outcomes.

<u>Reliability</u>: The stability or dependability of measures when taken over repeated applications.

<u>Responsive</u>: The part of the process of screening applications for acceptance for review that focuses on responsiveness to the Request for Applications. This screening includes making sure applications (1) are submitted to the correct competition and/or topic and (2) meet the basic requirements set out in the Request for Applications.

<u>Secondary datasets</u>: Datasets that are often generated from nationally representative surveys or evaluations (https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp); administrative data from federal, state, or district agencies or from non-public organizations; and/or data from previous research studies.

<u>Validity</u>: The degree to which a measure provides a true indication of whatever it is intended to represent.