

Special Education Research and Development Center Program

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.324C

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Product of the National Center for Special Education Research

Letter of Intent Due:	October 21, 2022	https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit
Application Package Available:	September 30, 2022	https://www.grants.gov/
Application Deadline:	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 12, 2023	https://www.grants.gov/
Possible Start Dates:	August 1- September 1, 2023	
<p>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.</p>		

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Part I: Overview and Requirements

A. Introduction

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides scientific evidence to improve education practice and policy and shares that evidence in a way that can be used by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

Within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE) supports research with the following aims:

1. Expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, and youth with disabilities to improve the developmental, education, and transition outcomes of such individuals
2. Improve services provided under, and support the implementation of, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)

1. Special Education Research and Development Center Program (ALN 84.324C)

IES supports Research and Development Centers (R&D Centers) that conduct focused, scientific research on key education issues facing our nation. Through the Special Education Research and Development Center Program, researchers tackle complex special education problems and develop innovative solutions by engaging in research, development, evaluation, and national leadership activities aimed at improving the education system and, ultimately, student achievement. For information on previous Special Education R&D Centers, please see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/research/developmentCenters.asp>.

For the FY 2023 Special Education Research and Development Center program, IES invites applications for an R&D Center on Supporting Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education (Postsecondary Center).

This R&D Center will be responsible for

1. Conducting exploratory research that will contribute to a better understanding of the experiences and outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities as well as policies, programs, and practices that are intended to help them adjust to and persist and succeed in postsecondary education.
2. Providing national leadership and capacity building by training and mentoring doctoral students and early career investigators interested in conducting research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary education; disseminating research findings; and engaging in dialogue with researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to improve research, practice, and policy.
3. Conducting supplemental research and/or national leadership activities based on emerging needs of the field.

The work of IES is grounded in the principle that effective education research must address the interests and needs of education practitioners and policymakers, as well as students, parents, and community members. To this end, the Postsecondary Center should yield outcomes and products that are meaningful to postsecondary students with disabilities and the stakeholders and systems that serve them. Outcomes should include evidence that can be used by higher education institutions, faculty, and staff to better identify and support students with disabilities; the identification of areas for future research, such as needed intervention development and measurement work, critical to furthering our understanding of students with disabilities in postsecondary education; recommendations related to sampling, measures, and methods to strengthen future research in postsecondary education for students with disabilities; and greater research capacity in the field for rigorous research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary education as well as recommendations for further capacity building.

To encourage rigorous education research that is transparent, actionable, and focused on consequential outcomes, all applications are expected to follow 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; using high-quality outcome measures; documenting intervention implementation and contrast; identifying interventions' components; analyzing interventions' costs; facilitating generalization of

study findings; making research findings, methods, and data open; supporting scaling of promising interventions; and addressing inequities in learners' opportunities, access to resources, and outcomes.

2. Eligible Applicants

Institutions that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientific research are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities.

Broadening Participation in the Education Sciences:¹ IES is committed to broadening institutional participation in its research grant programs. IES encourages applications from minority-serving institutions (MSIs) that meet the eligibility criteria for this RFA. 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 institution 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 institution 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, institutions applying for funding must designate a single point of contact for the project. The role of this person is primarily for communication purposes on the scientific and related budgetary aspects of the project, and this person should be listed as the PI. All other PIs should be listed as co-principal investigators.

B. Getting Started

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES provides technical assistance (TA) to applicants that addresses the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition and methodological and other substantive issues concerning research in education settings. IES program officers work with applicants through a variety of formats up until the time of Grants.gov submission. If you submit a letter of intent (LOI) at <https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit>, a program officer will contact you regarding your proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to visit <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/> for additional application resources that address a variety of issues related to application preparation, submission, and the peer review process.

The program officer for this competition is Dr. Akilah Swinton Nelson (Akilah.Nelson@ed.gov).

2. 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* provides information on how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. [Part I](#) sets out the general requirements for an R&D Center application. [Part II](#) provides information about the requirements and recommendations for an R&D Center application. [Part III](#) provides information about general formatting and the other narrative content for the application, including required appendices. [Part IV](#) provides general information on competition

¹ Section 114 of the Education Science Reform Act of 2002 charges IES with undertaking "initiatives and programs to increase the participation of researchers and institutions that have been historically underutilized in Federal education research activities of the Institute, including historically Black colleges or universities or other institutions of higher education with large numbers of minority students."

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.

2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf) provides important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure your application is complete and received without errors on time through Grants.gov.

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

3. Ensuring Your Application is Reviewed

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 separate IES Application Submission Guide

(https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/FY2023_submission_guide.pdf)

- Received and validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 12, 2023.

(b) Compliance

- Includes the **required R&D Center narrative** (see [Part II](#))
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see [Part III](#))
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the R&D Center narrative and appendices.
 - Any pages above the maximum will be removed by IES before forwarding an application for peer review
- Includes all **required appendices** (see [Part III](#))
 - [Appendix A](#): Data Management Plan (Required)

(c) Responsiveness

- Meets **General Requirements** (see [Part I](#))
- Meets **R&D Center Narrative Requirements** (see [Part II](#))

C. General Requirements

1. Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

All research supported under the R&D Center program **must** focus on postsecondary students with disabilities.

2. Education Outcomes

All research supported under the R&D Center program **must** measure academic outcomes.

(a) Academic Outcomes

IES is interested in the following academic outcomes for postsecondary education: access to, persistence in, progress through, and/or completion of postsecondary education, which includes developmental education courses and bridge programs as well as programs that lead to occupational certificates, career and technical

education attainment,² associate's, or bachelor's degrees; and learning, achievement, and higher-order thinking in postsecondary courses.

(b) Optional Outcomes – Recommended when Appropriate

In addition to a required academic outcome, applicants may propose to include additional outcomes relevant to their research focus. IES supports research on a range of optional outcomes and recommends their inclusion when appropriate. Below is a list of the optional outcomes applicants may propose.

(1) Employment, Earnings, and Independent Living Outcomes

Employment and earning outcomes are defined as measures of labor force participation, such as hours of employment, job stability, apprenticeships, and wages and benefits. Independent living outcomes include management of one's personal self-care, daily living skills, financial management skills, and the self-management of healthcare/wellness needs.

(2) Social and Behavioral Competencies

Social and behavioral competencies are defined as social skills, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that are important to learners' success in school and beyond.

(3) Educator and Institutional Outcomes

Educator outcomes are defined as measures of educator knowledge, skills, beliefs, behaviors, and/or practices and institutional outcomes include institutional policies, programs, and practices.

3. Education Settings

Your research must be conducted in postsecondary education settings, which include community and technical colleges and 4-year colleges and universities, or with data collected from such settings. Each of these settings may be brick-and-mortar or be partially or fully distance learning/online programs. IES does not support research that is relevant only in informal contexts outside the control of institutions of higher education. Contact the IES program officer for this competition if you have questions about the education setting(s) you have identified for your proposed research.

4. Award Limits

Applications to the Special Education Research and Development Center program **must** conform to the following limits on award duration and cost.

R&D Center	Maximum Duration	Maximum Award
Supporting Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education	5 years	\$5,000,000

² 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.

Part II: R&D Center Purpose, Requirements, and Recommendations

A. Background and Purpose

Individuals with disabilities are pursuing postsecondary education at increasing rates. Yet, despite data showing enrollment rates doubled between the 1990s and 2000s, completion rates for these students are far lower than their peers without disabilities. This suggests that the unique needs and challenges faced by postsecondary students with disabilities are not being fully addressed. Although postsecondary institutions are required to provide supports and services to students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, these services are often not utilized by students. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including the fact that many students with disabilities do not disclose their disability status to their institution (a necessary precursor to accessing disability-related supports) and even when they do disclose their status, they often do not access available supports.

Although there is a growing body of research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary settings, the many challenges associated with doing this research (such as infrequent self-disclosure of disability and limitations in data available about this population) have resulted in limited research on the factors that contribute to student success and whether and how these may differ for certain students. As such, additional research is needed to better understand the experiences and outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities as well as the policies, programs, and practices that are intended to help them adjust to and persist and succeed in postsecondary education.

The purpose of the R&D Center on Supporting Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education (Postsecondary Center) is to address these research gaps through (a) a focused program of exploratory research; (b) national leadership and capacity-building activities (national leadership activities); and (c) supplemental activities. The overarching goal of the Postsecondary Center is to provide the evidence base and research capacity to address the most pressing needs of postsecondary students with disabilities.

The Postsecondary Center will conduct a **focused program of research**, consisting of multiple studies, to explore factors that affect access to, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education for students with disabilities. Studies conducted by the Postsecondary Center **must** be exploratory; IES will not support intervention development, measurement, or efficacy work under this competition.

Exploratory research for this competition should examine relationships between student-, educator-, institution-, and/or policy-level characteristics and student academic outcomes as well as factors that influence these relationships. A variety of approaches are appropriate, including (1) primary data collection and analyses, (2) secondary data analyses, (3) meta-analyses that go beyond a simple identification of the mean effect of interventions, or (4) some combination of these. IES also encourages the use of mixed methods research, defined as the integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a single study. Findings from this exploratory research should ultimately help the community of postsecondary administrators, faculty, staff, and researchers better meet the needs of the students with disabilities. Findings should also set the context for new research in this area, for instance by developing improved theories of change and identifying targets for future intervention or assessment.

Examples of research questions to address are identified below.³ You may consider these in developing your application, but you should not feel limited by them. You are encouraged to think broadly about concerns and issues faced by postsecondary students with disabilities and the systems that support them. Peer reviewers may consider these IES-identified research questions in their evaluation of the Significance of the proposed

³ These research questions stem from discussions during an IES technical working group meeting which convened a group of experts to discuss priorities for research and data collection on students with disabilities in postsecondary education. A summary of panelists' recommendations for IES to advance research in this area is available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/whatsnew/techworkinggroup/pdf/PostsecTWGMeetingSummary.pdf>.

R&D Center, but please note that IES also welcomes applications that address other research needs and questions.

- What factors support or hinder access to, persistence in, and completion of postsecondary education for students with disabilities?
- What institutional policies and programs and educator practices facilitate student engagement and positive academic outcomes?
- What factors influence students' self-disclosure of disability and decisions around accessing disability-related accommodations and universal supports?
- How do factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and type of disability influence the experiences and outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities?
- What are the relationships between different types of postsecondary instruction—such as remedial and developmental education, instruction incorporating universal design principles, or online remote instruction—and the academic outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities?
- What are the postsecondary experiences of students with intellectual disabilities and other low-incidence disabilities?

When appropriate for the research questions, investigators are encouraged to link student data from high school to postsecondary outcomes using existing state, federal, or other datasets. For example, applicants may consider using statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS), which are designed to help states, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes.⁴ Existing data could be supplemented with primary data collection to better track students with disabilities from high school to postsecondary settings and to better understand their experiences.

The Postsecondary Center will also conduct **national leadership activities** to inform and support the broader community. These national leadership activities will build from and feed into the focused program of research and will help address the needs of a wide range of stakeholders.

To promote greater awareness and access to research-based information about postsecondary students with disabilities, the Postsecondary Center will conduct activities that address the needs of various stakeholders, including students, higher education administrators, faculty and staff, policymakers, parents/guardians, and researchers. Activities should include disseminating research findings through a website designed specifically for the Center, presentations at professional conferences, working papers, briefs, infographics, videos, webinars, toolkits, social media posts, and journal publications. Activities may also include convenings with researchers and stakeholders to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas.

To improve the research capacity of the field, the Postsecondary Center will conduct activities to support the training and development of doctoral students and early career investigators interested in conducting research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary education as well as to provide training and mentoring to established researchers who would benefit from additional support. This may include trainings related to conducting rigorous research in postsecondary settings or secondary data analyses, sponsoring research apprenticeships in state or local education agencies and colleges/universities, mentoring and networking opportunities, webinars, and workshops. IES encourages applicants to ensure that research capacity-building activities include researchers from diverse backgrounds, including individuals from traditionally underrepresented communities, such as researchers with disabilities.

Finally, the Postsecondary Center will conduct **supplemental activities**, which may include relatively rapid research/data analysis in response to questions that are not being addressed adequately elsewhere or additional national leadership activities. The Postsecondary Center will work cooperatively with IES to select and design these activities in response to policy and practice needs. For this reason, IES does not expect a

⁴Additional information regarding the SLDS program can be found at <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/>. For information on what is contained in SLDS, see the *Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Survey Analysis: Descriptive Statistics* (NCES 2021-126) which reports aggregate summary statistics of SLDS capacity and includes the state-level response to the 2018 SLDS Survey collection (available at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2021126>).

detailed plan for these supplemental activities in the application but does not expect a budget of \$250,000 set aside for them.

B. Requirements

1. R&D Center Narrative

The R&D Center narrative **must** adhere to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)) and be **no more than 35** pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 35th page of the narrative. The narrative **must** include five sections: Significance, Research Plan, National Leadership Activities, Management and Institutional Resources, and Personnel.

(a) Significance of the Focused Program of Research and National Leadership Activities

The purpose of this section is to describe and justify the importance of the exploratory research and national leadership activities that the Postsecondary Center will conduct.

You **must describe** the

- Conceptual framework that will guide the center's work, including the national leadership activities
- Research questions the center will address
- Factors you will study and how they are related to student outcomes

(b) Research Plan for the Focused Program of Research

The purpose of this section is to describe the design and methods for each study in the focused program of research and demonstrate how they will allow you to address your research questions.

You **must describe** the

- Characteristics of your sample
- Research design and methods for each study proposed
- Data analysis plans for each study

(c) National Leadership Activities

The purpose of this section is to describe the Postsecondary Center's national leadership activities.

You **must describe** how you will

- Disseminate what the center is learning to various stakeholders
- Build field capacity to conduct research on supporting postsecondary students with disabilities

(d) Management and Institutional Resources

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

You **must describe** the

- Organizational structure of the center
- Plans and procedures for the overall management of the center
- Resources to conduct the work of the center

(e) Personnel

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

You **must describe** your project team.

2. Data Management Plan

All R&D Center applications must include a [Data Management Plan \(DMP\) in Appendix A](#). Your DMP describes your plans for making the final research data from the proposed project accessible to others.

3. Award Limits

Awards made under this competition **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost.

(a) Duration Maximum

The maximum duration of a Postsecondary Center is **5 years**.

(b) Cost Maximum

The maximum cost for a Postsecondary Center award is **\$5,000,000** (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs).

- No more than **70 percent** of the total budget (direct costs + indirect costs) may be allocated to the focused program of research.
- \$250,000 **must be reserved for supplementary studies** to be designed in collaboration with IES.

C. Recommendations for a Strong Application

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.

1. Incorporating Stakeholder Input

Consistent with the SEER standards, applicants should describe how they will consider input from students, institutional faculty and staff, and/or other key stakeholders when conceptualizing, designing, and reporting the results of their research.

2. Significance of the Focused Program of Research and National Leadership Activities

Identify a clear focus for the Postsecondary Center. The focus may be a particular research topic or outcome(s). Explain why this focus is significant to postsecondary success and what it could contribute to our knowledge of supporting postsecondary students with disabilities.

Describe the exploratory aims of the program of research, including the factors at the student, educator, institution, and/or policy level that you propose to study and the relationships you expect them to have with education outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities.

Describe how the Postsecondary Center's research questions will contribute to a better understanding of the experiences and outcomes of postsecondary students with disabilities.

Describe the types of stakeholders that need to be engaged in researching, implementing, and disseminating information.

Discuss obstacles faced by various stakeholders—including postsecondary students, staff and faculty, researchers, and policymakers—and how the center's program of research and national leadership activities would address these obstacles.

Consider what information students, administrators, faculty, researchers, and/or other stakeholders need to know and discuss how your research and other activities address those needs.

Discuss how the various research projects and national leadership activities will inform one another and how the different partners will collaborate and benefit from involvement.

3. Research Plan for the Focused Program of Research

Describe the research studies you will carry out to address your specific research questions.

Provide a clear statement of the problem or issue that each study will address.

Discuss the characteristics of your sample and the population they represent and provide a rationale for the sample proposed to address your research questions.

Discuss the setting(s) in which the research will take place and discuss how they will allow you to draw conclusions about the education settings your research is intended to inform.

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. Consistent with the SEER standards, outcomes should be assessed using high-quality measures (<https://ies.ed.gov/seer/outcomes.asp>).

Describe procedures for data collection. For studies involving secondary data analysis, identify the datasets you will use and the key variables you will examine to address your research questions. If multiple datasets will be used, describe how they will be linked. Discuss limitations of the dataset(s) and how you will address any exclusions and missing data.

Describe your plan to analyze the data, including primary analyses and any mediator or moderator analyses. For mixed methods studies, data analysis plans should provide detailed information on the analytical and interpretive processes for the qualitative data and reflect the integration of qualitative and quantitative data.

Provide a detailed timeline for each study. Timeline tables or figures may be placed in either the project narrative or [Appendix B: Supplemental Charts, Tables, and Figures](#).

4. National Leadership Activities

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 upon or feed into the center's research activities.

Describe the center website you will design, including its content and the audiences you intend to reach. IES also encourages applicants to use social media and electronic forms of communication (such as webinars, podcasts, and videos) to broaden the reach of the center at a relatively low cost.

Discuss ways that the Postsecondary Center could provide timely, actionable information to address high-priority or immediate pressures that higher education institutions are facing related to supporting students with disabilities.

Identify the knowledge that various stakeholders (including students, researchers, administrators, faculty, disability services staff, parents/guardians and other family members) need to build and discuss the activities and products the Postsecondary Center will create to address their needs.

Discuss your plans for convenings with researchers and stakeholders, including the major goals for meeting with them, how you will facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, and how you might work with them

and IES to determine training or dissemination needs and form appropriate plans to meet these needs. You might consider including a proposed agenda for the first meeting in your narrative or [Appendix B](#).

Consider activities that bring together different stakeholders or that help different audiences understand the needs, insights, or motivations of groups with whom they may not normally interact. For example, the Postsecondary Center could help university administrators better understand the experiences and needs of postsecondary students with disabilities.

Identify existing forums, such as annual professional conferences, where the Postsecondary Center can disseminate to various stakeholders.

Discuss your plans to provide training for researchers and/or various stakeholders, include the following:

- The type(s) of training you are prepared to offer and why the training is needed
- The individuals or groups that will be targeted for the training, the numbers of each, and how they will be identified or recruited
- The content and format of the training
- The length of the training and whether it will be offered a single time or repeatedly
- How you will advertise the training
- The steps you will take to ensure that trainees come from diverse backgrounds and traditionally underrepresented groups
- How you will assess the outcomes of your training and use this to improve the training or materials if the training will happen multiple times

If you plan to offer financial support to trainees, specify the amount and the conditions for the support.

Discuss any opportunities you will provide for doctoral students, early career researchers, and other postsecondary researchers, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and traditionally underrepresented communities, to contribute to the Postsecondary Center activities and gain meaningful research experience. These may take any of a variety of forms, such as providing opportunities to work on research carried out by the center, facilitating mentorship, organizing webinars or other forms of online training, sponsoring research apprenticeships in state or local education agencies and colleges/universities, and/or hosting summer workshops.

5. Management and Institutional Resources

Describe your plans and procedures for the overall management of the Postsecondary Center and its diverse activities.

Identify the management structure and procedures that you will use to ensure that the Postsecondary Center is responsive to the concerns and needs of IES while also meeting the expectations for the focused program of research.

Include an organizational chart that shows how the major functions or activities of the Postsecondary Center will be organized.

Document the availability and cooperation of the settings required to carry out your research via letters of agreement in [Appendix C](#) of your application.

6. Personnel

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

- Qualifications to carry out the proposed work
- Roles and responsibilities within the project
- 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 dissemination and training and mentoring doctoral students and current researchers
- Experience and capacity to manage a project of this size and type

IES strongly encourages applicants to propose partnerships among an interdisciplinary team of researchers, postsecondary students, administrators, faculty, and staff to help guide the program of research and the national leadership activities.

In its research grant programs, IES is strongly committed to broadening participation, including personnel from underrepresented communities and diverse institutions. Describe how the background and experience of the project team support the successful conduct of the proposed research, including information on the project team's experience working with the population of postsecondary students with disabilities that the research will address as well as the audiences that may be targeted through dissemination efforts.

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

If key personnel have previously received an IES grant (or grants), briefly discuss the outcomes of the research and how the project's findings and products were disseminated in order to demonstrate your ability to produce project outcomes consistent with the IES mission.

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 applications 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. In order 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 Limits

All applications must adhere to the page limit specifications for (1) the research narrative as described in [Part II.B: R&D Center Narrative](#); and for (2) the appendices as described in [Part III.C: Required and Optional Appendices](#).

2. Page and Margin Specifications

For all IES 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.

3. 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.

4. Spacing

Text must be single spaced.

5. 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.

6. Citations

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

7. 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 R&D Center Narrative – Significance, Research Plan, National Leadership Activities, Management and Institutional Resources, and Personnel – that is described for the R&D Center (see [Part II: R&D Center Purpose, Requirements, and Recommendations](#)) is followed by several appendices. One appendix (Appendix A) is 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 required and optional 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/>).

1. Appendix A: Data Management Plan (Required)

Appendix A must meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than five pages**. If Appendix A exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page of the appendix before it is forwarded for peer review. Applications that do not contain a Data Management Plan (DMP) will be deemed nonresponsive to the Request for Applications and will not be accepted for review.

DMPs are expected to differ depending on the nature of the studies conducted by the R&D Center and the data collected. By addressing the items identified below, your DMP describes how you will meet the requirements of the IES policy for data sharing (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp>).

When the PI and the AOR sign the cover page of the grant application, they will be assuring compliance with IES policy for 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 education repository where you will pre-register your study in the first year of the study, 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/co- principal 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
- If some or all of the data cannot be shared, describe what information will be made public to allow others to replicate your analyses, such as identifying what data were used, how and where they can be obtained, and how they were prepared and analyzed including the code used

The costs of the DMP can be covered by the grant and should be included in the budget and explained in the budget narrative. IES program officers will be responsible for reviewing the completeness of the proposed DMP. If your application is being considered for funding based on the scores received during the peer review process but your DMP is determined incomplete, you will be required to provide additional detail regarding your DMP.

This is the only material that may be included in Appendix A; all other material 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 research project, a diagram of the management structure of your project, or examples of measures used to collect data for your project.

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: Letters of Agreement (Optional)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix C. Use this appendix to provide copies of letters of agreement from higher education institutions, schools, districts, state agencies and other partners, and/or other settings and data sources that will participate in or provide data for the proposed research or serve as consultants. 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 partners. 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.

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

D. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the R&D Center Narrative (see [Part II: R&D Center Purpose, 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 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/>). 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. The summary should use short, active sentences to briefly describe the significance of the project, its activities, and the intended outcomes.

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title of the project
- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose of the center and its significance
- **Focused Program of Research:** An overview of the studies and research activities, such as sample, research design, and methods
- **National Leadership Activities:** An overview of the various leadership, capacity-building, and dissemination activities
- **Outcomes/Products:** A brief description of the expected products of the project, including the information that will be learned and disseminated
- **Related IES Projects:** A list of the IES-issued award numbers and/or corresponding online abstract links (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/abstract.

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 that 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 number (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 a cooperative agreement pursuant to this Request for Applications. Through the terms of the cooperative agreement, the grantee will work with IES to plan and implement their activities.

2. Funding Available

Although IES intends to support the R&D Center 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. IES intends to fund no more than one R&D Center through this competition. However, should funding be available, we may consider making additional awards to high-quality applications that remain unfunded after one award is made.

The size of the award depends on the scope of the project. Please attend to the duration and budget maximums in [Part II](#).

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/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFRd93f2a98b1f6455/section-200.414> 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.

4. Program Authority

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

5. Applicable Regulations

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 Award 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) Demonstrating Access to Data and Education Settings

The research you propose will most likely require that you have (or will obtain) access to education settings such as classrooms, colleges/universities, secondary datasets, or studies currently under way that the center can build on. 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 C](#) 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 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 in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to IES indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research 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.

(2) Using Secondary Datasets

If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the peer review panel and your research relies on access to secondary datasets (such as federally collected datasets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation

that you have access to the necessary datasets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed datasets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to IES from the entity controlling the dataset(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed dataset prior to submitting your application, IES 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.

(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.

(c) 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 compliance to 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 Data and Results

(1) Access to Data

You must include a Data Management Plan (DMP) in [Appendix A](#). The scientific peer review process will not include the DMP in the scoring of the scientific merit of the application. Instead, IES program officers will be responsible for reviewing the completeness of the proposed DMP. The costs of the DMP can be covered by the grant and should be included in the budget and explained in the budget narrative.

(2) Access to Results: Grantee Submissions to ERIC

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).

(b) Pre-Register Studies

Grantees must register their studies on a suitable platform within the first year of receiving a new award. There are several options for preregistration including the Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/>), Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP; <https://egap.org/content/registration>), and Uri Simonsohn's AsPredicted (<https://aspredicted.org/>).

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

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.

Elements for the Letter of Intent:

- Descriptive title
- Brief description of the proposed R&D Center
- 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 R&D Center (attend to the Duration maximum)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the Budget maximums)

2. Multiple Submissions

You may submit applications to more than one of the FY 2023 IES grant programs. However, you may submit a given application only once for the FY 2023 grant competitions, meaning you may not submit the same application or similar applications to multiple grant programs. 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 January 12, 2023 through the internet 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/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

After applications are fully uploaded and validated at Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Education receives the applications for processing and transfer to the IES 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 4 to 6 weeks after the application deadline, all applicants (new and existing ANS users) will begin to receive a series of emails about the status of their application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (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 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 (<https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/reviewers.asp>). Applications are assigned to panel according to the match between the overall expertise of reviewers on each panel and the content and methodological approach proposed in each application.

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 to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all learners. IES expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that purpose. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in [Part II: R&D Center Purpose, Requirements, and Recommendations](#).

(a) Significance of the Focused Program of Research and National Leadership Activities

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the R&D Center?

(b) Research Plan for the Focused Program of Research

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan for the Focused Program of Research section for the R&D Center?

(c) National Leadership Activities

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the National Leadership section? Does the applicant propose meaningful leadership activities for the R&D Center?

(d) Management and Institutional Resources

Do the plans and procedures for the overall management of the R&D Center indicate that the applicant has the capacity to complete the proposed research, dissemination, and leadership activities efficiently and successfully? 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 proposed R&D Center activities? Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Management and Institutional Resources section?

(e) Personnel

Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the Principal Investigator/Center Director and other key personnel possess the appropriate training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research? Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section?

6. Award Decisions

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

- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review
- Performance and use of funds under a previous federal award
- Contribution to the overall program of research 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	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you included an R&D Center Narrative?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements (Part III.B)?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you included Appendix A: Data Management Plan?
General Requirements for Responsiveness	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the research focus on postsecondary students with disabilities?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the measured outcomes include at least one academic outcome as described in Part I?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed research being conducted in postsecondary education settings, or with data collected from such settings?
Required R&D Center Narrative Elements for Responsiveness	
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conceptual framework that will guide the center’s work, including the national leadership activities • research questions that will be addressed • factors you will study and how they are related to student outcomes
Research Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characteristics of your sample(s) • research design and methods for each study proposed • data analysis plans for each study proposed
National Leadership Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dissemination plan of what the center is learning to various stakeholders • plan to build capacity to conduct research on supporting postsecondary students with disabilities
Management and Institutional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational structure of the center • plans and procedures for the overall management of the center • resources to conduct the work of the center
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project team