

Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.305N

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Application Package Available:	October 20, 2022	https://www.grants.gov/
Application Deadline:	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 23, 2023	https://www.grants.gov/
Possible Start Date:	September 1, 2023	

All applicants must also read the companion IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) for information on how to prepare and submit applications electronically through Grants.gov.

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Part I: Overview

A. Purpose of the Education Research Networks Grants Program

Through its National Center for Education Research (NCER), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports research to build knowledge and understanding of education practice and policy. IES was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA – P.L. 107-279), in part to improve academic achievement and access to educational opportunities for all learners (ESRA, § 111.b.1.B), but also to focus especially on learners whose increased achievement would help close achievement gaps (ESRA, § 115.a.1) or who lack access to educational opportunities (ESRA, § 115.a.2.A and 115.a.2.B). As part of this mission, IES takes steps to ensure that our work is carried out in a manner that is objective, secular, neutral, and nonideological and free of partisan political influence and racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias (ESRA, § 111.b.2.B). NCER's program of research is intended to:

1. Improve access to high-quality education for all learners from early childhood through adulthood, particularly learners least likely to have such access
2. Improve academic achievement for all learners from early childhood through adulthood, particularly those least likely to achieve academically
3. Reduce opportunity and achievement gaps between high-performing and low-performing learners
4. Improve access to, persistence in, progress through, and successful completion of postsecondary education

In this request for applications (RFA), NCER invites applications to contribute to networks under the Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice program. The Education Research Network Grants program focuses resources and attention on education problems or issues that are a high priority for the nation and creates both a structure and process for researchers who are working on these issues to share ideas, build new knowledge, and strengthen their research and dissemination capacity. Networks are comprised of multiple teams who have their own individual projects that share a focus on a particular education issue and a Network Lead. The goals of a Network are to advance the field's understanding of a problem or issue beyond what an individual research project or team can do on its own and to assist policymakers and practitioners in using this information to strengthen education policies and programs and improve learners' education outcomes. Networks support IES's mission to fund rigorous research that helps solve significant education problems that are relevant to the teaching and learning needs of the diverse population of the United States. NCER's ability to support high quality research depends on our ability to train and support talented researchers, statisticians, and evaluators that reflect this diversity. IES encourages principal investigators and personnel from all demographic backgrounds (<https://ies.ed.gov/aboutus/diversity.asp>) to apply. IES also encourages applications from minority-serving institutions.

For FY2023, IES invites applications for:

- A Network Lead for a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Research Network. The CTE Research Network will include Research Teams funded by other IES grant competitions.
- Up to ten Research Teams to join the Digital Learning Platforms (DLPs) to Enable Efficient Education Research Network, SEERNet, which currently includes a Network Lead and five Platform Teams. Applicants can learn more about SEERNet here: <https://seernet.org/>.

IES will consider only applications that are responsive and compliant to the requirements described in this Request for Applications (RFA) and submitted on time electronically via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>).

For this competition, all awards will be made as cooperative agreements to facilitate IES's involvement in the planning and implementation of network activities. As part of the cooperative agreements with IES, each

team will commit to collaborative participation with the network. See [Part IV.B.2.d Network Commitments](#) for the specific agreements for members of the network.

To encourage rigorous education research that is transparent, actionable, and focused on meaningful outcomes, all applications to this competition are expected to incorporate the principles outlined in the IES-wide Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER; <https://ies.ed.gov/seer/>), as applicable. These principles include –

- Pre-registering studies
- Making research findings, methods, and data open
- Addressing inequities in learners' opportunities, access to resources, and outcomes
- Identifying interventions' components
- Documenting treatment implementation and contrast
- Analyzing interventions' costs
- Using high-quality outcome measures
- Facilitating generalization of study findings
- Supporting scaling of promising interventions

IES-funded research should yield outcomes and products that are meaningful, inform stakeholders about the cost and practical benefits and effects of interventions (programs, policies, practices) on relevant outcomes for learners, and contribute to scientific knowledge and theory of teaching, learning, and organizing education systems (ESRA, § 112.1). NCER expects grantees receiving funding through this program to disseminate evidence in a way that is useful to and accessible by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public (ESRA, § 112.2).

B. Getting Started

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES offers technical assistance to applicants to address the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition. Program officers work with potential applicants through a variety of formats, including email, phone, video conferencing, pre-recorded and live- webinars and virtual office hours, up until the time of Grants.gov submission. IES webinars (live and on demand; <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>) are also available to assist with application development. All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a letter of intent (LOI) on the IES Review webpage (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/>) by November 16, 2022, and an IES program officer will respond with feedback regarding the fit of your proposed project for this RFA. The program officers for this competition are:

CTE Research Network
Dr. Corinne Alfeld
Email: Corinne.Alfeld@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 245-8203

Digital Learning Platforms Network
Dr. Erin Higgins
Email: Erin.Higgins@ed.gov
Telephone: (202) 987-1531

2. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants differ by network. See [Part II](#) for specific eligibility requirements by network.

Broadening Participation in the Education Sciences: IES is interested in broadening institutional participation in its research grant programs. IES encourages applications from minority-serving institutions (MSIs), alone or in combination with other institutions, that meet the eligibility criteria for the network to which the application will be submitted. MSIs include Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Predominantly Black Institutions, and Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions.

The Principal Investigator: The applicant organization is responsible for identifying the principal investigator (PI) on a grant application and may elect to designate more than one person to serve in this role.

The PI is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports. If more than one PI is named, the organization identifies these PIs as sharing the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically. All PIs will be listed on any grant award notification. However, organizations 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 this person should be listed as the PI. All other PIs should be listed as co-principal investigators.

3. Eligible Study Populations

Research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities from birth through K-12 or in postsecondary education must be funded by the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncser>) not NCER. Such applications will be deemed nonresponsive to this competition and will not be forwarded for peer review. The only exception to this is for learners with or at risk for disabilities who are in or could enter into adult education programs¹.

4. RFA Organization and the IES Application Submission Guide

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. [Part I](#) provides an overview of the Education Research Networks Grants program. [Part II](#) describes the requirements and recommendations for this competition. [Part III](#) provides information about general formatting and other narrative content for the application, including required appendices. [Part IV](#) provides general information on competition regulations and the review process. [Part V](#) provides a **checklist that you can use to ensure you have included all required application elements to advance to scientific peer review**. [Part VI](#) provides the topic and network role codes that you must enter in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form.
2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) – for important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure your application is complete and received on time without errors through Grants.gov.

We strongly recommend that both the principal investigator (PI) and the authorized organization representative (AOR) read both documents, whether submitting a new or revised application.

5. Ensuring Your Application is Forwarded for Scientific Peer Review

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.

(a) On-time submission

- See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf)

¹ For the purposes of this RFA, adult education refers to the system and authorized providers that serve learners at least 16-years old who are not enrolled in the standard K-12 system but are or could be preparing for, transitioning into, or currently enrolled in adult literacy programs, as defined in Title II, the “Adult Education and Family Literacy Act”, of the 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), such as Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, Integrated Education Training, Family Literacy, Integrated English Language and Civics.

- Received and validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 23, 2023.

(b) Compliance

- Includes the **required project narrative** (see [Part II](#))
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see [Part III](#))
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the project narratives (see [Part II](#)) and appendices (see [Part III](#)). IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for peer review
- Includes all **required appendices** (see [Part III](#))
 - [Appendix A: Dissemination History and Plan](#) (required for DLP Network Research Teams only)
 - [Appendix D: Letters of Agreement](#) (required for DLP Network Research Teams; optional for CTE Research Network Lead)
 - [Appendix E: Data Management Plan](#) (required for DLP Network Research Teams only)

(c) Responsiveness

- Meets **requirements** for the network topic and role (see [Parts II](#) and [Part III](#))

C. Award Limits

Applications to the Education Research Network Grants program must conform to the following limits on award duration and cost by network topic and role. Budgets should align with proposed project activities. Applicants should provide a detailed budget justification that explains how the requested costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable (see 2 CFR 200, Subpart E; <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>) and reflect the proposed scope of work.

Network Topic & Role	Maximum Number of Awards	Grant Duration	Maximum Grant Award
CTE Research Network Lead	1	5 years	\$3,750,000
DLP Research Team	10	2 years	\$400,000 per team

Part II: Competition Requirements and Recommendations

A. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Research Network Lead

1. Overview and Goals of the CTE Research Network

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) will establish a new “**Career and Technical Education Research Network**” (**CTE Research Network**) for FY2023. The CTE Research Network will include a Network Lead, funded under this RFA, and Research Teams studying CTE at the secondary and postsecondary levels funded through other IES grant programs.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) generally comprises instruction in academic, technical, and employability skills and builds knowledge and provides experiences required to enter and succeed in a variety of careers. At the secondary level, CTE introduces students to possible career fields and allows them to begin to build marketable skills and, in some cases, earn credentials, postsecondary clock hours and credits, and participate in work-based learning experiences; at the postsecondary level, CTE provides an entry point for new or returning students to learn specific knowledge and specialized skills in a particular occupational field. Even as the number of methodologically rigorous CTE research studies has increased over the last decade, in part due to IES support of research focused on students’ college and career readiness (<https://ies.ed.gov/topics/cte.asp>), more high quality CTE research evidence is needed.

The purpose of the FY2023 CTE Research Network is to build on the momentum of the current CTE Research Network (<https://ctereseachnetwork.org/>; see History section below) by continuing to serve as a hub for CTE research, research training, leadership, and dissemination of research findings. The Network will continue to provide information and evidence to the CTE community about what works, for whom, and why. In addition to conducting their own research, network members will engage in conversations and collaborations around CTE research issues, train new CTE researchers, and disseminate research findings to a wide variety of audiences.

2. Overview of the CTE Research Network Lead

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening CTE for the 21st Century Act (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-3096/pdf/COMPS-3096.pdf>; Perkins V) calls for research, development, dissemination, evaluation and assessment, capacity building, and technical assistance with regard to career and technical education programs [Sec. 114(c)(1)]. In partial fulfillment of this requirement, IES intends to award no more than one new grant in FY2023 for a **Network Lead** that will be responsible for administering and coordinating a CTE Research Network involving CTE-focused research projects funded under other IES competitions. IES will identify the projects that will be invited to participate in the CTE Research Network as Research Teams, and the CTE Research Network Lead will provide funding for Research Team participation in the Network.² The Network Lead will play a critical role in convening the Research Teams and providing the support needed to make sure the CTE Research Network functions smoothly and accomplishes its research, training, and dissemination goals.

Specifically, the CTE Research Network Lead will be responsible for four major sets of activities:

- **Network administration and coordination.** The Network Lead will serve as the point of contact with IES, convene meetings and facilitate discussions among CTE Research Network members, and coordinate the Network’s supplemental research activities.³ These cross-Network supplemental

² **Network Participation:** Applicants must set aside a minimum of \$750,000 of the total budget for up to 5 network members to participate in network activities.

³ **Supplemental Activities:** Part of the Network Lead’s work will be to coordinate cross-Network supplemental activities that respond to pressing CTE research, policy or practice needs. The Network Lead will work cooperatively with IES to select and design these

activities will respond to pressing CTE research, policy or practice needs and will be determined in coordination with IES and the Research Teams.

- **Research activities.** The Network Lead will be responsible for conducting a systematic review and synthesis of research findings on education-connected work-based learning (WBL) and identifying fruitful areas for future WBL research. *Work-based learning* refers to industry or employment settings for work-based learning where there is a formal agreement between the school or college and the employer regarding students' expected learning outcomes. The systematic review and synthesis should move the field forward by bringing together knowledge from CTE and other relevant fields to understand what is known and what has yet to be studied about how students learn practical career-related skills and gain experience in work settings related to their field of training.
- **Research training.** The Network Lead will organize research training activities across the network to prepare new researchers to study CTE and to increase the capacity of the field to carry out high-quality, rigorous CTE-focused research.
- **Leadership and Dissemination.** The Network Lead will develop and host a network website, organize briefings or presentations for key stakeholders, and disseminate the Network's products and findings.

IES intends to award no more than one grant for a CTE Research Network Lead in FY2023. The award will be made as a cooperative agreement to support IES's involvement in the planning and implementation of the CTE Research Network's activities. See [Part II.A.4.b](#) for eligibility requirements. Applicants may present their ideas for how to structure the Network Lead role. For example, the Network Lead may be one institution, or it may represent a partnership between two or more institutions or organizations that bring strong, complementary skill sets to carry out the work. Similarly, applicants may propose a single Principal Investigator (PI) or two or more co-PIs (these may be at different institutions or organizations), with one acting as the Project Director. The Network Lead may involve other key personnel under either approach.

3. History

In FY2018, IES established a CTE Research Network "Expanding the Evidence Base for CTE" (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=2226>) to increase the number and quality of causal research studies in CTE and build the capacity of researchers to conduct this type of research. For FY2023, IES seeks to establish a new CTE Research Network to build on the previous Network's contributions and continue to expand the field of high quality, rigorous CTE-focused research studies. Importantly, the FY2023 CTE Research Network will not be limited to studies with causal research designs.

4. CTE Research Network Lead Requirements

(a) Overview

The CTE Research Network Lead will be responsible for four major activities: (1) Network Administration and Coordination; (2) Research; (3) Training; and (4) Leadership and Dissemination. To be responsive to the CTE Research Network Lead role and forwarded for peer review, the application must meet the requirements listed below.

(b) Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the CTE Research Network Lead are institutions of higher education, public and/or private non-profit organizations and/or agencies, and consortia of such institutions, organizations, or agencies that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research. Eligible subgrantees include nonprofit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions of higher education. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

supplemental activities. For this reason, IES does not expect a detailed plan for these supplemental activities in the application. Applicants must budget 10 percent in direct costs of the maximum award amount to support these supplemental activities that will be determined in cooperation with IES once an award is made.

(c) Academic Outcomes

The research synthesis proposed by the Network Lead **must** examine students' career and technical education (CTE) attainment, defined as an indicator of mastery of CTE content or skills (such as CTE course grades or credits earned, technical skills, assessment scores, industry certification, or employment outcomes in a field related to the CTE training).

In addition to a required CTE outcome, the research synthesis proposed by the Lead may also examine other academic outcomes such as the following:

- For **kindergarten through Grade 12**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in academic content areas, including literacy⁴, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), social studies⁵; English language proficiency; and progression through education systems as indicated by course and grade completion, retention, high school graduation, and dropout
- For **postsecondary**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses; and access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education, which includes developmental education courses and bridge programs as well as programs that lead to occupational certificates, associate's, or bachelor's degrees
- For **adult education**,⁶ achievement in literacy, English language proficiency, and numeracy, as well as access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of adult education courses and programs

(d) Additional Outcomes – Recommended when Appropriate

In addition to a required CTE outcome, IES encourages applicants to propose inclusion of additional outcomes relevant to their research focus when appropriate. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the additional outcomes applicants may propose.

- Digital Literacy⁷
- Social and Behavioral Competencies⁸
- Educator Outcomes⁹

(e) Education Settings

Proposed research and development must be relevant to education in the United States and must address factors under the control of U.S. education systems. Education in the U.S. is delivered in a wide range of formal settings, such as public and private K-12 schools, area career and technical education centers,¹⁰ technical and community colleges, and 4-year colleges and universities. In addition, there are also formal programs under the control of education agencies that take place outside of school, including after-school, distance learning,

⁴ By *literacy*, IES refers to language-based skills including reading, writing, listening, and speaking regardless of modality (such as online or in person).

⁵ *Social studies* outcomes are defined as a learner's understanding of government structures and processes and how to be an engaged and knowledgeable citizen through skills and knowledge in civics, citizenship, geography, history, and economics.

⁶ *Adult education* refers to the system that serves learners at least 16-years old and outside the K-12 system who are preparing for, transitioning into, or currently enrolled in adult education, as defined in Title II of the 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIAO), such as Adult Basic Education, adult English language programs, and preparation programs for high school equivalency exams.

⁷ For the purposes of this competition, we are adopting the American Library Association definition of the term *digital literacy*: "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

⁸ *Social and behavioral competencies* refer to the social skills, attitudes/emotions, and behaviors that are important to learners' success in school and beyond.

⁹ *Educator outcomes* refers to measures of educator knowledge, skills, beliefs, behaviors, and/or practices.

¹⁰ *Area Career and Technical Education Centers* are defined in the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act \(PL 115-224, as amended through P.L. 116-6, Enacted\)](#).

online, work-based learning,¹¹ and formal settings authorized by state or local agencies, such as adult education programs run through grants to community-based organizations. IES does not support research and development that is relevant only in informal contexts outside of education systems. Contact an IES program officer if you have questions about the setting you have identified for your proposed research.

(f) CTE Research Network Lead Project Narrative Requirements

The project narrative **must** adhere to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)) and be **no more than 22 pages**. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 22nd page of the narrative. The project narrative for a CTE Research Network Lead application **must** include seven sections: Significance, Network Administration and Coordination Plan, Research Plan, Training Plan, Leadership and Dissemination Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

(1) Significance

The purpose of this section is to describe your vision for the Network, and the overarching goals of the Network Lead.

You **must** include a description of your vision for a CTE Research Network.

(2) Network Administration and Coordination Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your plan for coordinating the CTE Research Network.

You **must** describe your plans for Network Coordination, including convening meetings with network members¹² and facilitating cross-network supplemental activities. Network members must conduct cross-Network supplemental activities that respond to pressing CTE research, policy or practice needs. The Network Lead will work cooperatively with IES to select and design these supplemental activities. For this reason, IES does not expect a detailed plan for these supplemental activities in the application. Applicants must budget 10 percent in direct costs of the maximum award amount to support these supplemental activities that will be determined in cooperation with IES once an award is made.

(3) Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your plan for conducting a systematic review and synthesis of research findings on work-based learning (WBL) and identifying fruitful areas for future WBL research.

You **must** describe how you will conduct a systematic literature review and synthesis of work-based learning research. WBL can be broadly defined as programs or settings in which learners receive work experience that aligns with their career studies (for example, internships, co-ops, apprenticeships) but **must** be connected to an education setting. Relevant education levels include secondary, postsecondary, and adult education (including workforce skills training and retraining aligned to curricula delivered in education settings). Findings from the synthesis will inform future CTE research activities.

(4) Training Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your plans for conducting training in approaches to conducting research in CTE settings.

You **must** describe your training plan.

(5) Leadership and Dissemination Plans

The purpose of this section is to describe your plans for Network leadership and dissemination of Network member findings.

¹¹ *Work-based learning* refers to industry or employment settings for work-based learning where there is a formal agreement between the school or college and the employer regarding students' expected learning outcomes.

¹² Applicants must set aside a minimum of \$750,000 of the total budget for up to 5 network members to participate in network activities.

You **must** describe your plans for national leadership and dissemination, which **must** include establishing a website and social media presence within the first year.

(6) Personnel

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that your team possesses appropriate experience for the proposed activities and will commit enough time to the project.

You **must** describe your project team.

(7) Management and Organizational Resources

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that you have the organizational structure, capacity, and access to the resources needed to carry out and effectively manage the Network Lead.

You **must** describe the

- Plans and procedures for the overall management of the CTE Research Network.
- Resources to conduct the work of the CTE Research Network Lead, including supporting the participation of the Research Teams in Network activities.

(g) Award Limits

Awards made under the CTE Research Network Lead topic must conform to the following limits on duration and cost.

(1) Duration

The duration of the CTE Research Network Lead is 5 years.

(2) Cost Maximum

The maximum cost for the CTE Research Network Lead award is \$3,750,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs). See [Part IV.A.3.c.](#) for special budget considerations for the CTE Research Network Lead.

(3) Maximum Number of Awards

IES intends to make no more than one CTE Research Network Lead award.

5. CTE Research Network Lead Recommendations

(a) Overview

These recommendations are intended to improve the quality of your application, and the peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

(b) Populations of Interest

Promoting equity in CTE access and success for all students is a core purpose of Perkins V. To highlight disparities and identify areas for improvement, the law requires states and subrecipients to disaggregate data on student outcomes by gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as for students who are migrants and members of nine student subgroups described by the law as “special populations.”¹³ IES encourages applicants to design research and dissemination activities, when feasible, so that the results are disaggregated by gender, major racial and ethnic groups, and the “special populations” identified by Perkins V.

¹³ Section 3(48) of Perkins V identifies the following students as members of “special populations:” individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including youth and adults from low income backgrounds; individuals preparing for non-traditional fields; single parents, including single pregnant women; out-of-workforce individuals; English learners; homeless individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and youth with a parent who is on active duty in the armed forces.

(c) Project Narrative Recommendations

(1) Significance

Describe your visions for a new CTE Research Network and for a CTE Research Network Lead.

Discuss the significance of your proposed network administration, leadership, research synthesis, and research training activities. Describe how these activities will advance the knowledge and practice of CTE.

(2) Network Administration and Coordination Plan

Discuss your plans for convenings with network members, including how you will facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, discussion of and feedback on network members' research designs, and plans for new activities and collaborations. You might consider including a proposed agenda for the first network meeting in your narrative or [Appendix B](#).

Describe how you might work with Research Teams and IES to determine training or dissemination needs and to form appropriate plans to meet these needs.

Describe the process the network might use to develop cross-network working groups to focus on particular issues.

Discuss your plan to work with the Research Teams and IES to identify and prioritize supplemental activities that are carried out jointly by network members. (Note that you **must** reserve 10% of your total budget for these activities, even though they are not yet determined.)¹⁴

Discuss some of the major challenges the CTE Research Network might face. These might include challenges internal to the network. Describe how, as Network Lead, you would work with network members to overcome these challenges.

Identify the procedures that will be used to ensure that the Network Lead delivers on its obligations to the network members and IES.

Provide a timeline that shows when major activities will take place and a description of how those activities will inform one another and how they build from or feed into the CTE Research Network's activities. This may be included in [Appendix B: Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures](#).

(3) Research Plan

Describe how your proposed systematic review and synthesis of research on work-based learning (WBL) connected to education settings will contribute to the field of CTE by identifying key components of WBL that are linked to learner outcomes. IES is particularly interested in the identification of promising WBL systems or frameworks that are in need of further rigorous study or evaluation.

Specify the research questions that your systematic review and synthesis will address.

Describe the steps you will take to conduct your systematic review and synthesis of the WBL research literature. Discuss and justify your criteria for inclusion and exclusion of research studies.

Describe your methodological approaches for the systematic review and analysis. Describe the dimensions along which you plan to code and classify information included in the studies that will be reviewed.

Describe how the recommendations emerging from the synthesis could inform future studies of WBL by the network as well as by other researchers.

¹⁴ **Supplemental Activities:** As mentioned earlier in the RFA: As part of the Network Lead's work, you must conduct cross-Network supplemental activities that respond to pressing CTE research, policy or practice needs. The Network Lead will work cooperatively with IES to select and design these supplemental activities. For this reason, IES does not expect a detailed plan for these supplemental activities in the application. Applicants must budget 10 percent in direct costs of the maximum award amount to support these supplemental activities that will be determined in cooperation with IES once an award is made.

Describe how you will disseminate the results of your systematic review and synthesis, which should be geared primarily toward a researcher audience. At minimum, the report should be made publicly available on the network website, although IES encourages the Network Lead to pursue formal publication (e.g., through a peer-reviewed journal or as a book).

Provide a timeline for carrying out this research synthesis activity. The report should be completed within the first 18 months of the grant and made available for network members and the public for immediate use.

(4) Training Plan

Describe your vision for research training activities that will help encourage new researchers to conduct research on CTE and strengthen the skills of researchers who are already working in this field.

Identify the type(s) of training you are prepared to offer as Network Lead and why the training is needed.

- Explain the individuals or groups that will be targeted for the training, the numbers of each, and how they will be identified or recruited.
- Explain the content and format of the training (e.g., summer training institutes, conference workshops, etc.). (Note that individual training fellowships are not allowed under this grant).
- Discuss the length of the training and whether it will be offered a single time or repeated.
- Discuss your recruitment and selection process, including how you will advertise the training and how you will determine how many and which applicants to accept for training.
- Explain what steps you will take to ensure that trainees include individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Discuss how you will assess the outcomes of your training and what you will consider a successful outcome(s).
- If you plan to offer financial support to research trainees, specify the amount and the conditions.

Include a timeline for research training activities during the grant.

(5) Leadership and Dissemination Plans

Explain how you will provide leadership around issues of national need relevant to CTE research.

Explain how you will work with the network members to communicate broadly about the objectives, activities, and findings of the CTE Research Network.

Describe how you will generate interest in research and use of evidence on CTE. Describe the types of outreach or other activities you will undertake to engage stakeholders in the work of the CTE Research Network.

Describe your CTE Research Network website, including your ideas for making the website a “go to” source for CTE research and how you will make it informative and engaging for non-researchers. Provide a timeline for launching the website within the first year of the grant and explain how you will keep it current.

Identify the various audiences you intend to reach with your communication activities, and how you will make the results accessible and useful for these audiences. Describe the groups of stakeholders who may benefit from your national engagement activities and how you will reach these audiences through the major publications, presentations, and products you expect to produce. Discuss your ideas for using briefings and other forums for various audiences and stakeholders to encourage dialogue and feedback on the network’s research objectives, findings, and future activities.

Discuss your use of social media and the electronic forms of communication (such as webinars, podcasts, and videos) you will produce to help the stakeholders you have identified, including how you envision them finding and using these products.

Describe how you will coordinate with national associations and/or use conferences to share information and exchange ideas with CTE education policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

Describe what kinds of tools and resources you will post on your website to support CTE researchers, both in and out of the Network.¹⁵

Include a timeline for dissemination activities during the course of the grant. These should primarily take place in years 3-5 of the grant.

(6) Personnel

Identify and describe expertise and qualifications of the key personnel at the primary applicant institution and at any subaward institutions. Describe the CTE and CTE research expertise of the key personnel. Describe the project management, leadership, and dissemination expertise of the Network Lead team at the primary applicant organization and at any subaward organizations.

In its research grant programs, IES is committed to broadening participation, including personnel from underrepresented communities and diverse institution types. Describe how the background and experience of the project team supports the successful conduct of the proposed work. Discuss your team's experience working with populations of learners from the demographic communities that your project addresses.

Identify and describe the following for all key personnel, including the principal investigator, co-principal investigators, and co-investigators:

- Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the project.
- Experience that is relevant to national leadership activities, including communications and dissemination, engaging stakeholders in interactive activities, and summarizing or curating information or resources.
- Experience and capacity to manage a project of this size and type. IES encourages applicants to partner with an interdisciplinary team of researchers, developers and industry representatives, and program administrators and practitioners to help guide the activities.

Discuss who will manage the communications across the network and with the public. Strong applications will have a dedicated communications manager or communications team.

(7) Management and Organizational Resources

Describe your institutional capacity and experience to function as Network Lead. Be sure to include prior history of managing large grants.

Describe the facilities and other resources you have available to support your role as Network Lead. These may include specialized libraries or research facilities, access to extant datasets, videoconferencing facilities to support Network meetings, etc.

Describe your plans and procedures for the overall management of the CTE Research Network and its diverse activities.

Identify the management structure and procedures that you will use to ensure that the CTE Research Network is responsive to the concerns and needs of IES and how the Network Lead would address potential conflicts among teams.

Include an organization chart that shows how the major functions or activities of the Network Lead and the CTE Research Network itself will be organized and how key personnel will relate to one another (may be included in [Appendix B](#)).

Discuss your editorial, review, and communications capacity to host a Network website and produce, review, and disseminate Network products, including the products of Network members.

¹⁵ Note that IES-funded researchers who create products for use in research and practice as a result of their project (such as curricula, professional development programs, measures and assessments, guides, and toolkits) are expected to make these products available for research purposes or (after evaluation or validation) for general use.

Document the availability and cooperation of the organizations or experts that will help carry out your plan via letters of agreement in [Appendix D](#) of your application (optional).

B. Digital Learning Platforms (DLPs) Network Research Teams

1. Overview and Goals of the DLPs Network

In FY2021, NCER funded a network to increase the number of digital learning platforms (DLPs) that support research and to provide the infrastructure needed to enable education technology industry leaders and developers, education researchers, and education practitioners to work together to conduct relevant, rigorous, equity-focused research. The network – SEERNet (<https://seernet.org/>) – is led by Digital Promise and includes five Platform Teams: Terracotta (a plug-in for Canvas developed at Indiana University), Kinetic (OpenStax/Rice University), UpGrade/MATHia (Carnegie Learning), Arizona State University (ASU) Learning@Scale (ASU/ASU Online), and ASSISTments (Worcester Polytechnic Institute/The ASSISTments Foundation). During the first year of the SEERNet network, the Platform Teams built tools to support research and established processes to work with external researchers. In FY2023, IES is inviting applications for Research Teams who will join the network to conduct research using the DLPs within SEERNet.

The intent of this network is to leverage existing, widely used DLPs for rigorous education research and replication. Education research is often a slow and costly process. Also difficult is replicating research in a timely and cost-effective way to ensure that findings are meaningful for the wide range of contexts and populations that make up our nation's education system. Conducting research through widely used DLPs may accelerate the research enterprise and make it easier to conduct replications to identify what works for whom under what conditions. As DLPs' role in the provision of education grows, more research is needed to determine how to improve their effectiveness.

Each platform within SEERNet has characteristics that make it well suited for certain types of research. For instance, some are set up to support A/B studies and efficacy/replication studies of instructional approaches. Others have large, existing datasets that can support a variety of secondary data analysis projects. Each platform also has its own process for working with researchers and for recruiting a sample of students for studies that involve primary data collection. A guide with this information and more can be found here: https://seernet.org/?page_id=279.

2. Overview of the DLPs Network Research Teams

The focus of the current competition is on establishing Research Teams that will make use of one of the funded SEERNet platforms for their proposed research. This competition is not limited in terms of research project types or research designs, and it is open to applicants who propose primary data collection and analysis, secondary data analysis, or a mix of both, as long as the proposed research is feasible within the DLP that will be used to conduct the research. Research questions may be exploratory, design-based, or causal.

All applicants must include a letter from the Platform Team for the DLP that will be used to conduct the proposed research that comments on the feasibility of the proposed research. [Part II.B.3.g](#) of this RFA includes more information on how to obtain the letter. Additionally, all applicants must build a six-month planning period into the start of the grant to allow for time to work out any additional platform feasibility challenges. For all DLP Network Research Teams grants that IES awards, IES will impose a special condition that states that future grant funding beyond the first six months is contingent on the Research Team demonstrating that their project is able to be implemented in partnership with the proposed DLP.

3. DLP Network Research Team Requirements

(a) Overview

Each Research Team will conduct independent research activities, working with the Platform Team whose DLP will be used to implement the research, and will also coordinate with the other teams in the SEERNet network. To be responsive to the DLP Network Research Team role and forwarded for peer review, the proposed project must meet the requirements listed below.

(b) Eligible Applicants

Organizations that have the ability and capacity to conduct rigorous research and development are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, institutions of higher education and non-profit, for-profit, public, or private agencies. Applicants from the same institution as the Platform Team they intend to work with are eligible to apply to conduct research on that platform, and applicants associated with a SEERNet Platform Team are eligible to apply to work with another Platform Team within SEERNet.

(c) Academic Outcomes

Research projects **must** include measures of academic outcomes of learners. IES supports research on a diverse set of academic outcomes that reflect learning and achievement in academic content areas and learners' successful progression through education systems. **The academic outcomes that are the focus of the project must be obtainable within the SEERNet DLP that will be used to implement the proposed research.** Additional data sources may be used in conjunction with the data obtained from the SEERNet DLP.

IES is interested in the following academic outcomes:

- For **kindergarten through Grade 12**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in academic content areas, including literacy¹⁶, STEM, social studies¹⁷; English language proficiency; career and technical education (CTE) attainment¹⁸; and progression through education systems as indicated by course and grade completion, retention, high school graduation, and dropout
- For **postsecondary**, learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses; and access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education, which includes developmental education courses and bridge programs as well as programs that lead to occupational certificates, associate's or bachelor's degrees
- For **adult education**,¹⁹ achievement in literacy, English language proficiency, and numeracy, as well as access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of adult education courses and programs

(d) Additional Outcomes – Recommended when Appropriate

In addition to a required academic outcome, IES encourages applicants to propose inclusion of additional outcomes relevant to their research focus when appropriate. All applications that include such outcomes **must also include** a required academic outcome. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the additional outcomes applicants may propose.

- Digital Literacy²⁰
- Social and Behavioral Competencies²¹

¹⁶ By *literacy*, IES refers to language-based skills to include reading, writing, listening, and speaking regardless of modality (such as online or in person).

¹⁷ *Social studies* outcomes are defined as a learner's understanding of government structures and processes and how to be an engaged and knowledgeable citizen through skills and knowledge in civics, citizenship, geography, history, and economics.

¹⁸ *CTE attainment* is defined as an indicator of mastery of CTE content or skills such as CTE course grades or credits earned, technical skills, assessment scores, industry certification, or employment outcomes in a field related to the CTE training.

¹⁹ *Adult education* refers to the system that serves learners at least 16-years old and outside the K-12 system who are preparing for, transitioning into, or currently enrolled in adult education, as defined in Title II of the 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIAO), such as Adult Basic Education, adult English language programs, and preparation programs for high school equivalency exams.

²⁰ For the purposes of this competition, we are adopting the American Library Association definition of the term *digital literacy*: "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

²¹ *Social and behavioral competencies* refer to the social skills, attitudes/emotions, and behaviors that are important to learners' success in school and beyond.

- Educator Outcomes²²
- Labor market success

(e) Education Settings

Proposed research and development **must** be relevant to education in the United States and **must** address factors under the control of U.S. education systems. Proposed research **must** be implemented within one and only one of the five SEERNet DLPs: Terracotta, Kinetic, UpGrade/MATHia , ASU Learning@Scale, and ASSISTments. Applicants may not submit multiple applications proposing to conduct the same or similar research using different DLPs. 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.

(f) Research Team Project Narrative Requirements

Each Research Team project narrative **must** adhere to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)) and be **no more than 22 pages**. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 22nd page of the narrative. The project narrative for a Research Team application **must** include four sections: Significance, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

(1) Significance

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the research you are proposing to conduct through one of the five DLPs in the SEERNet Network.

You **must**:

- describe the research questions that will be addressed through the proposed work.
- identify which SEERNet Network DLP will be used to implement the proposed research.

(2) Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your research design, methods, and analysis plan and demonstrate how these will address the research questions. IES encourages the use of methods that combine both quantitative and qualitative analysis as relevant and appropriate.

You **must describe** the

- feasibility of conducting the proposed research on the identified DLP
- plans to address remaining feasibility challenges in consultation with the Platform Team during an initial six-month planning period
- characteristics of your sample
- research design and methods
- data analysis plan

(3) Personnel

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that your team possesses the appropriate experience for the proposed work and will commit enough time to the project.

You **must describe** your project team.

(4) Resources

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate organizational capacity and access to resources needed to execute a project of this size and complexity.

You **must describe** your resources to conduct the project.

(g) Feasibility letter from the platform developer

Applicants **must** include the full text of their request for a feasibility letter as well as the feasibility letter obtained from the SEERNet Platform Team whose DLP is to be used for the proposed research in [Appendix D](#).

²² Educator outcomes refers to measures of educator knowledge, skills, beliefs, behaviors, and/or practices.

The feasibility letter is not intended as a letter of endorsement or an assessment of the quality of the proposed research, but rather an objective commentary on the feasibility of implementing the study or studies on the designated DLP. If the Platform Team notes potential feasibility challenges in the letter, the applicant should provide an explanation in the project narrative as to how those challenges have been addressed through amendments to the research plan (relative to the one outlined in their original request for a feasibility letter) and/or could be addressed with the Platform Team during the six-month planning period at the start of the grant. To provide adequate time to obtain the letter ahead of the submission deadline, applicants are strongly recommended to submit the following information to the Platform Team's contact email (listed below) and to the SEERNet email address (seernet@digitalpromise.org) by January 6, 2023:

- 1-2 sentence overview of the project and its purpose
- List of the research questions to be addressed by the proposed study or studies
- Sample size and characteristics required for the proposed study or studies
- Research design
- Brief description of any measures, content, and/or instructional approaches that need to be implemented for the study

Contact information for each Platform Team:

- OpenStax/Kinetic: kinetic@openstax.org
- Terracotta: info@terracotta.education
- ASSISTments: etrial.305N@assistments.org
- MATHia/UpGrade: upgradeplatform@carnegielearning.com
- ASU Learning@Scale: learningatscale@asu.edu

(h) Data Management Plan (DMP)²³

All DLP Network Research Teams applications **must** include a Data Management Plan (DMP) placed in [Appendix E](#). Your DMP describes your plans for making the final research data from the proposed project accessible to others. See Part III.C.6 for details about what should be included in your DMP.

(i) Award Limits

Awards made under the DLP Network Research Teams role **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost.

(1) Duration Maximum

The maximum duration of a Research Team award is **2 years**.

(2) Cost Maximum

The maximum cost for each Research Team award is **\$400,000** (total cost = direct + indirect costs).

(3) Maximum Number of Awards

IES intends to make **no more than ten awards, with no more than two awards using each of the five SEERNet DLPs**. However, should funding be available, IES may consider making additional awards to high-quality applications that remain unfunded after ten awards have been made.

4. DLP Network Research Team Recommendations

(a) Overview

These recommendations are intended to improve the quality of your application, and peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

²³ Resources that may be of interest to researchers in developing a data management plan can be found on the IES website (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>).

(b) Project Narrative Recommendations

(1) Significance

Discuss the significance of your proposed work. How will the results affect policy or practice? How will the results inform future education research? How will the research address education inequities, such as by identifying ways to improve learners' outcomes and/or their access to resources and opportunities? How will the results inform future design decisions for DLPs, both generally and specifically for the DLP that will be used for the proposed research?

Describe the population of learners and educators intended to benefit from this research, highlighting how the research will address features of the education system that work differentially well for diverse communities of learners and for those who have historically been underserved by the education system.

If you propose an exploratory study to identify relationships between learner-, educator-, school-, and policy-level characteristics and meaningful education outcomes, describe how the factors you propose to study are under the control of education agencies and the relationships you expect them to have with learner outcomes. Describe how your research will explore how the quality of the DLP learning experience varies in relation to differences in learners' strengths, experiences, and characteristics, with sensitivity to variation in educators' characteristics and education settings.

If you propose research designed to test the causal impact of an intervention or intervention feature:

- Describe the value of the intervention or intervention feature being tested. Why would it be an improvement over what already exists? For example, is it more user-friendly, more likely to produce significantly better learning outcomes, more likely to be ready to be used at scale when evidence of impact is available, and/or less expensive to implement than what exists in current practice?
- Clearly describe your initial theory of change, illustrating how and why the desired change in learner outcomes is expected to happen as the result of the intervention or feature you are testing.
 - Include the theoretical justifications and empirical evidence to support your theory of change.
 - Specify the core components of the intervention or intervention feature being tested as well as conditions that must be in place that will lead to the desired change in education outcomes.
 - Include a visual representation of your theory of change in [Appendix B: Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures](#).

If the DLP you intend to use expects you to recruit your own participants, describe partnerships with education agencies to support recruitment. Review the SEERNet research guide for more information about recruitment: <https://seernet.org/about-us/research-guide/>.

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 research.

(2) Research Plan

Specify your research questions and describe how they are motivated by the information provided in your significance section.

Review the SEERNet research guide carefully to ensure that all proposed research activities and their corresponding budget are appropriate for the DLP you have identified for your proposed research: <https://seernet.org/about-us/research-guide/>. For instance, for some DLPs, content creation falls to the Research Teams, in which case proposing development work and the costs associated with it would be appropriate. However, research that requires revisions to content, such as instructional materials and assessments, developed and delivered by or through the DLP would not be suitable for this competition.

Summarize the issues raised in the feasibility letter included in [Appendix D](#) and provide a clear plan for addressing them in collaboration with the identified SEERNet Platform Team during the 6-month planning period of the project.

Provide a timeline for each step in your project including sample recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination. Ensure that the timeline includes the six-month planning period at the start of the project.

Timeline tables or figures should be placed in either the project narrative or [Appendix B: Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures](#), but discussion of the timeline should be included only in the project narrative.

Discuss how your research conceptualizes education equity, and how the research design, sample, measurement, analysis, and reporting align to that conceptualization.

Sample and Setting

Discuss the procedure you will use to recruit a sample that represents your target population (including subgroups, if applicable). Note that each platform has different processes for how researchers recruit participants for their studies. For more information, see https://seernet.org/?page_id=279.

Describe and justify exclusion and inclusion criteria and discuss how they will affect your ability to generalize to the target population.

Describe the population of learners that your sample represents. Explain how your work with this sample will contribute to a larger body of knowledge on what works, for whom, and under what conditions, and how learners from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those in your proposed study, will be represented in this larger knowledge base. IES does not expect individual projects to be generalizable to the U.S. population as a whole; instead, your target population may represent a very narrow segment of the larger U.S. population. Describe strategies to reduce attrition, if applicable.

For all quantitative inferential analyses, demonstrate that the sample provides enough power to address your research questions.

Research Design and Methods

Describe your research design with enough detail to demonstrate it will address your research questions. Identify all measures and discuss their validity and reliability for the intended purpose and population.

For primary data collection projects:

- Describe procedures for data collection.
- Describe processes for transforming or recoding raw data into another format or structure.
- Describe any qualitative data collection and coding protocols including the procedures for monitoring and maintaining inter-rater reliability and the mechanism for quantifying the data if needed.

For secondary data analysis projects:

- Describe the types of data that will be requested from the DLP.
- Describe the process for transforming the data to create any of the key variables, if applicable.

If you are proposing a research design to study the causal impact of an intervention or intervention feature, you are encouraged to review the recommendations in the most recent Education Research Grants competition for the Initial Efficacy project type: https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/2022_84305A.pdf.

Data Analysis Plan

Describe the types of analyses you intend to perform, such as descriptive, correlational, predictive and/or causal analyses. NCER does not favor any one type of analysis but expects that the proposed analyses will be high quality and will be tailored to address the research questions.

Describe how you will determine whether the findings from your sample represent the larger population by contrasting your sample's characteristics with the characteristics of the target population.

Describe your plans for adjusting for any mismatch between your sample and the target population. IES does not expect individual projects to be generalizable to the U.S. population as a whole; instead, your target population may represent a narrow segment of the U.S. population.

Describe and justify the statistical models to be used, including how they address the multilevel nature of education data and how well they control for selection bias. Discuss analyses to explore alternative hypotheses.

Discuss how you will address exclusion from testing and missing data. Describe sensitivity tests to assess the influence of key procedural or analytic decisions on the results. Provide separate descriptions for all analyses of factors that mediate or moderate the relationships of interest and provide information about the statistical power for each analysis.

Describe analyses that allow valid estimates to be calculated for different groups within the sample to improve our understanding of the extent to which there are varying outcomes for different groups, especially those groups that have been historically underserved.

Provide enough detail for reviewers to be able to judge the feasibility of any plans to link multiple datasets.

(3) Personnel

Identify and describe expertise and qualifications of the project team at the primary applicant organization and at any subaward organizations to carry out the proposed work.

If applicable, describe partnerships with education agencies to carry out the proposed work.

In its research grant programs, IES is committed to broadening participation, including personnel from underrepresented communities and diverse institution types. Describe how the background and experience of the project team supports the successful conduct of the proposed work. Discuss your team's experience working with populations of learners from the underrepresented communities that your project addresses.

Identify the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the project on track and ensure the quality of its work, including

- Roles and responsibilities of personnel on the project
- Proportion of time personnel will devote to the project, expressed as percent effort over a 12- month calendar year

(4) Resources

Describe your organization's capacity to manage a grant of this size.

Describe your access to resources available at the primary and any subaward organizations. Applicants may not include a subaward to the Platform Team whose DLP they are proposing to use to implement their study.

Describe your plan for acquiring 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, curriculum, or training materials.

In addition to the required letter from a SEERNet Platform Team and the text of the initial request for the letter, include letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing memoranda of understanding in [Appendix D: Letters of Agreement](#), if applicable to your project.

Part III: Preparing Your Application

A. Overview

The application contents—individual forms and their PDF attachments—represent the body of an application to IES. IES encourages you to refer to the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) for additional information about preparing to submit your application and ensuring your application is sufficient.

B. General Formatting

To ensure that reviewers can read your application and that all applicants have similar expectations for length and space, IES specifies the following formatting conventions. Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements is necessary so that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using small type or by providing more text in their applications. These requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted, unless otherwise specified. For an application to be compliant and sent forward for review, the applicant should ensure that each narrative section follows both the page limit maximums and the formatting guidelines below unless otherwise specified.

1. Page and Margin Specifications

For all IES grant applications, a “page” is 8.5 in. x 11 in. on one side only with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

2. Page Numbering

Add page numbers using the header or footer function and place them at the bottom or upper right corner for ease of reading.

3. Spacing

Text must be single spaced.

4. Type Size (Font Size)

Type must conform to the following three requirements:

- The height of the letters must not be smaller than a type size of 12-point.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi.
- Type size must yield no more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch.

You should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the application; consequently, the use of small type will be grounds for IES to return the application without scientific peer review. Adherence to these requirements also is necessary to ensure that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using smaller type or line spacing to provide more text in the application.

As a practical matter, if you use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing, or other alterations, and use footnotes sparingly, if at all, the application will typically meet these requirements. Readability should guide your selection of an appropriate font and your use of footnotes.

5. Citations

Use the parenthetical author-date style for citations rather than numeric citations that correspond to the reference list.

6. Graphs, Diagrams, and Tables

IES encourages you to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If color is used, you should ensure that the material reproduces well when printed or photocopied in black and white.

Text in figures, charts, and tables, including legends, may be in a type size smaller than 12-point but must be readily legible.

C. Required and Optional Appendices

The required project narrative that is described for each network topic and role (see [Part II: Competition Requirements and Recommendations](#)) 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 project 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 one of the optional appendices. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.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/>).

The project narrative and appendices are critical parts of the IES application because they include the substantive content that will be reviewed for theoretical and practical significance and scientific merit.

1. Appendix A: Dissemination History and Plan (Required for DLP Research Teams Only)

DLP Research Team applicants **must** include Appendix A after the project narrative. Appendix A includes two sections: Dissemination History and Dissemination Plan. Appendix A **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages**, including one page for the Dissemination History and two pages for the Dissemination Plan. If Appendix A exceeds this three-page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

(a) Dissemination History

The dissemination history is intended to demonstrate that the research and development you and your project team have conducted in the past has been disseminated in a way that is consistent with the IES mission to promote scientifically valid research findings that provide the basis for improving academic instruction and lifelong learning. PIs who have never led an IES grant should focus on dissemination history of related, past federal or non-federal research projects in which they and their project team have participated or other relevant research dissemination activities. Reviewers will use this information to determine whether the project personnel have dissemination experience that will support the proposed dissemination plan.

The dissemination history should include the following:

- A brief description of the outcomes of prior research and development, including products developed or tested and how the project's findings and products were disseminated
- For interventions or assessments that were developed through one or more projects and have evidence of impact on learner outcomes or of the validity and reliability of the assessment for intended purposes and learners, an explanation for how it has been made available to users, the number of active users of the product, the number of users of the product during its history, and funding agreements or outside investments for commercialization (if applicable)
- Other unique dissemination products or notable presentations of research findings, particularly those that were intended for practitioners, policymakers, parents, students, and/or the general public

(b) Dissemination Plan

Describe your plan to disseminate the findings from the proposed project. Dissemination plans should be tailored to the audiences that will benefit from the findings and reflect the unique purpose of the project.

Identify the audiences that you expect will most likely benefit from your research such as federal and state policymakers and program administrators and local school system administrators, school administrators, educators, parents, learners, and other education researchers.

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

The Dissemination History and Plan is the only information that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application.

2. Appendix B: Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures (Optional)

Appendix B **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix B exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review. In Appendix B, you may include figures, charts, or tables with supplementary information like a timeline for your project, a diagram of the management structure of your project, or examples of measures used to collect data for your project such as individual test items, tests, surveys, and observation and interview protocols.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

3. Appendix C: Examples of Intervention or Assessment Materials (Optional)

Appendix C **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 10 pages**. If Appendix C exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 10th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review. If you are proposing to explore, develop, evaluate, or validate an intervention or assessment you may 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.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix C; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

4. Appendix D: Letters of Agreement (Required for DLP Network Research Team Applicants; Optional for CTE Research Network Lead Applicants)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix D. Use this appendix to provide copies of letters of agreement from schools, districts, platform developers, and/or other settings or data sources that will be a part of or will provide data for the proposed research and/or individuals who will serve as consultants. You may also use this appendix to provide copies of letters that provide clear evidence of the education problem or issue's importance to educators. 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 (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

Letters of agreement 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 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.

For DLP Network Research Team Applicants Only

Applicants **must** include the full text of their request for a feasibility letter as well as the feasibility letter obtained from the SEERNet Platform Team whose DLP is to be used for the proposed research in Appendix D. The feasibility letter is not intended as a letter of endorsement or an assessment of the quality of the proposed research, but rather an objective commentary on the feasibility of implementing the study or studies on the designated DLP. If the Platform Team notes potential feasibility challenges in the letter, the applicant should provide an explanation in the project narrative as to how those challenges could be addressed with the Platform Team during the six-month planning period at the start of the grant. To provide adequate time to obtain the letter ahead of the submission deadline, applicants are strongly recommended to submit the following information to the Platform Team's contact email (listed below) and to the SEERNet email address (seernet@digitalpromise.org) by January 6, 2023.

- 1-2 sentence overview of the project and its purpose
- List of the research questions to be addressed by the proposed study or studies
- Sample size and characteristics required for the proposed study or studies
- Research design
- Brief description of any measures, content, and/or instructional approaches that need to be implemented for the study

Contact information for each Platform Team:

- OpenStax/Kinetic: kinetic@openstax.org
- Terracotta: info@terracotta.education
- ASSISTments: etrial.305N@assistments.org
- MATHia/UpGrade: upgradeplatform@carnegielearning.com
- ASU Learning@Scale: learningatscale@asu.edu

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix D; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

5. Appendix E: Data Management Plan (Required for DLP Network Research Teams Only)

DLP Network Research Teams applicants **must** include Appendix E.

When the PI and the AOR sign the cover page of the grant application, they will be assuring compliance with IES policy on data sharing as well as other policies and regulations governing research awards. Once the DMP is approved by IES, the PI and the institution are required to carry it out and to report progress and problems through the regular reporting channels. Compliance with IES data sharing requirements is expected even though the final dataset may not be completed and prepared for data sharing until after the grant has been completed. In cases where the PI/grantee is non-compliant with the requirements of the data sharing policy or DMP, subsequent awards to individuals or institutions may be affected. By addressing the items identified below, your DMP describes how you will meet the requirements of the IES policy for data sharing. The DMP should include the following:

- Identification of the data repository where you will pre-register your study within the first year of the project, following the Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER; <https://ies.ed.gov/seer/preregistration.asp>)
- Type of data to be shared
- Procedures for managing and for maintaining the confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information
- Roles and responsibilities of project or institutional staff in the management and retention of research data, including a discussion of any changes to the roles and responsibilities that will occur should the project director/principal investigator and/or co-project directors/coprincipal investigators leave the project or their institution
- Expected schedule for data sharing, including how long the data will remain accessible (no later than publication of findings in a peer-reviewed publication and available for at least 10 years) and

acknowledgement that the timeframe of data accessibility will be reviewed at the annual progress reviews and revised as necessary

- Format of the final dataset
- Dataset documentation to be provided, including any decisions made about the data that would be important in replicating the results
- Method of data sharing, such as through a data archive, and how those interested in using the data can locate and access them
- Whether or not users will need to sign a data use agreement and, if so, what conditions they must meet
- Any circumstances that prevent all or some of the data from being shared (This includes data that may fall under multiple statutes and, hence, must meet the confidentiality requirements for each applicable statute including data covered by Common Rule for Protection of Human Subjects, FERPA, and HIPAA.) The costs of the DMP can be covered by the grant and should be included in the budget and explained in the budget narrative.

Appendix E must meet the general formatting guidelines and be no more than five pages. If Appendix E exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review. Include your Data Management Plan (DMP) in Appendix E. This is the only material that should be included in Appendix E; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

D. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the project narrative (see [Part II: Competition Requirements and Recommendations](#)) and required and optional appendices (see above), you will also prepare a project summary/structured abstract, a bibliography and references cited, an exempt or non-exempt research on human subjects narrative, and biosketches for key personnel and consultants to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) 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. Project Summary/Structured Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/structured abstract as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. If your project is recommended for funding, IES will use this abstract as the basis for the online abstracts that we post when new awards are announced. We recommend that the project summary/structured abstract be two-pages long and follow the format used for IES online abstracts (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/>).

(a) Title and Network Role

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title of the project.
- **Network Role:** Identify the network role to which you are applying (see [Parts II](#) and [III](#)). This information should match the code entered for Item 4b: Agency Routing Number on the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form (see the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) and [Part VI: Required Codes for Item 4b of the SF 424 Cover Sheet](#) for more information).

(b) Project Summary

The purpose of the project summary is to provide a high-level overview that is accessible to a range of audiences, such as policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. This section should use short, active sentences to briefly describe the significance of the project, project activities, and the intended outcomes.

- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose of the project and its significance for improving education in the United States. This should include why the research is important, what this project will do to address the need, and the general expected outcomes of the project.
- **Project Activities:** An overview of the project activities.

- **Products and Dissemination:** A brief description of the expected products of the project, including the products to be developed and the information that will be learned and disseminated.

(c) Structured Abstract

The purpose of the structured abstract is to provide key details about the project activities. This section is most likely to be used by other researchers but should be written in a way that is accessible to anyone who wants more information about the project.

- **CTE Research Network Lead**– For each of the four major activities (Network Administration and Coordination, Research, Training, and Leadership and Dissemination), CTE Research Network Lead applicants should describe the following:
 - Activity structure and goals: a brief description of what each activity entails, its goals, and how its structure is likely to achieve those goals
 - The stakeholder or audience for each activity
- **DLP Research Teams**– For each major study, DLP Research Teams should describe the following:
 - Setting: A brief description of the location (identified at the state level) where the project activities will take place and other important characteristics of the locale, such as whether it is rural or urban.
 - Population/Sample: A brief description of the sample who will participate in the proposed project activities, including number of participants; the composition of the sample including age or grade level, race/ethnicity, or disability status as appropriate; and the population the sample is intended to represent.
 - Innovation/Factors: a brief description of what will be developed or tested, or a brief description of the factors that will be examined in relation to learner outcomes (for studies that propose exploratory work)
 - Research Design and Methods: A brief description of the major features of the design and methodology.
 - Control Condition (if applicable)
 - Key Measures
 - Data Analytic Strategy
 - Cost Analysis (if applicable, include a brief description of the cost and/or cost effectiveness analyses planned)
 - Related IES Projects: A list of the IES-issued award number and/or corresponding online abstract link (URLs) to completed or ongoing IES-funded projects that are related to the proposed project

See our online search engine of funded research grants (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/>) for examples of the content to be included in your project summary/structured abstract and to search for award numbers and URLs.

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You **must** submit the bibliography and references cited as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. There is **no recommended 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 project 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* (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/hrsnarrative1.html>) for a brief overview of principles,

regulations, and policies which affect research involving human subjects in research activities supported by the Department of Education.

Note that the Revised Common Rule is now in effect with changes that will affect Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of your proposed research protocol. Take care to address how changes to exemption and continuing review procedures, and the use of a single IRB, will be addressed should your application be recommended for funding.

The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of IRB 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 from the Department.

4. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel

You **must** submit a biographical sketch for each person named as key personnel in your application. You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). Each biographical sketch (an abbreviated CV plus current and pending support information) **must be no more than five pages in length**. If a biographical sketch exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

Biographical sketches are submitted as separate PDF attachments in the application package. IES strongly encourages applicants to use SciENcv (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>) where you will find an IES biosketch form. IES will accept the SciENcv format for your biographical sketch even though it does not adhere exactly to our general formatting requirements. You may also develop your own biosketch format. If you use SciENcv, the information on current and pending support will be entered into the IES biosketch template. If you use your own format, you will need to provide this information in a separate table.

The biographical sketch for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, other key personnel, and consultants (if included) should show how members of the project team possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example, by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience, including experience working with the study population as applicable.

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, and other key personnel, along with the proportion of their time, expressed as percent **effort over a 12-month calendar year**, allocated to each project. Include the proposed IES grant as one of the pending grants in this list.

Be sure to include your ORCID iD (Open Researcher and Contributor; <https://orcid.org/>) if you have one and consider establishing one if you have yet to do so.

Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award cooperative agreements pursuant to this Request for Applications.

2. Funding Available

Although IES intends to support the topic and network roles described in this announcement, all awards pursuant to this Request for Applications 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.

The size of the award depends on the network role as well as the scope of the project. Please attend to the duration and budget maximums set for each network role in [Part II: Competition Requirements and Recommendations](#). For the CTE Research Network, IES intends to award no more than one Network Lead. For the DLP Network, IES intends to award up to ten Research Teams, with no more than two awards using each of the five SEERNet DLPs.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

(a) Indirect Cost Rate

When calculating your expenses for research conducted in field settings, you should apply your institution's federally negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate. Please note that the Indirect Cost Group (ICG) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Chief Financial Officer will not be available for assistance during the application preparation process. If your institution does not have an indirect cost rate and you receive a grant from IES, the ICG group can help with obtaining an indirect cost rate once the grant is awarded.

Most institutions that do not have a current negotiated rate may use a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR §200.414 https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1414&rgn=div8 for more information). This de minimis rate may be used indefinitely and no documentation is required to justify its use.

Institutions, both primary grantees and subawardees, not located in the territorial United States may not charge indirect costs.

(b) 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 (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=dcd3efbcf2b6092f84c3b1af32bdcc34&node=se2.1.200_1432&rgn=div8).

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 Uniform Guidance 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 or other disallowed expenditures.

(c) CTE Research Network Lead Required Budget Amounts

The CTE Research Network Lead must reserve 10% of their budget for supplemental activities that will be determined after the grant is awarded.

The CTE Research Network Lead must also set aside a minimum of \$750,000 of the total budget for up to 5 network members to participate in network activities.

(d) DLP Network Research Teams Budget Considerations

DLP Network Research Teams applicants should separate their year 1 budget into two 6-month phases within the SF-424 and the narrative budget justification so that the costs for the 6-month planning period are clear and separate from project costs following the planning phase. See [Part IV.B.2.b](#) for more information about expectations for the 6-month planning phase.

Applicants may not include a subaward to the Platform Team whose DLP they are proposing to use to implement their study.

4. Program Authority

20 U.S.C. 2324(c)(1) and 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

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) codified at CFR Part 200. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99. 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 Requirements

1. Pre-Award

(a) Clarification and Budget Questions

IES uses the scientific peer review process as the first step in making funding decisions. If your application is recommended for funding based on the outcome of the scientific peer review, an IES program officer will contact you to clarify any issues that were raised by the peer reviewers and to address whether the proposed budget adequately supports the scope of work and meets federal guidelines.

(b) Finalizing your proposed Data Management Plan (DMP)

IES program officers will be responsible for reviewing the completeness of the proposed DMP (applicable only for DLP Network Research Teams). If your application is being considered for funding based on the scores received during the scientific review process but your DMP is determined incomplete, you will be required to provide additional detail

(c) Demonstrating Access to Data and Education Settings

The research you propose to conduct may require that you have (or will obtain) access to education settings such as classrooms, schools, districts, colleges/universities; secondary datasets; or studies currently under way. For DLP Network Research Teams, this applies if you are working with a platform that expects researchers to do their own recruitment (see the SEERNet research guide for more information: <https://seernet.org/about-us/research-guide/>). 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 D](#) 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.

(1) Conducting research 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 relies on access to education settings, you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary settings 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 before the full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, IES will ask you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.

For DLP Network Research Teams proposing to conduct research on a platform that does not require researchers to do their own recruitment, the feasibility letter from the Platform Team is sufficient documentation of access to the education settings necessary to carry out the work. As noted below in [Part IV.B.2.b](#), IES will impose a special condition on all DLP Network Research Team grants that states that future grant funding beyond the first 6 months of the project is contingent on the Research Team demonstrating to IES that their project can be feasibly implemented in partnership with the proposed DLP.

(2) 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 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 will 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.

For DLP Network Research Teams proposing secondary data analysis projects, the feasibility letter from the Platform Team is sufficient documentation of access to the SEERNet Platform Team dataset necessary to carry out the work. As noted below in [Part IV.B.2.b](#), IES will impose a special condition on all DLP Network Research Team grants that states that future grant funding beyond the first 6 months of the project is contingent on the Research Team demonstrating to IES that their project can be feasibly implemented in partnership with the proposed DLP.

(3) Building on 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 (including principal and co-principal investigators) regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

(d) Assessment of Past Performance

IES considers the applicant's performance and use of funds under a previous federal award as part of the criteria for making a funding decision. Performance on previous Department of Education awards is considered, as is additional information that may be requested from the applicant, including evidence of

compliance with the IES Public Access Policy (applicable for all grants funded from 2012 to present; <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>).

2. Post-Award

(a) Compliance with IES Policy on Public Access to Results

IES requires all grantees to submit the electronic version of peer-reviewed scholarly publications to ERIC (<https://eric.ed.gov/>), 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 (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>) 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. **As the designated representative for the grantee institution, IES holds the principal investigator responsible** for ensuring that authors of publications stemming from the grant comply with this requirement.

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 (<https://eric.ed.gov/submit/>), as well as a Frequently Asked Questions page (<https://eric.ed.gov/?granteefaq>). 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).

Additionally, for applicants required to include a DMP, compliance with IES data sharing requirements is expected even though the final dataset may not be completed and prepared for data sharing until after the grant has been completed. In cases where the PI/grantee is non-compliant with the requirements of the data sharing policy or DMP, subsequent awards to individuals or institutions may be affected.

(b) Special Conditions on Grants

IES may impose special conditions on a grant pertinent to the proper implementation of key aspects of the proposed research design or 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.

For all DLP Network Research Teams grants, IES will impose a special condition that states that continuing grant funding beyond the first 6 months is contingent on the Research Team demonstrating that their project can be feasibly implemented in partnership with the proposed DLP. DLP Network Research Teams will need to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Platform Team they have proposed to work with during the 6-month planning phase.

(c) Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting

The principal investigator (PI) is required to attend one meeting each year (for up to 3 days) in Washington, DC with other IES grantees and IES staff. The project's budget should include this meeting. PIs who are not able to attend the meeting may designate another person who is key personnel on the Research Team to attend.

(d) Network Commitments

Below are the commitments that each team will need to agree to as part of its cooperative agreement, which is completed prior to award.

The CTE Research Network Lead must agree to the following:

- Ensure the network-wide dissemination plan is enacted and updated as necessary

- Provide national leadership and outreach that incorporates the findings and activities of the full network
- Support and promote the work of other network members
- Facilitate opportunities for various stakeholders (education or training programs, researchers, developers, employers, etc.) to meet and collaborate with one another either virtually or in person
- Coordinate cross-network projects (e.g., supplemental projects, working groups)

The DLP Network Research Teams must agree to the following:

- Co-create and implement a network-wide dissemination plan
- Ensure representation at virtual and in-person network meetings
- Work with the Platform Team whose DLP is being used for the Research Team's proposed research to address any remaining feasibility issues, establish an MOU, and negotiate co-authorship agreements, if pertinent, with the Platform Teams
- Collaborate with the Platform Teams and the Network Lead, as well as the other Research Teams who will be funded around network-level initiatives
- Adopt shared measures and coding conventions as relevant

C. Overview of Application and Scientific Peer Review Process

1. Submitting Your Letter of Intent

Letters of intent (LOIs) are submitted online at the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO) system (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit>). **Select the Letter of Intent form for the competition 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 an LOI, a 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.

(a) Elements for the Letter of Intent:

- Descriptive title
- Topic and network role for your application
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address of the principal investigator and any co-principal investigators
- Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors
- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the Duration maximums for each topic and network role)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the Budget maximums for each topic and network role)

2. Multiple Submissions

You may submit applications to more than one of the FY2023 IES grant programs and to multiple topics within a competition. In addition, within a particular grant program or topic, you may submit multiple applications. However, you may submit a given application only once for the FY2023 grant competitions, meaning you may not submit the same application or similar applications to multiple grant programs, multiple topics, or multiple times within the same topic. 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 February 23, 2023, using the software provided on the Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) website.

You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) and on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

After applications are fully uploaded and validated at Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Education receives the applications for processing and transfers them to the IES 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 PI and the AOR will receive invitation emails. Approximately four to six 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 (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) 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/application_review.asp) by a panel of experts who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and Request for Applications.

Each compliant and responsive application is assigned to an IES review panel convened for this competition.

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 he or she believes 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 provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all learners. IES expects reviewers to assess the scientific rigor and practical significance of the research proposed to judge the likelihood that it will make a meaningful contribution to the larger IES mission. Information about each of these criteria is described in [Part II: Competition Requirements and Recommendations](#). The review criteria for each network role in this RFA are listed separately below.

(a) CTE Research Network Lead

(1) Significance

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the Network Lead role?

(2) Network Administration and Coordination Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations for network administration and coordination?

(3) Research Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan section for the Network Lead role?

(4) Training Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Training Plan section for the Network Lead role?

(5) Leadership and Dissemination Plans

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Leadership and Dissemination Plans section for the Network Lead role?

(6) Personnel

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section for the Network Lead role? Do the principal investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate experience, and will they commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed activities?

(7) Management and Organizational Resources

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Management and Organizational Resources section for the Network Lead role? Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed activities?? Do the commitments of each partner (if applicable) show support for the implementation and success of the grant?

(b) DLP Network Research Teams

(1) Significance

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the Research Team role?

(2) Research Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan section for the Research Team role?

(3) Personnel

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section for the Research Team role? Do the principal investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate experience, and will they commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed work?

(4) Resources

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Resources section for the Research Team role? Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed activities? Do the commitments of each partner show support for the implementation and success of the project?

(5) Dissemination

Does the application address the recommendations described in Appendix A: Dissemination History and Plan? Does the applicant present a dissemination plan that is tailored to audiences that will benefit from the findings and reflect the purpose of the project? Does the applicant describe a dissemination history that demonstrates past success in sharing results of education research widely and appropriately?

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

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- Performance and use of funds under a previous federal award
- Contribution to the overall program of research described in this request for applications
- Ability to carry out the proposed research within the maximum award and duration requirements
- Availability of funds

Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

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

See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.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
Have you included a Project Narrative?
Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements?
Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all page maximums as described in the RFA? IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for scientific peer review.
For the CTE Research Network Lead applicants, have you included Appendix D: Letters of Agreement (if applicable), and Appendix E: Data Management Plan (if applicable)?
For DLP Network Research Teams applicants, have you included Appendix A: Dissemination History and Plan, your request for a feasibility letter and the feasibility letter from a SEERNet Platform Team in Appendix D: Letters of Agreement, and Appendix E: Data Management Plan?
Responsiveness
Have you met all the Requirements for an application?
Have you indicated a single network topic and role for your application (i.e., CTE Research Network Lead or DLP Research Team)?
Do you meet the applicant eligibility requirements for the network to which you are applying?
Does your proposed research include measures of academic outcomes and does it address the setting requirements specific to the network topic and role for your application?
Does your Project Narrative include the required sections and the associated requirements for the selected network role? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below?

(Table continues on the following page)

Required Project Narrative Elements						
CTE Research Network Lead						
Significance	Network Administration and Coordination Plan	Research Plan	Training Plan	Leadership and Dissemination Plan	Personnel	Management and Organizational Resources
You must describe your vision for a CTE Research Network.	You must describe your plans for Network Coordination, including convening meetings with network members and facilitating cross-network supplemental activities.	You must describe your plan for conducting a systematic review and synthesis of research findings on work-based learning.	You must describe your training plan.	You must describe your plans for national leadership and dissemination, which must include establishing a website and social media presence within the first year.	You must describe your project team.	You must describe the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and procedures for the overall management of the CTE Research Network • Resources to conduct the work of the CTE Research Network Lead.

DLP Network Research Team			
Significance	Research Plan	Personnel	Resources
You must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the research questions that will be addressed through the proposed work. • identify which SEERNet Network DLP will be used to implement the proposed research. 	You must describe the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feasibility of conducting the proposed research on the identified DLP • plans to address remaining feasibility challenges in consultation with the Platform Team during an initial six-month planning period • characteristics of your sample • research design and methods • data analysis plan 	You must describe your project team.	You must describe your resources to conduct the project.

Part VI: Required Codes for Item 4b of the SF 424 Cover Sheet

Applications to the **Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Policy and Practice (ALN 84.305N) program** are submitted under a single topic and a single network role. You must enter the appropriate topic and network role code in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form (see the IES Application Submission Guide, https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf for more information about this form). For example, an application under the DLP Network topic and the Research Team role should have the code “NCER-DLP Research” entered in the field for Item 4b.

Topic	Code
CTE Research Network	NCER-CTE
DLP Network	NCER-DLP

Network Role	Code
Network Lead	Lead
Research Team	Research