Research Training Programs in Special Education

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.324B

A Product of the National Center for Special Education Research

Letter of Intent Due:	August 10, 2023	https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit
Application Package Available:	July 20, 2023	https://www.grants.gov/
Application Deadline:	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on September 21, 2023	https://www.grants.gov/
Possible Start Dates:	July 1 – September 1, 2024	
See the companion **IES Application Submission Guide** (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) for guidance on preparing and submitting applications through Grants.gov		

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Part I: Overview

A. Introduction

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides scientific evidence to improve education practice and policy and shares that evidence in ways that can be used by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. Within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) supports research to

1. Expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities in order 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 (IDEA; 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)

In this Request for Applications (RFA), NCSER invites applications for the Research Training Programs in Special Education (Training) (ALN 84.324B). For FY 2024, NCSER is accepting applications under one program, Early Career Development and Mentoring (Early Career). The Early Career program provides support for an integrated research and career development plan for investigators in the early stages of their academic careers who have established an interest in special education research, with the ultimate aim of launching independent research careers focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities.

NCSER aims to fund rigorous research that helps solve significant education problems and that is relevant to the needs of the diverse population of learners with or at risk for disabilities in the United States. IES's ability to support high-quality research depends on the ability to train and support talented researchers who reflect this diversity. IES encourages principal investigators and personnel from all backgrounds (https://ies.ed.gov/aboutus/diversity.asp). NCSER also encourages applications from early career researchers at minority-serving institutions.

To encourage rigorous education research that is transparent, actionable, and focused on consequential outcomes, all applications to the FY 2024 Early Career program 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; making 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; and supporting scaling of promising interventions.

B. Getting Started

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES provides technical assistance to applicants that addresses the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition and methodological and other substantive issues concerning research and career development. 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 on the IES Review webpage (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 resources that address a variety of issues related to application preparation, submission, and peer review. Contact the NCSER program officer at any point in the application preparation process to discuss your research idea and/or career development plan.

The program officer for this competition is Katherine (Katie) Taylor (Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov).

2. Eligible Applicants

For the Early Career Program, IES provides funds to the institution of higher education of the principal investigator (PI) who submitted the application for their research and career development (see Part II.B for information on PI eligibility). Eligible institutions are institutions of higher education, such as colleges and universities, in the United States and its territories.

Broadening participation in the education sciences:[1] IES is interested in broadening institutional participation in its research training programs. Early career researchers at the following types of minority-serving institutions (MSIs) are encouraged to apply for IES grants: 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.

3. RFA Organization and the IES Application Submission Guide

To submit a compliant, responsive, and timely application, applicants 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 provides an overview of the competition. Part II describes the requirements and recommendations for the Early Career program. Part III provides information on formatting, the appendices, and other narrative content. Part IV describes competition regulations and review criteria. Part V provides a checklist to help ensure the inclusion of all required application elements needed to advance to scientific peer review. Part VI provides the program code 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/submission_guide.asp) provides important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help ensure applications are 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 of these documents, whether submitting a new or revised application.

4. 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

- Received and validated by Grants.gov **no later than** 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on September 21, 2023 (see the IES Application Submission Guide; https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp)

(b) Compliance

- Includes the required training program narrative (see RFA Part II.C)
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see RFA Part III.B)
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the training program narrative and appendices. IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for peer review.
- Includes all required appendices (see RFA Part III.C)

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[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."

- o [Appendix A: Dissemination Plan](#)
- o [Appendix B: Response to Reviewers](#) (Resubmissions Only)
- o [Appendix C: Summary of Research](#)
- o [Appendix D: Letters of Agreement from Mentors](#)
- o [Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners](#)

(c) Responsiveness

- Meets the general requirements (see RFA [Part II.B](#))
- Meets the training program narrative requirements (see [Part II.C](#))

C. Changes in the FY 2024 RFA

All applicants and staff involved in proposal preparation and submission, whether submitting a new or revised application, **should carefully read all relevant parts of this RFA**. Major changes to the Early Career program in FY 2024 are listed below and described fully in relevant sections of the RFA.

- NCSER added information on provisions defining disability for learners in postsecondary settings.
- NCSER clarified recommendations around describing and justifying the career development goals in the significance section.
- NCSER made changes to the project types. Initial efficacy, follow-up, and replication studies are now all combined under a single Impact project type. The purpose of the Impact project type is to support causal studies to assess the impacts of interventions (programs, practices, or policies) on learner education outcomes.

Part II: Program Requirements and Recommendations

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. ([Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov](); 202-987-0071)

A. Purpose

The Early Career program ([https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/program.asp?ProgID=79]()) supports grants that prepare researchers to conduct rigorous and relevant early intervention and special education research. The intention is to support investigators in the early stages of their academic careers who are addressing issues that are important to learners with or at risk for disabilities, their families, practitioners, and policymakers and to prepare them to submit competitive proposals for IES research grant competitions. Under the Early Career program, investigators complete an integrated research and career development plan with guidance from experienced mentors.

The purpose of this program is to prepare investigators to conduct the type of research that NCSER funds under its Special Education Research Grants program (ALN 84.324A). As such, research proposed under this competition should be similar in structure to a Special Education Research project (in terms of the research topics and project types). However, NCSER expects Early Career projects to be much smaller in scope given the award limits, the requirement for the early career researcher to be the sole PI, and the need for the PI to balance the goals of the research with the career development plan. Relatedly, NCSER does not expect the PI to be an expert on all aspects of the proposed research. The proposed mentoring and training activities should support the PI in carrying out the aspects of the research on which they are less experienced. The sections below on the [Training Program Narrative Requirements]() and [Recommendations for a Strong Application]() specify the level of detail expected in the Training Program Narrative.

By the end of the Early Career grant, investigators should be prepared to collaborate with education stakeholders to conduct rigorous and relevant education research. Additional accomplishments may include:
- Conducting a project that addresses applicable SEER principles ([https://ies.ed.gov/seer]())
- Taking on leadership roles related to special education or early intervention research
- Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with districts, schools, and/or education practitioners
- Developing research products that are of use to practitioners and policymakers in improving outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities
- Disseminating findings that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education or early intervention and that have practical implications for education practitioners and policymakers
- Submitting a federal research grant to continue research undertaken as part of the Early Career award

B. General Requirements

Applications must meet the requirements set out in this section in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

1. Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research and training, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports.

The early career researcher **must** be the sole PI. No other PIs or Co-PIs may be identified.

The PI **must** have completed a doctoral degree or postdoctoral program no earlier than April 1, 2018 and no later than the start of the award period. Please note that IES will use the date on which the University granted

the PI's doctoral degree. For example, if their dissertation was defended on March 25, 2018, but the university granted the degree on April 2, 2018, the PI would be eligible to apply.

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

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

The PI may be from a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education, provided that the focus of their research and mentoring is in the field of early intervention or special education for learners with or at risk for disabilities. Such fields may include, but are not limited to, general education, human development, political science, psychology, sociology, and statistics.

2. Mentors

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

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

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

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

3. Learners With or At Risk for Disabilities

Research supported under the Early Career program **must** focus on learners with or at risk for disabilities (any age from infancy through postsecondary education) and/or families, educators, or other professionals who support the development and education of these learners. NCSER supports research on learners with or at risk for low-incidence disabilities as well as on learners with or at risk for high-incidence disabilities.

For research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities in early childhood and K-12 settings, disability is defined in Public Law 108-446 (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-I/1401). Risk for a disability is identified on an individual basis. You (the PI) should clearly identify the disability or disability categories that your sample is at risk of developing and present research-based evidence of an association between risk factors in your proposed sample and the potential identification of specific disabilities. The determination of risk may include, for example, factors used for moving learners to higher tiers in a Response to Intervention model. Evidence consisting only of general population characteristics such as labeling learners as "at risk for disabilities" because they are from low-income families or are English language learners is not sufficient for this purpose.

For research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary settings, disability is described in the *qualified students with a disability* provision in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html#protected) and the *qualified individual with a*

disability provision in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35).

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

4. Education Setting

Proposed research **must** be relevant to education in the United States and **must** address factors under the control of U.S. education systems.

Education for learners with disabilities in the U.S. is delivered in a wide range of settings, including homes, natural settings for early childhood special education services, childcare centers, preschools, public and private K-12 schools and alternative schools and settings (such as juvenile justice and residential treatment facilities), community colleges, technical 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, or online programs. IES does not support research that occurs in informal contexts outside of U.S. education systems.

5. Award Limits

Applications **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:
- The maximum duration is 4 years.
- The maximum cost is $700,000 (total cost = direct + indirect). See the discussion of indirect cost rate in Part IV.

C. Training Program Narrative Requirements

The training program narrative must adhere to the formatting guidelines (see Part III.B) and be no more than 25 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 25th page of the narrative. The training program narrative **must** include five sections – Significance, Research Plan, Career Development Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

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

1. Significance

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

You **must**
- Describe your need for further career development.
- Provide an overview of the proposed research project.
- Identify a primary and, if applicable, secondary research topic that aligns with the focus of your research from the list below. Research on postsecondary students and/or outcomes is allowed under any of the research topics.
  - Cognition and Student Learning
  - Early Intervention and Early Learning
  - Educators and School-Based Service Providers
  - Families of Children with Disabilities

- o Reading, Writing, and Language
- o Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- o Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Competence
- o Systems, Policy, and Finance
- o Transition to Postsecondary Education, Career, and/or Independent Living
- Identify a project type that reflects the type and purpose of the work you will do from the list below. In general, the cost maximums may not be sufficient for conducting rigorous Impact studies. However, there may be instances, given characteristics of the intervention or research methods, where these studies are possible. For instance, the intervention being evaluated is short-term and inexpensive and/or the evaluation utilizes data from administrative records.
  - o <u>Measurement</u> projects support the development, refinement, and/or validation of new or modified assessments for use by educators or education researchers.
  - o <u>Exploration</u> projects support the identification of relationships between learner-, educator-, school-, and policy-level characteristics and meaningful education outcomes. A variety of approaches are appropriate under Exploration, including (1) primary data collection and analyses, (2) secondary data analyses, (3) meta-analyses, or (4) some combination of these.
  - o <u>Development and Innovation</u> projects support the development and pilot testing of new or modified interventions (programs, practices, or policies) that are intended to produce beneficial impacts on learner education outcomes.
  - o <u>Impact</u> projects support causal studies to assess the impacts of interventions (programs, practices, or policies) on learner education outcomes. Impact projects include initial efficacy (studies that test an intervention that has not been rigorously evaluated previously to determine whether it has beneficial impacts on education outcomes), replication (studies that test an intervention that has been rigorously evaluated previously and demonstrated beneficial impacts on education outcomes to better understand for whom it works and under what conditions), and follow-up studies (studies that test the longer-term impact of an intervention that has been shown to have beneficial impacts on education outcomes in a previous or ongoing evaluation study).

2. Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe the aims and methodology for the proposed research.

IES anticipates that certain aspects of the research plan will be less detailed than others and that there will be further development of these plans through the proposed training and mentoring.

You **must**
- Describe the research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data analysis procedures.
- Measure one or more of the following learner outcomes that support success in school and/or afterwards:
  - o Developmental: cognitive, communicative, linguistic, social, emotional, adaptive, functional, and/or physical development
  - o School readiness: pre-reading, language, vocabulary, early STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics) knowledge, and/or social and behavioral competencies (including self-regulation and executive function)
  - o Literacy: reading, language, and/or writing
  - o STEM: science (including computer science), technology, engineering, and/or mathematics
  - o Social/Emotional/Behavioral: social skills, attitudes, behaviors, and/or mental health important to learners' education and post-school success
  - o Functional: behaviors and skills across domains that learners need to participate in developmentally appropriate routines and activities in the context of everyday living
  - o Secondary/Transition: progression through education systems as indicated by course and grade completion; high school graduation; career and technical education (CTE) certification; and/or successful transition from high school to work settings, independent living, or postsecondary education and training

        o   Postsecondary: access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education and/or learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses; in addition to these postsecondary outcomes, employment and earnings outcomes such as hours of employment, job stability, wages, and benefits may be considered

3. Career Development Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe the process for mentoring and additional training. The Career Development Plan should go beyond the typical career development activities expected of all early career researchers, such as attending and presenting at conferences.

You **must** describe a training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities to extend your expertise.

4. Personnel

The purpose of this section is to describe the expertise, responsibilities, and time commitments for you, your mentor(s), and any other personnel.

You **must**
- Describe your expertise as the PI as well as the expertise of your mentor(s) and, if applicable, other personnel, such as consultants.
- Specify the date on which you were granted your doctoral degree and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program.
- Specify the names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if relevant) your postdoctoral supervisor in order to demonstrate that the mentors have not served as your primary graduate school or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral supervisor.

5. Resources

The purpose of this section is to describe the institutional resources to support you in successfully completing this project and disseminating the results.

You **must** describe the resources to support you in conducting the proposed project.

D. 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. Significance

Describe and justify your career development goals, including why you need additional training and mentoring in these areas and why they are important for helping you accomplish the proposed research activities and preparing you to conduct rigorous and relevant research going forward.

Describe the progression from your prior research to the research that will occur over the award period to the line of independent research that you will develop.

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

Address the following recommendations for your proposed project type.

Project Type	Significance Recommendations
Measurement	Describe the assessment and the specific need for the measurement work.

	Describe the assessment framework. Strong frameworks include the following: • The operational definition(s) of the construct(s) being measured • The theoretical model showing how constructs are related to each other and/or external variables • How the assessment provides evidence of the construct(s) • The intended use(s) and population(s) for which the assessment is meant to provide valid information
Exploration	Describe the factors you will study and how you expect them to relate to learner outcomes. Discuss the significance of your proposed work, including how the results will inform future education research and/or affect policy or practice.
Development and Innovation	Describe the intervention, its implementation, and the population intended to benefit from it. Describe the theory of change for the intervention and the theoretical and empirical evidence that supports it. The theory of change should make clear why the intervention is expected to change learner outcomes. You may include a visual representation of your theory of change in Appendix F. Describe the need for the intervention, including how it differs from current practice and addresses limitations of other interventions.
Impact	Describe the intervention, its implementation, and the population intended to benefit from it. Describe the theory of change for the intervention and the theoretical and empirical evidence that supports it. The theory of change should make clear why the intervention is likely to produce better education outcomes relative to current practice. You may include a visual representation of your theory of change in Appendix F. For Impact studies of interventions that have not been rigorously evaluated previously (initial efficacy studies), justify the intervention's readiness for evaluation by providing any available data on its feasibility, fidelity, and promise for improving learner outcomes. For Impact studies of interventions that have been evaluated previously (follow-up studies and replication studies), describe the previous causal impact study (design, sample, measures, analyses), and the intervention's beneficial impacts on education outcomes. For follow-up studies, discuss your ability to follow sample members from the prior study and why the impacts from the prior study would be expected to continue long-term. For replication studies, describe and justify any aspects of the previous causal impact study that will be varied, such as the geographical location, the target population, or features of the intervention implementation and delivery. Describe the practical importance of the Impact study for educators or policymakers.

2. Research Plan

The level of detail provided in this section should align with your expertise and proposed training activities. The aspects of the research plan that are less detailed should be those on which you propose to receive additional training and mentoring. For example, if your career development plan includes training in implementing and analyzing data from single-case experimental designs, IES would not expect a detailed description of specific design features and visual and/or quantitative analysis in the research plan. However, you should describe the basic type of single-case design you propose to conduct and how it is appropriate for your research questions and clearly indicate for reviewers the type of training and/or mentoring that will support you in further developing and carrying out the design. **The other aspects of your research plan in which you do have experience should be described in detail.** For example, if you propose to conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) and your prior training and research focused on RCTs, IES would expect a detailed description of how you plan to conduct and analyze data from the RCT.

Describe the aims of the research project, including your specific research question(s) and hypotheses.

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

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

Describe your criteria for defining disability or risk for disability.

Describe the setting where your research will take place.

(b) Research Design
Describe the research design with enough detail to demonstrate that it will address the research questions.

Describe how you will consider input from learners, educators, and/or other key stakeholders in conceptualizing, designing, and reporting results of your research, and when considering issues critical for implementation and scaling of interventions.

Address the following recommendations for your proposed project type.

Project Type	Research Plan Recommendations
Measurement	If you propose to develop or refine an assessment, describe the iterative development process, including procedures for the following (as applicable and feasible): • Scoring and administration • Developing items • Demonstrating that items adequately measure the intended construct(s) and only the intended construct(s) • Examining whether the items and the assessment are biased against groups within the intended population Describe the types of validity evidence to be collected and how they align with the assessment framework.
Exploration	For primary data collection and analyses, describe the procedures for collecting and scoring data, and (if applicable) any qualitative data collection and coding protocols. For secondary data analyses, identify the datasets you will use and the key variables you will examine. Discuss any limitations of the dataset(s). For meta-analyses, describe the study inclusion and exclusion criteria, search procedures, coding scheme, and procedures for extracting data from the studies.

	Demonstrate that there are enough studies available with the relevant information to allow an adequate dataset to be constructed.
Development and Innovation	Describe how you will iteratively develop the intervention and make necessary adjustments to ensure usability and feasibility. Describe the pilot study, including the research design, data collection procedures, plan for monitoring fidelity of implementation, and (if applicable) what the comparison group will receive.
Impact	Describe and justify the research design and how it could meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) design standards (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/handbooks). Discuss your ability to detect a reasonably expected and minimally important effect size. Describe the data collection procedures, plan for monitoring fidelity of implementation, and (if applicable) what the comparison group will receive and how you will monitor comparison group practice.

(c) Measures
Describe the measures you will use to assess variables of interest, including learner outcomes, and discuss their reliability and validity 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).

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

(d) Data Analysis
Explain your proposed analyses and how they will address your research questions.

(e) Timeline
Provide a timeline for each step in your project, including research and career development activities. The timeline may be discussed in the training program narrative and/or presented in Appendix F.

3. Career Development Plan

Describe three to four overarching training goals and how they relate to your research plan and address gaps in your knowledge and training. Training goals may focus on expanding your content-area knowledge, methodological skills, and/or development as a scholar.

Specify how the mentors will help you reach your training goals, guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan, and guide your development as a scholar. Mentoring activities may include regular meetings to discuss the research plan and progress (primary mentors are expected to communicate with PIs at least once per month); review of your career development plan and suggestions for particular activities or directed readings; and additional guidance that will be useful for your development as a scientist, including reviews of manuscripts for publication, dissemination products, and grant applications.

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

Describe your planned training activities and how they will help you reach your training goals. For each activity, specify what it entails, with which training goal(s) it is aligned, the timing, and whether it is campus-based or external to your home institution. Training activities could include (but are not limited to) courses offered by your institution, IES-funded methods trainings, grant-writing seminars, and statistics workshops.

Describe how your career development plan, including the mentoring and/or training activities, will equip you to meet the SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer), as appropriate.

Describe how the content and timing of activities in your career development plan are integrated with the research plan. For instance, if you propose to participate in a training related to designing and conducting RCTs, you should demonstrate how that will be completed prior to conducting an RCT as part of your research project. A timeline may be discussed in the training program narrative and/or presented in Appendix F.

4. Personnel

In its research training programs, IES is strongly committed to broadening participation, including personnel from underrepresented communities and diverse institutions.

Describe your qualifications to be the PI, specifying your accomplishments and experience conducting research related to learners with or at risk for disabilities.

Specify the percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) you will devote to the project. Explain how you will have time to conduct your proposed research and accomplish your training plan given your other responsibilities. IES anticipates that you will allocate a minimum of 20% and maximum of 50% of calendar year time to manage your research training project, with the specific amount depending on your course load and other sources of salary funding.

Describe the qualifications of your mentors, their proposed roles in training, and how their expertise aligns with the proposed research and training activities you have identified.
- Identify which mentor is the primary mentor if there is more than one.
- Include mentors with appropriate expertise in research with learners with or at risk for disabilities and, if relevant, their families or educators.
- If proposing multiple mentors, include mentors with a variety of areas of expertise. For instance, one mentor may have expertise in the relevant content area and the other may have expertise in another aspect of your proposed research or career development plan, such as the research methods.
- Specify a mentor at your home institution who can help guide your career development there (for example, by helping you navigate the institution's procedures for grant submission) as well as provide additional content and/or methodological expertise.
- Describe your mentors' prior experiences mentoring early career researchers (including faculty or postdoctoral fellows).
- Summarize the special education research projects conducted by the mentors, including their role on the project (PI, Co-PI, Co-I, consultant), a brief description of the research project and the methods used, and the funding source (if applicable).

Describe the time commitments of your mentors for your project.
- Describe the anticipated number (and length) of mentor meetings per month as well as the amount of time to be devoted to other mentoring activities.
- Specify their percent effort over a 12-month calendar year. Their effort should be commensurate with the mentoring activities and reflect the time they will actually devote to the project (including donated time). IES anticipates that your mentors' combined time commitment to the project will be at least 5% per calendar year.

Describe other personnel (if applicable), including their proposed roles, qualifications, and time commitments. Other personnel, such as consultants, can be used to provide support on specific aspects of your research plan or to fill gaps in your mentorship and training (for example, by providing consultation on statistical analyses). These personnel should have unique and specific roles that are different from those served by the mentors.

For all personnel, describe their experience disseminating research findings to a range of audiences, including to researchers in peer-reviewed scientific journals and to relevant stakeholders such as policymakers and practitioners. If relevant, also describe their experience marketing products for learners with or at risk for disabilities.

Describe how the background and experience of the project team (including you, your mentors, and other personnel) will support the successful conduct of the proposed work, including information on the project team's experience working with the population of learners that the research will address.

5. Resources

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

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

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

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

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

Describe your resources, including access to specific offices and organizations, to carry out your plans to disseminate results as described in the required dissemination plan in Appendix A.

E. Additional Budget Parameters

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

The budget should include the costs of conducting the proposed research and career development plans. This may include such costs as research and administrative staff salary, research supplies, participant incentives, local travel for data collection, and registration for training workshops.

The budget may also include the following:
- Up to 50% of the PI's salary to be used for academic year support and/or summer salary.
- **Up to $5,000 per year across all mentors**. If there are co-mentors, this maximum allowable sum must be divided among all the mentors. Institutions may have different ways for allocating $5,000 across mentors. Mentors may be compensated using honoraria, salary including fringe benefits, or cost sharing or in-kind contributions. Regardless of compensation method, the Federal government contribution cannot exceed $5,000. Although in-kind contributions and cost sharing are allowed, they are not taken into consideration during the review of the application, nor do they influence the funding decision.
- Funding for travel, including to the annual IES PI Meeting, for the PI or mentor(s) to meet, for professional research conferences, and for specialized training workshops available through other entities (such as summer institutes in methodology or statistical analysis).

Grant funds **must not** be used for the following:
- Facility construction, renovation, or maintenance
- Support for graduate students beyond their direct work on the grant. For example, grant funds should not be used to support graduate student research or travel to conferences
- Mentors' research

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/submission_guide.asp) 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. 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 Limit for the Training Program Narrative

The training program narrative must be no more than 25 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 25th page of the narrative.

2. 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.

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 12-point type size.
- 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. The type size used must conform to all three requirements. 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 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.

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 (see for example the American Psychological Association, 2009) 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 training program narrative that is described in [Part II](#) is followed by several appendices. Some of these appendices are required and some are optional. When you submit your application through Grants.gov, you will create a single PDF file that *contains the training program narrative and all appendices* and include it as an attachment in the application package. Include appendices in alphabetical order and simply skip an appendix if it is not required for your application or if you choose not to include an optional appendix. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) 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 training program 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 Plan (Required)

You must include Appendix A after the training program narrative. Appendix A **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages.** If Appendix A exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

In Appendix A, describe your plans to disseminate the findings from the project. Dissemination plans should be tailored to the audiences that may benefit from the findings and reflect the unique purpose of the particular project type.

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

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

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

The dissemination 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: Response to Reviewers (Required for Resubmissions)

Appendix B **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages**. If Appendix B exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded

for scientific peer review.

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix B. Use Appendix B to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments.

If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should use Appendix B to provide a rationale explaining why the current application should be considered a "new" application rather than a "resubmitted" application.

This response to the reviewers or justification to be considered a new application is the only information that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application.

3. Appendix C: Summary of Research (Required)

Appendix C **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix C exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

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

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 From Mentors (Required)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix D. Appendix D **must** include letters of agreement from the mentor(s), including the primary mentor and additional co-mentors, in Appendix D.

The letter(s) should include enough information to make it clear that the mentor understands the nature of the commitment of time, resources, and mentoring activities that will be required if the application is funded.

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

5. Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners (Required)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix E.

Appendix E **must** include letters of agreement from your institution and research partners. Ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

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

acceptance, and an agreed upon start date.

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

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

6. Appendix F: Supplemental Information (Optional)

Appendix F **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix F exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

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

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

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

D. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the training program narrative ([Part II](#)) and required and optional appendices (see above), you will also prepare a project summary/abstract, a bibliography and references cited, an exempt or non-exempt research on human subjects narrative, and biographical sketches for key personnel to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) 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/Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/abstract as a separate PDF attachment. 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 (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/). We recommend that the project summary/abstract be one-page long and include the following information.

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title for the project
- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose and significance of the purpose of the project that addresses the research and career development plans

- **Research Plan:** A brief description of the research plan including research questions/hypotheses, sample, intervention (if applicable), measures, and data analysis plan
- **Career Plan:** A brief description of the proposed training and mentoring activities

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 training program narrative.

3. Human Subjects Narrative

You **must** submit an exempt or non-exempt human subjects narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. There is **no recommended 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/overview.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 Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit an application. However, if an application involving non-exempt human subjects research is recommended for funding, the designated U.S. Department of Education official will request that you obtain and send certification within 30 days of the formal request.

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, and this five page limit includes current and pending support information**. **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, mentors, other key personnel, and consultants (if included) should show how personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience.

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the principal investigator, each mentor, 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 grants pursuant to this Request for Applications (RFA).

2. Funding Available

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

Please attend to the duration and budget maximums in Part II.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

(a) Indirect Cost Rate

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

Institutions, both primary grantees and subawardees, not located in the territorial United States cannot 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 new OMB Uniform Cost Principles. Grantees are responsible for the proper use of their grant awards and may have to repay funds to the Department if they violate the rules for meeting- and conference-related expenses 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, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99 and 2 CFR 3485. In addition, 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

B. Additional Award Requirements

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

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

(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 and/or training relies on access to education settings, you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary settings in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to IES indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research and/or training before the full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, IES may ask you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.

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

(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 PI 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 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 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).

(b) Special Conditions on Grants

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

(c) Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting

On all training grants, the 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. Should the PI not be able to attend the meeting, they 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 a Letter of Intent

Letters of intent 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 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 letter of intent is non-binding and optional but strongly recommended. If you submit a letter of intent, a program officer will contact you regarding your proposed research and career development. IES staff also use letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Elements of the letter of intent:
- Descriptive title
- Brief description of the proposed project, including the research and career development plans
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address of the PI
- Name and institutional affiliation of mentors and any key collaborators
- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the duration maximum)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the budget maximum)

2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to one of the previous IES competitions but that was not funded, you must indicate on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance Form in the Application Package (see the IES Application Submission Guide; https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) that the FY 2024 application is a resubmission (Item 8) and include the application number of the previous application (an 11-character alphanumeric identifier beginning "R324" entered in Item 4a). Prior reviews will be sent to this year's reviewers along with the resubmitted application. You must describe your response to the prior reviews using Appendix B. Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2024 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past and did not receive an award but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should indicate on the application form (Item 8) that the FY 2024 application is a new application. In Appendix B, you must provide a rationale explaining why the FY 2024 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision. If you do not provide such an explanation, then IES may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year's reviewers along with the current application.

You may submit applications to more than one of the FY 2024 IES grant programs, so long as the applications are substantively different from one another. If you submit the same or similar applications, IES will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

3. Application Processing

Applications must be submitted electronically and received no later than 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Time on September 21, 2023 through the internet using the software provided on Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/). You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) 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/submission_guide.asp) 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 (https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/reviewers.asp).

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

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

5. Review Criteria for Scientific Merit

Reviewers will assign an independent score for each criterion as well as an overall scientific merit score. The criteria that contribute to the scientific merit of the project include Significance, Research Plan, Career Development Plan, Personnel, Resources, and Dissemination. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in Part II.

(a) Significance

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

(b) Research Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan section? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

(c) Career Development Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Career Development section? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

(d) Personnel

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section? Do the principal investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate training and experience and will they commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed training program? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

(e) Resources

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Resources section? 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? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

(f) Dissemination

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in Appendix A: Dissemination Plan? Does the applicant present a dissemination plan that is tailored to the purpose of the project and designed to reach the audiences that may benefit from the findings? For resubmissions, does the applicant adequately address the comments/concerns of prior reviewers?

6. Award Decisions

The following will be considered in making award decisions for responsive and compliant applications:
- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review
- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award
- Contribution to the overall program of research training described in this RFA
- Ability to carry out the proposed research training within the maximum award and duration requirements
- Availability of funds

Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

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

See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) 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 training program narrative?
	Do the training program narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements?
	Do the training program 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.
	Have you included the following required appendices? • Appendix A: Dissemination Plan • Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application) • Appendix C: Summary of Research • Appendix D: Letters of Agreement from Mentors • Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners
Responsiveness	
	Have you met the general requirements under (1) Principal Investigator, (2) Mentors, (3) Learners With or At Risk for Disabilities, (4) Education Setting, and (5) Award Limits?
	Does your training program narrative include the required sections? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below?
Significance	• Need for further career development • Overview of the proposed project • Research topic(s) • Project type
Research Plan	• Research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data analysis procedures • Measures of education outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities
Career Development Plan	• A training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities
Personnel	• Expertise of the PI, mentor(s), and (if applicable) other personnel • Date you were granted your PhD and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program • Names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if applicable) your postdoctoral supervisor
Resources	• Resources to support you in conducting the proposed project

Part VI: Program Code

You must enter the program code below in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form (see the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) for more information about this form).

Program	Code
Early Career Development and Mentoring	NCSER-Early Career