IES FY 2019 Grant Competitions: Application Submission Process

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Transcript

(Slide 1)

Welcome to the IES Application Submission Process webinar. My name is Emily Doolittle, and I am a Program Officer at the National Center for Education Research, one of two research centers at IES. In this webinar, I will provide an overview of how to submit a grant application to IES for the current fiscal year 2019 funding opportunities.

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Today, you will learn how to apply for an IES grant, with a focus on how to find the materials you need, how to use grants.gov to complete and submit your application, and some general information about what to include in your application and how to format important components of your application. You will also learn about general requirements that apply to all IES grant programs.

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IES has two research centers, each of which offers funding opportunities. The research centers' grant competitions are identified using a CFDA number, which stands for the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. All National Center for Education Research, also known as NCER competitions, are identified with the CFDA number 84.305, and all National Center for Special Education Research, also known as NCSER, competitions are identified with the CFDA number 84.324. Individual grant programs within each center are identified using an alpha character (A, B, C, etc.). More on that later.

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So, what are the research centers competing in FY 2019? Each Center runs one or more competitions each fiscal year. Some are competed regularly while others are not.

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NCER is accepting applications to five grant programs in FY 2019. The Education Research Grants Program is the main grants program for NCER, designated with CFDA number 84.305A.

The Education Research and Development Centers Program, 84.305C, is competed infrequently. For FY '19, NCER is accepting applications for two R&D centers: Improving Rural Education and Writing in Secondary Schools. NCER is also accepting applications to its Statistical and Research Methodology in Education program (84.305D, also known as Stats and Methods).

The Partnerships & Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy program (84.305H) is accepting applications to two topics: Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research and Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies.

Finally, NCER is accepting applications to its Low-Cost, Short-Duration Evaluation of Education Interventions program (84.305L).

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Now, let's look more closely at the main NCER grants program, Education Research. Under this program, we accept applications to multiple topic areas. Some are standing topics (we have 12 this year) and some are Special (competed for a limited time). This year, NCER is inviting applications to two Special Topics: Foreign Language Education and Social Studies. If you're applying to this grants program, you will need to identify the topic area on your application cover sheet to help make sure your application is assigned appropriately for peer review. I'll return to this later.

(Slide 7)

NCSER is accepting applications to four grant programs in FY 2019. The Special Education Research Grants Program is the main grants program for NCSER, designated with CFDA number 84.324A. The Research Training Programs and Special Education (84.324B) is accepting applications under the Early Career Development and Mentoring topic.

NCSER is also accepting applications for its Low-Cost, Short- Duration Evaluation of Special Education Interventions program (84.324L).

Finally, NCSER is accepting applications for Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Policy and Practice in Special Education. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (84.324N) which like the R&D Centers and NCER, is not competed every year.

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Like the Education Research program in NCER, the Special Education Research Grants programs is this primary grants program for NCSER, with multiple topic areas. There are 11 standing topics and 3 special topics in FY 2019. The special topics are Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities, English Learners with Disabilities, and Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities.

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Pay attention to due dates. For FY 2019, the research centers are accepting applications on three different due dates. Know the due date for your competition. IES does not accept late applications. More on that later.

Applications to NCER's R&D Center Competition and NCSER's Networks Competition are due on or before August 9th. Five competitions are accepting applications on or before August 23rd - Education Research, Special Education Research, Research Training in Special Education, Stats and Methods, and Partnerships.

Finally, the NCER and NCSER Low-Cost, Short-Duration programs are accepting applications on or before March 7th.

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Before you go to the IES website to learn more about these programs and the requirements for an application, I recommend that you sign up for the IES Newsflash, an email alert system that can

help you stay up-to-date with the latest news and information from IES including upcoming research grant competitions. To sign up for the IES Newsflash, hover your mouse over the News and Events tab on the main IES web page and choose Newsflash from the list.

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Here, you can sign up to receive email alerts from one or more of the IES Centers. To receive information about funding opportunities, sign up for both the NCER and NCSER News flashes.

(Slide 12)

Now, let's review how to find the materials you will need to submit an application to one of these research group competitions at IES.

(Slide 13)

You need two things to apply. First, you need the Request for Applications, or RFA, which contains information for writing your Project Narrative, including requirements and recommendations for a strong application, as well as information about submitting your application using grants.gov. The RFAs are located on the IES website. You also need to find the correct application package which contains the forms that you will need to complete. That is located on the grants.gov website.

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You can find all RFAs for current fiscal year competitions on the IES website on the Funding Opportunities page.

(Slide 15)

To get to the Funding Opportunities page, go to the main IES web page and click Menu - from the drop-down, select Funding Opportunities.

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On the left-hand side of the page you will see a list of steps to follow to submit a research grant application to IES. Links to the RFAs are circled in red. On the right-hand side you see the competitions that are accepting applications in FY 2019.

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You can download RFAs either as a PDF or as a Word document.

(Slide 18)

Now, let's turn to grants.gov where you will find the application package for your competition.

(Slide 19)

I recommend that you start on the For Applicants page on grants.gov. Here you will find links to get registered and apply for grants, both circled in red. Start with registration to ensure your organization is registered in time to submit your application well in advance of the deadline date. More on that later.

(Slide 20)

Before you can register your organization on grants.gov, you need a DUNS number and an active System for Award Management, or SAM, registration. Each organization only needs one grants.gov account. Within each account you can have multiple user profiles to allow more than one person to work on a single grant application.

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Registration (and annual renewal) on grants.gov involves multiple steps that can take several weeks depending on a variety of factors. This process will take even longer this year because of changes in the SAM registration process (Step 2), more about this change on the next slide.

Your Organization Registration in grants.gov must be active in order to submit an application to IES. Make sure your organization registration is complete in plenty of time to meet the application deadline.

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Your institution must be registered in SAM and grants.gov before you can submit an application. Earlier this year, the registration process for SAM was changed with the addition of a new requirement to submit a notarized letter as part of the SAM registration process. This is true for those registering in SAM for the first time, as well as for those renewing their registration. Be sure to complete the registration process in SAM as soon as possible so that you can submit your application to IES by the deadline date.

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Once you have attended your organization's registration status in grants.gov, you will need to find the application package for your competition. Go to Apply for Grants and select "Apply for a Grant Opportunity Today."

If you are not familiar with Workspace, you can read an overview of how to apply using Workspace here as well (circled in red).

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Workspace is the standard way for organizations to apply for federal grants in grants.gov. In past years Workspace was an optional way to submit an application in grants.gov. Now, Workspace is required. More on Workspace later.

(Slide 25)

Now, let's go to "Apply for a Grant Opportunity Today", and I'll show you how to find the application materials for your competition.

(Slide 26)

The easiest way to find the application materials for your competition is to use the search function in grants.gov (circled in red).

(Slide 27)

Search by CFDA number for the competition you wish to apply to without the alpha character. As a reminder all grant competitions offered by NCER use 84.305 as a CFDA number and all those offered by NCSER use 84.324.

(Slide 28)

Search by CFDA using the numbers only. Here, I've entered "84.305" in the search field (circled in red).

(Slide 29)

When you search by CFDA number (without the alpha character), you'll get a list of all of the competitions offered. Make sure you select the Opportunity Title and CFDA number for your competition.

(Slide 30)

Here's the result of a search by CFDA 84.305. This list circled in red shows the five NCER grant competitions that are accepting applications for FY 2019 funding. Click on the Opportunity Number to get to the application forms for each competition.

(Slide 31)

Here's the list of NCSER's four funding opportunities when I searched by CFDA 84.324. Again, click on the Opportunity Number to get to the application forms for your competition.

(Slide 32)

Here is the Grant Opportunity for Education Research (CFDA 84.305A). Click on the Package tab to view the application package and apply (circled in red).

(Slide 33)

Note, the "Please read before applying!" section. Read these instructions to ensure that you have the correct version of Adobe Reader to view and complete the application package.

Click the Preview link to access read-only forms and application instructions before you apply.

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When you click Preview, you can see the mandatory and optional forms for this competition. If you click on any of these links, it will take you to a preview of that form. If you click "Download Instructions" (circled in red) you will open up a copy of the Request for Applications for the competition, which you should already have from the IES website.

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Back to the Package tab, where you can click "Apply" to apply.

(Slide 36)

Here, you can access grants.gov's Applicant FAQs, check the deadline (see Closing Date), and confirm you have found the correct application package, all circled in red.

Here you can also find the Agency Contact information (an IES program officer) if you have any immediate questions for someone at IES about the application materials for your competition. When you're ready, click the Apply button upper right-hand corner to begin working on your application. You can work on the application before your grants.gov registration is complete. However, your registration must be complete before you can submit your application.

(Slide 37)

Now, I'll show you how to apply using Workspace.

(Slide 38)

Workspace is a shared online environment where you work on your grant application. Multiple people may simultaneously access and fill out the mandatory and optional forms within an application. This is an example Workspace from grants.gov to show you what the environment looks like. Now, I'll show you some features of the Workspace.

The Participants tab lists the members of a Workspace who work as a team to complete the required forms for a federal grant.

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Under Actions, bottom right of the screenshot, you have several options. Click Web Forms to fill out the forms online. Click Download to complete PDF forms. Click Upload to submit completed PDF forms.

Click Lock-Unlock forms to prevent other Workspace members from editing a form that you needed. Click Reuse if you want to use a form from another Workspace.

(Slide 40)

Let's review some basic features of the web forms. Complete the form in your web browser. Navigate by clicking Sections (see left-hand side). Use the tab key to move through the form fields. Required fields are marked by a red asterisk.

(Slide 41)

You will enter information into the web form in a variety of ways, including entering your own text using a drop-down menu, or using a pop-up calendar that allows you to choose dates and selecting radio buttons for multiple choice fields.

(Slide 42)

If you need help while working on the web forum, hover your mouse over the field where you will see an error message that explains what is needed.

(Slide 43)

Other features to note in web forms, they will auto-save every five minutes. Also, you should complete the SF424 cover sheet first because it will pre-populate other forms in the application package.

(Slide 44)

At the bottom of each web form, there is a tab "Check for Errors" that will tell you if there are any errors on the form. For example, if you haven't filled in a field that is required, when you click the "Check Package for Errors" button, you will get a message telling you what is needed.

(Slide 45)

If you don't want to use the web form option, you can download the forms and complete them using Adobe software. Once completed, you then upload them to Workspace. Note that the PDF forms also have a Check for Errors button.

(Slide 46)

If using PDF forms, you can move through the form using the tab key. Note that required fields have a red border and yellow shading. As with the web forms, you can hover your mouse over form fields if you need help.

(Slide 47)

Whether using web forms or PDF forms, you always have the option of reusing a form. Grants.gov will keep your forms for three years.

(Slide 48)

When you're ready to submit your application, the Workspace owner, the participant with that assigned role, must notify the Authorized Organization Representative, AOR, that it is ready to submit. The AOR is the Workspace participant with the authority to submit the application. Also, please note that you need your grants.gov password in order to submit the application.

(Slide 49)

Now, we will go over more features of grants.gov to help you complete and submit your application successfully and on-time.

(Slide 50)

As noted earlier, you need Adobe software to read and complete the application forms. In addition, you will attach documents to the application forms that contain the substance of your application. More on that later. These documents must be in a PDF format in order to be accepted by IES. If you need help converting your files to PDF, grants.gov has resources to check the version you have and download the version you need if you don't have the correct version. Note, if you can see the application package you're able to complete and submit grant applications on grants.gov.

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Back on the For Applicants page, there is a section on Adobe compatibility, circled in red, that you can use to ensure you have the right version of Adobe to submit your application.

(Slide 52)

You must submit your application through grants.gov. You cannot email your application to the program officer. If you do that, your application will not be sent forward for peer review.

(Slide 53)

Application received by grants.gov are date and time-stamped, and the time is stamped to the second. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and the date and timestamp must be no later than 4:30 and zero seconds p.m. Eastern Time on the due date in order for IES to review your application. Late applications will not be reviewed.

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IES will not accept your application in paper format unless you qualify for one of the following exceptions. If you do not have access to the internet or you do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the grants.gov system, then you can qualify for an exception to the online submission. If you think you qualify for this exemption contact the relevant IES program officer to explain your situation and learn more.

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If you have any trouble completing the forms and the application package or submitting your application through grants.gov, your first step should be to contact grants.gov. You can call their 800 number or send an email. When you contact grants.gov for help, they will give you a case number that you need to keep. Once you have your case number, contact your IES program officer and let them know about the problem and the steps that you have already taken to remedy the problem.

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On the Applicant FAQ page, grants.gov provides several resources that may help you if you are experiencing any difficulties with your application.

(Slide 57)

IES does not accept late applications. If grants.gov determines that there was a technical problem with the grants.gov system and that the problem with the system affected your ability to submit your application on time, we will accept your application. If that is the case, email the IES program officer with your grants.gov case number. Please note, though, that the vast majority of the time there is not a technical problem with grants.gov. Instead it is a common error that leads to problems that slow you down and that could make your application late. IES will not accept an application that was late because the grants.gov submission guidelines weren't followed.

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You can track your application on grants.gov using the Track My Application link to verify that your submission was on time and valid. You can track the application this way from the time you begin the upload process until the Department receives the application and assigns a unique identifier.

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You access the Track My Application page from the For Applicants page where you can select Track My Application.

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Enter the grants.gov tracking number for your submission to follow your application's progress through the grants.gov system.

(Slide 61)

You will get confirmation of your submission from grants.gov and IES in the form of four emails. The first three emails come from grants.gov, and the fourth email comes from IES U.S. Department of Education.

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The first email confirms that you have attempted to upload your application to grants.gov. At this point your application will be assigned a tracking number that starts with G-R-A-N-T, grant. The second email you receive will indicate either that your application has been validated by grants.gov or that your application has been rejected due to errors. If it has been rejected, you will need to go back and fix the errors.

This is yet another reason that you should submit your application early because you want to make sure you have enough time to fix any problems if your application is rejected. The third

email you receive from grants.gov indicates that the Department of Education has retrieved your application.

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The final email contains a PR award number unique to your application. It will start with R then 305 or 324 depending on which center you submitted your application to, and then the letter of the competition. From then on, you should use this R305 or R324 number to track your application. If your application was submitted late this email will state that it was late and that it will not be given further consideration.

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IES has a peer review website called PRIMO, Peer Review Information Management Online. A few weeks after the application deadline, you will receive an email about PRIMO's Applicant Notification System. From this point forward, all communication about the status of your grant application will come from the system. If you do not receive this email, please contact your program officer so we can help you get set up.

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Here's the PRIMO website. After submitting your application, you will be invited to set up your PRIMO applicant account to keep track of the status of your application as it is reviewed.

(Slide 66)

Now, let's turn to the content of an application.

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An application consists of forms, the SF424 research and related, or R&R, form family, and PDF files with the substantive content of your application that are attached to the forms. This substantive content includes a project abstract, a Project Narrative, several appendices (some of which are required, some optional), a reference list, a human subject's narrative, and bio sketches for key personnel.

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This is the SF424 cover sheet. As mentioned earlier, you should fill this form out first because it will pre-populate the other forms on the application package.

Please note item 4B, the agency routing identifier. This is not a required form field according to grants.gov, but IES would like you to enter information into this field to help us make sure your application is routed appropriately.

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The Agency Routing Identifier, item 4B, is used to screen applications for responsiveness and to assign applications to the appropriate scientific peer review panel. If your application doesn't

include an agency routing identifier or if it is incorrectly identified, your application may be rejected as non-responsive or assigned inaccurately for scientific review.

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This is the Other Project Information form shown on slide which is where you will attach the substantive portions of your application like your project abstract and narrative. All attachments must be PDF files.

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The Department of Education will only accept an application that uses PDF files as attachments. The forms included in the application package provide the means for you to attach Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. You must attach read-only non-modifiable PDF files; any other file attachment will not be accepted by the Department.

Grants.gov has additional requirements for PDFs, including a unique file name for each file, names that are no more than 50 characters, and that avoids special characters. Finally, you must use individual files that are non-fillable and not password protected. See grants.gov Applicant FAQs for more information about PDF files.

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The substantive content of your application.

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The Project Summary or Abstract has a page limit of one page single-spaced. You should add it as a PDF file attachment under number seven on the Other Project Information form. Make sure that you adhere to margins and formatting recommendations which we are going to go over later. You should include your research topic and goal, and the Project Summary or Abstract if you are applying to 84.305A or 84.324A. This information should match the information provided in item 4B of the SF424 form.

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Project Narratives have varying page limits, and it depends on the competition to which you're applying. So make sure that you check the RFA to determine your page limit for your Project Narrative. The Project Narrative should be added as an attachment under item number eight on the Other Project Information form.

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The Project Narrative has four or five sections depending on the competition to which you are applying. So, you should read the relevant RFA. Most of the applications will have Project Narratives that includes Significance, Research, Plan, Personnel, and Resources sections. Information for each of these sections is detailed in the RFA.

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See relevant RFA for information about appendices. Appendices and alpha codes (A-F) vary by competition. Some are required, some are not.

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Dissemination plans should be tailored to the audiences that may benefit from the findings and reflect the unique purposes of the research goals.

Appendix A dissemination plan is required. It should be included at the end of the Project Narrative and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment. In other words, the same file as your Project Narrative should also include Appendix A at the end. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations.

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Appendix B should be three pages, single-spaced. This appendix is required for recent resubmissions only. For resubmissions, you must use up to three pages to describe how your revised proposal is responsive to prior feedback from the reviewers. Make sure you indicate your prior application number in those three pages in Appendix B.

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Appendix C has a page limit of 15 pages, single-spaced. It should be included at the end of Appendix B and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations.

(Slide 80)

Appendix D has a page limit of 10 pages, single-spaced. It should be included at the end of Appendix C and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations.

(Slide 81)

Appendix E has no page limit. It should be included at the end of Appendix D and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment. Again, make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations.

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Appendix E should include letters of agreement from your research partners, that may be schools or districts. It may also be consultants who will work on your project. Do not reduce the size of the letters. Make sure they are full size. The letters should clearly indicate an understanding of the time, space, and resources that will be required of the partner if the application is funded.

If you include scanned documents as part of a PDF file (for example Letters of Agreement in Appendix E) scan them at the lowest resolution to minimize the size of the file and expedite the upload process. PDF files that contain graphics and re-scanned material can greatly increase the

size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. The average discretionary grant application totals one to two megabytes, therefore, check the total size of your application package before you attempt to submit it. Very large application packages can take a long time to upload, putting the application at risk of being received late, and therefore, not accepted by the Institute.

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Appendix F, the Data Management Plan, is required only for the Efficacy and Replication Goals under 305A and 324A. There is a page recommendation of five pages, single-spaced. Appendix F should be included at the end of Appendix E and submitted as part of the same PDF attachment. Make sure you would adhere to margin, format, and font size requirements.

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For your bibliography and references cited, there is no page recommendation. You should use APA style, that is the American Psychological Association style.

You should add the references as a PDF file under number nine of the Other Project Information form. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations and that your citations are complete.

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The Human Subjects Narrative has no page limit, and again, it should be added as an attachment, a PDF file on number 12 of the Other Project Information form. Note that item 12 on that form says Other Attachments. It does not say specifically "Human Subjects Narrative", but that is where you want to upload your file. So you either need to submit an exempt Human Subjects Narrative or a non-exempt Human Subjects Narrative.

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You can learn more about exemptions on the department's website, provide enough detail and your Human Subjects Narrative to determine whether the exemption is appropriate or not.

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 If you are conducting non-exempt human subject work, your narrative should include the involvement and characteristics of the human subjects, the sources of materials and data, the recruitment and informed consent process, discussion of potential risks and protection against those risks, the importance of the knowledge to be gained, and collaborating sites.

(Slide 88)

Next, we're going to talk about budget form.

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Here I'll review some of the common mistakes that we see in budget forms.

(Slide 90)

Section E, participant trainees support costs, circled in red, should only be used for training grant applications (305B or 324B).

(Slide 91)

The next common mistake we see is the Time Commitment of Senior and Key Personnel. Under the Senior Key Person Profile is where you enter the information for your key personnel, including the current and pending support as an attachment.

For the time commitment of each person on the SF424 budget form, make sure you fill in the calendar months or the academic plus summer months that they will be devoting to the project.

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You will see that month is circled in red.

(Slide 93)

IES sets budget maximums for grants. Budget maximums vary by RFAs, topics, and research goals. Make sure that your budget does not exceed the maximum allowed.

(Slide 94)

For the budget, you need to include a Narrative Budget Justification. The Narrative Budget Justification has no page limit recommendation, and you should add it as an attachment, a PDF file, to the R&R Budget form. Adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations. This should be a single document with all of the budget justification for all years of the entire project in one file. Attach this file at Section K of the first budget period.

(Slide 95)

This is what the form looks like (on the slide), and you can see that toward the bottom there in red I have circled where you add the Narrative Budget Justification. Notice also the circle at the bottom right corner that says, "Add Period." That is how you add another period for multiple year projects.

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Your Narrative Budget Justification should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers and IES to judge whether your costs are reasonable. Make sure your Narrative Budget Justification aligns with the budget. In other words, make sure that the numbers in your narrative match the numbers on your form.

We recommend that, in order to allow for easy cross checking, you organize either within year by category or within category by year.

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Sub-awards, if you have them, should not duplicate the costs in the main award. Include the time commitment and descriptions of responsibilities for the principal investigator and other key personnel. You need to clearly indicate cost shares in your Narrative Budget Justification if you have them.

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For the Indirect Cost Rate, you need to use your institution's negotiated federal indirect cost rate. You should use the off campus indirect cost rate, when appropriate, following the terms of your institution's negotiated agreement. Do not include as direct costs things that are really indirect costs.

You need to check your negotiated agreement and make sure that you are only including indirect costs in this category. The Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be in place at the time of award in order for you to claim indirect costs.

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Use the R&R Sub-Award Budget Attachment form if you have sub-awards. This is listed under Optional Documents. If you don't have any sub-awards, you don't need to complete this optional document. But if you do, then you need to complete this form, extracting and attaching budgets for as many sub-awards as you are including. You need to extract and attach a budget form for each institution that will hold a sub-award. Separate budgets are required only for those sub-awardee and collaborating organizations that perform a substantial portion of the work.

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This is what the R&R Sub-Award Budget form looks like, shown on slide. You will notice the big red circle is where you click to extract the form. The small red circle shows where you would attach the form once it is complete. You need a separate form for each sub-award. If you have three sub-awards you need to extract the form three times, filling each one, save each with a unique name following grants.gov instructions for naming these PDF files, and then attach each of this form under one, two, and three.

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Next, we are going to talk about biographical sketches for key personnel. You should attach a single PDF file for each person. Each biographical sketch is limited to four pages. For example, many people submit an abbreviated curriculum vitae (CV). Each biographical sketch needs to adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations. It should be attached as a PDF at the Attached Biographical Sketch field of the Research and Related Senior Key Person Profile. The Institute encourages you to use the IES Biosketch available through SciENcv or you may develop your own bio sketch format.

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You can find the IES Biosketch here. Click the green button.

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This is where, circled in red at the bottom (shown on slide), you would attach the biographical sketch, and you need to do it separately for each key person.

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There are a few other mandatory forms that you need to fill out for your application. The first is the Project Performance Site Location form, the second is the Assurances for Non-Construction Programs, and the third is the grants.gov Lobbying Form, (formerly the ED Combined Assurances form). I'm gonna show you what they look like on the slides.

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This is the Project Performance Site Location form, shown on slide.

(Slide 106)

This is the Assurances for Non-Construction Projects form, shown on slide.

(Slide 107)

This is the grants.gov Lobbying Form (formerly the ED Combined Assurance form), shown on slide.

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Our last topic will be application format recommendations. To strive for consistency across applicants, we provide formatting recommendations.

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The same format recommendations are used for the Abstract, the Project Narrative, the appendices, the bibliography, the Human Subjects Narrative, the Narrative Budget Justification, biographical sketches, and list of current pending support. In other words, everything that you need to create on your own as opposed to just filling out a form. A page is defined as 8 and a half by 11 inches and on one side. We recommend having one-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of the page.

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We recommend that the height of your letters not be smaller than 12-point and your type density, including both characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. We suggest making sure you have no more than six lines of type within a vertical inch. In general, if you use a 12-point Times New Roman font and single spacing, you should be fine on all of these type size and font size recommendations.

We recommend these things for two reasons. First, so that we make sure that your text is legible for all of our reviewers, but also to ensure that everyone has the same amount of space for their Project Narrative and all the other components of your application.

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If you have graphs, diagrams, and tables, which you are allowed to have, you should make sure that they were produced well in black and white. So make sure, for instance, if you have some kind of pie chart or bar graph that, in black and white, you can tell the difference between the different sections of the pie or different bars.

We recommend that your graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts conform to the same type size as the rest of the materials with your application. Figures, charts, and table legends may be smaller in size, but should still be readily legible.

(Slide 112)

Now, we'll turn to general program information.

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IES considers applicants eligible if they have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically-valid research. IES does not require cost sharing or matching as part of the grant award.

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Awards depend on the availability of funds. Also, the number of awards will depend on the quality of the applications that we receive, and the size of the awards depends on the scope of the projects that are being proposed. The size of the award is also contingent on the budget maximum set for that particular competition or topic or goal within a competition.

(Slide 115)

Here are a couple of final reminders.

(Slide 116)

Use the application checklist and the Request for Applications for the competition you are submitting to, in order to determine that you have provided all of the required information for each form, that you have attached the correct PDF files to the proper form, and that you have completed all of the certifications and assurances.

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You should use the Check Package for Errors button in the application package in order to make sure that you have completed all of the required forms.

You need to upload your application and confirm that it is validated by grants.gov before 4:30:00 p.m. Eastern time. You can use the Track My Application function on grants.gov to make sure that your application has been uploaded and validated.

Pay attention to your emails. You will get four in total. Look for the PR award number and the date and timestamp in the final email to verify that your application was received on time.

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Remember to register for grants.gov early. If you aren't sure if your institution is registered for grants.gov, you should do it as soon as this webinar is over just to make sure. Make sure that you download the application package designated for your competition and your deadline. I recommend you submit your application early, if at all possible, at least three or four days in advance of the deadline so that you have enough time to correct any errors and try to submit again before the deadline.

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Last but not least, I have said this before, but I will say it again, contact your program officer if you have any questions. They can help you with the substantive requirements for your proposal and they can also help you with completing forms in the application package. So, make sure you reach out to your program officer.

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And here's the link for the IES funding page and the grants.gov website.