

# IES Application Submission Process FY2022

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# Transcript

*Transcription is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.*

(Slide 1)

Welcome to the "IES Application Submission Process" webinar. My name is Emily Doolittle, and I am a program officer in the National Center for Education Research. I am joined by my colleague, Sarah Brasiel, who is a program officer in the National Center for Special Education Research.

In the webinar today, we will provide an overview of how to submit a grant application to IES for the current Fiscal Year 2022 funding opportunities.

(Slide 2)

Today, you'll learn how to apply for an IES grant with the 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.

(Slide 3)

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

(Slide 4)

Go to the IES Funding Opportunities page to see what the centers are competing in the current fiscal year.

(Slide 5)

Pay attention to due dates. For FY 2022, 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.

NCSER's Research to Accelerate Pandemic Recovery in Special Education has two separate deadlines designated 324X-1 and 324X-2.

The first deadline, 324X-1 is August 2nd. And the second deadline 324X-2 is September 9th.

Applications to NCER's Stats and Methods Program and the Longitudinal Data to Support Recovery Policymaking are due on August 12th.

Finally, applications to NCER's Education Research Training and Systematic Replication competitions are due on September 9th.

(Slide 6)

Stay informed about current funding opportunities by signing up for the IES Newsflash.

(Slide 7)

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

(Slide 8)

You need three things to apply. First, you need the Request for Applications or RFA, which contains information for writing your Project Narrative, including requirements that must be met to advance to peer review and recommendations for a strong application. The RFAs are located on the IES website.

(Slide 9)

Second, you will need the Application Submission Guide, which contains information about submitting your application using Grants.gov.

(Slide 10)

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.

(Slide 11)

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

(Slide 12)

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 13)

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.

(Slide 14)

Registration (and annual renewal) on Grants.gov involves multiple steps that can take several weeks, depending on a variety of factors. 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 for your competition.

(Slide 15)

Once you've attended to 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're not familiar with Workspace, you can read an overview of how to apply using Workspace here as well. Circled in red.

(Slide 16)

Workspace is the standard way for organizations to apply for federal grants in Grants.gov.

(Slide 17)

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 18)

The easiest way to find the application package for your competition is to use the Search function in Grants.gov. Circled in red.

(Slide 19)

Search by CFDA or ALN 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. And all those offered by NCSEER use 84.324.

(Slide 20)

When you search by CFDA or ALN 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 to get the correct package.

(Slide 21)

Once you find the application package for your competition, open the Grant Opportunity and click Preview to see the mandatory and optional forms for the competition. If you click on any of these links, it will take you to a preview of that form.

(Slide 22)

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

(Slide 23)

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 of Workspace from Grants.gov to show you what the environment looks like. Now, I'll show you some features of the Workspace.

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

(Slide 24)

Under Actions, bottom right of the screenshot, you have several options.

Click Webforms to fill out the forms online.

Click Download to complete PDF forms.

Click Upload to submit completed PDF forms.

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Click Lock/Unlock forms to prevent other Workspace members from editing a form as needed.

Click Reuse if you want to use a form from another Workspace.

(Slide 25)

Let's review some basic features of the webforms.

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 26)

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

(Slide 27)

If you need help while working on the webform, hover your mouse over the field, where you will see a popup message that explains what is needed.

(Slide 28)

Other features to note in webforms. They will autosave every five minutes.

Also, you should complete the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance form first because it will pre-populate other forms in the application package.

(Slide 29)

At the bottom of each webform, there is a tab “Check for Errors” that will tell you if there are any errors in 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 30)

If you don't want to use the webform 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 31)

If using PDF forms, you can move through the form using the Tab key. Note that required fields are flagged. As with the webforms, you can hover your mouse over form fields if you need help.

(Slide 32)

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

(Slide 33)

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 34)

Now we'll go over more features of Grants.gov to help you complete and submit your application successfully and on time.

(Slide 35)

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. IES recommends that you use PDF files. 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 are able to complete and submit grant applications on Grants.gov.

(Slide 36)

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 37)

Applications 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 time stamp must be no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the due date in order for IES to review your application.

Late applications will not be reviewed.

(Slide 38)

If you have any trouble completing the forms in 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.

(Slide 39)

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

(Slide 40)

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.

(Slide 41)



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 IES 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 Your Application.

(Slide 43)

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

(Slide 44)

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.

(Slide 45)

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.

(Slide 46)

This final email contains an identifier called a PR/Award number that is 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 and a series of digits. Once you get this PR/Award number, use this R305 or R324 number to track your application on the IES Peer Review Website, which

I will describe next. If your application was submitted late, this email will state that it was late and that it will not be given further consideration.

(Slide 47)

IES has a peer review website called PRIMO, Peer Review Information Management Online. 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 48)

A few weeks after the application deadline, you'll receive up to three emails about PRIMO's Applicant Notification System, P-ANS. From this point forward, all communication about the status of your grant application will come from the system.

The first email has the subject line "IES-PRIMO Applicant Notification System (ANS) - Status of Application (Part 1 of 2)," and provides login information.

The second email has the subject line, "IES-PRIMO Applicant Notification System (ANS) - Status of Application (Part 2 of 2)," and provides password.

The third email or first email if you already have an ANS account has the subject line, Fiscal Year of Application Status Update - Institute of Education Sciences - PRIMO ANS," and tells you to log in to PRIMO to see the status of your application.

If you do not receive these emails, please contact your IES program officer so we can help you get set up.

(Slide 49)

Hello, this is Sarah Brasiel from the National Center for Special Education Research. I will be reviewing what is included in an application.

(Slide 50)

An application consists of forms, SF 424 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 subjects narrative, and biosketches for key personnel.

(Slide 51)

This is the SF 424 cover sheet. As mentioned earlier, you should fill this form out first because it will prepopulate the other forms in 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.

Please see the request for applications for your competition to find the appropriate Agency Routing information.

(Slide 52)

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.

(Slide 53)

This is the Other Project Information form shown on the 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.

(Slide 54)

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, flattened PDF files. Any other file attachment will not be accepted by the Department. Grants.gov has additional requirements for PDFs, including a unique name for each file, names that are no more than 50 characters, and that avoid 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.

(Slide 55)

Now we will discuss the PDF attachments, which are the substantive content of your application.

(Slide 56)

Each RFA specifies a maximum page limit. Any pages exceeding the maximum will be removed before the application is forwarded for scientific peer review.

We provide formatting recommendations to ensure applications are readable and that applicants are able to submit the same amount of information in an application.

(Slide 57)

The Project Summary or abstract should be no more than two pages, single-spaced, and follow the IES online abstract format. Add this abstract as a PDF file attachment under number 7 on the Other Project Information form. Make sure that you adhere to margin and formatting recommendations, which we are going to go over later. Include required codes in Item 4b of the SF 424 form.

(Slide 58)

Project Narratives have varying page limits, and it depends on the competition to which you are 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 8 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 include 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 through F vary by competition. Some are required, some are not. Appendices must be included at the end of the Project Narrative and submitted

as part of the same PDF file attachment. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size requirements.

(Slide 61)

For your bibliography and references cited, there's no page recommendation. You should use the author-date style for your citations. You should add the bibliography and references cited as a PDF under number 9 on the Other Project Information form. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size recommendations.

(Slide 62)

The Human Subjects Narrative has no page limit. And again, it should be added as an attachment, a PDF file on number 12 on Other Project Information form. Note that item 12 on that form says "Other Attachments." It does not specifically say 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 to determine whether the exemption is appropriate or not.

(Slide 64)

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 65)

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

(Slide 66)

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

(Slide 67)

Section E, Participant Training Support Costs, circled in red, should only be used for training grant applications 305B.

(Slide 68)

The next common mistake we see is the Time Commitment of Senior and Key Personnel. IES wants to know level of effort over the calendar year, include percentage of 12-month period for each key person in narrative budget justification.

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.

(Slide 69)

For the time commitment of each person on the SF 424 budget form, make sure you fill in the calendar months that they will be devoting to the project. For people at universities, calendar months would be the same as academic plus summer months. Do not fill in anything under Academic Months or Summer Months, only fill in the Calendar Month's box. You will see the Calendar Month as circled in red.

(Slide 70)

IES sets budget maximums for grants, budget maximums vary across and within RFAs. Make sure your budget does not exceed the maximum allowed.

(Slide 71)

For the budget, you also need to include a Narrative Budget Justification. The Narrative Budget Justification has no page limit, 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 72)

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.

(Slide 73)

Your Narrative Budget Justification should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers and IES to judge whether your costs are reasonable. Make sure the 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.

(Slide 74)

Subawards 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.

(Slide 75)

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 10% de minimis rate may be used if your institution does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

(Slide 76)

Use the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment forms if you have subawards. This is listed under Optional Documents. If you don't have any subawards, 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 subawards as you are including. You need to extract and attach a budget form for each institution that will hold a subaward. Separate budgets are required only for those subawardee and collaborating organizations that perform a substantial portion of the work.

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The Subaward budget form is a “parent” form within the Workspace environment because multiple subforms can be created within this form. Each institution that will hold a subaward to perform a substantive portion of the project must complete one of these subforms and save it as a PDF with a unique name for inclusion in this parent form.

(Slide 78)

Next, we're going to talk about the 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 Attach Biographical Sketch field of the Research & Related Senior Key Person Profile. The Institute encourages you to use the IES Biosketch available through SciENcv, or you may develop your own biosketch format.

(Slide 79)

You can find the IES Biosketch [here](#).

(Slide 80)

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

(Slide 81)

There are a few other mandatory forms that you need to fill out for your application.

(Slide 82)

You will need to fill out the Project Performance Site Location form shown on slide.

(Slide 83)

You'll also need to complete the Grants.gov Lobbying Form, formerly the ED Combined Assurance Form shown on slide.



(Slide 84)

IES is committed to monitoring its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of key personnel. To help IES gather information for this important task, we encourage you to submit the requested information for the PI and each identified co-PI and co-investigator. IES will separate this form from the application upon receipt as it is not part of the review process. And the data provided will be kept confidential. We encourage you to provide this information as it will help us in our efforts to ensure an equitable review and award process for all applicants. Providing the requested information is voluntary and is not a pre-condition of award.

(Slide 85)

Our last topic will be application format requirements.

(Slide 86)

A page is defined 8.5 by 11 inches and one side with one-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of the page.

(Slide 87)

The height of your letters must 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 12-point Times New Roman font and single spacing, you should be fine on all these type sizes 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.

(Slide 88)

If you have graphs, diagrams, and tables, which you are allowed to have, you should make sure that they reproduce 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.

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Here are a couple of final reminders.

(Slide 90)

Use the application checklist in the Request for Applications for the competition who are submitting to in order to determine 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've completed all of the certifications and assurances.

(Slide 91)

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 11:59:59 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'll get four in total. Look for the PR award number and the date/time stamp in the final email to verify that your application was received on time.

(Slide 92)

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 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.

(Slide 92)

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

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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.

Here's the link for the IES funding page and the Grants.gov website.