Institute of Education Sciences
Funding Opportunities Webinar Series
Application Submission Process

Webinar Transcript

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U.S. Department of Education

ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

IES Funding Opportunities Webinar Series: Application Submission Process

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Slide 1

During today's webinar, Institute of Education Sciences (IES) staff will provide information regarding the grant submission process. The webinar will focus on information in the application instructions packet, including content and formatting requirements, human subject clearance, and the application form.

Slide 2

Today we are going to talk about how to apply for an IES grant, and you will learn about the application process in terms of finding the forms and materials you need, using grants.gov to download the application package and submit your application, and completing and formatting your application.

Slide 3

The information contained in today's webinar applies to all of the fiscal year 2014 research and research training program grants. You will need to download a separate application package for each program, so pay special attention to the CFDA number. That is the one that starts with 84.305. The letter at the end is what distinguishes your competition from the others, so you want to pay special attention to that CFDA number and the letter at the end.

Slide 4

The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) is not holding research or research training grant competitions for fiscal year 2014. If funds become available for grant-making in 2014, NCSER will use these funds to make additional awards from 2013. NCSER does anticipate being able to hold a grant competition for fiscal year 2015.

Slide 5

The first topic we will cover today is how to find the application materials that you need.

Slide 6

You need three things to apply. First you need the Request for Applications or RFA, which contains information for writing your Project Narrative. You will also need the grants.gov Application Submission Guide and the application package itself.

Slide 7

You can find the first two items, the RFA and the Application Submission Guide, on the IES website, on the funding page (http://ies.ed.gov/funding). While you are on the IES page, you might as well sign up for the IES Newsflash (http://ies.ed.gov/newsflash), which will tell you automatically when RFAs and application materials, upcoming webinars, etc. are available.

Slide 8

This is the main IES page (shown on slide). To find the RFA and Application Submission Guide, choose the Funding Opportunities link on the main ies.ed.gov webpage.

Slide 9

To sign up for the Newsflash, hover your mouse over the News and Events on the main IES webpage, and choose Newsflash from the dropdown list.

Slide 10

When you go to ies.ed.gov/funding, this is what you will see (shown on slide). You will see I circled in red the link for the RFAs. When you click on that link you will find a list of all the RFAs for 2014, and then you want to make sure you choose the correct one, again paying attention to the letter at the end of the CFDA number.

Slide 11

This year the National Center for Education Research (NCER) only has one deadline for applications, which is September 4, 2013. Just to reiterate, that means that applications for 84.305A, B, C, D, and H are due on that day.

Slide 12-24

You also can find the IES submission guide on the funding page of the IES website. The third thing you need is the appropriate application package; the packages are available on grants.gov. Now I am going to show you how to navigate the grants.gov website to find the information that you need.

I am going to go to grants.gov. Across the top of the page, there are a number of menus, and you want to click on *Search Grants*. The easiest way to find the application package is to search by the CFDA number, using the third search term box in the upper left of the page. Enter "84.305" in the box and click *Search*.

You will see here that this returns multiple results because these are all of the IES NCER grant competition packages for fiscal year 2014. You want to make sure that you are downloading the application package for your competition, so pay attention to the opportunity title and to the CFDA numbers at the end of the opportunity title. The first one is 84.305A, for example.

Again, you want make sure that the CFDA number is correct. If you scroll down, you will see all of the appropriate information here. Again, this tells you the deadline. You now know that you have chosen the correct package.

When you are ready, you can click on the *Application Package* tab just under the grant opportunity title at the top. Again you have a chance here to confirm that you are downloading the correct package. Again, it says 84.305A, 2014. That is the correct package. Then we will click *Download*.

On this page, you have the opportunity to enter your e-mail address, which you can choose to do if you want to be alerted to changes in the package. If you don't want to enter it, you can click *No*. Then click *Submit*.

Now you can download the application instructions and/or the application package. The application instructions are the IES Application Submission Guide; that is the same document that was on the IES website, so you can download it from here also.

The application package is in Adobe; it is a PDF form. Again, at the very top, you just want to check here to make sure that you have the right package. Notice how this is outlined in red and highlighted in yellow? That is how you are alerted to the fact that this is a required field. You need to fill out that field.

Below you will see there is a list of mandatory forms and a list of optional forms. If you click on any of these links, then it will take you to that form.

The *Check Package for Errors* button at the top of the form is an important button for you to use because that is how you are going to check to make sure that you didn't leave any required fields empty.

Slide 25

Now we are going to talk a little bit more about some tips for using grants.gov.

Slide 26

In terms of registration for grants.gov, the first tip, and perhaps the most important tip, is to start early. Initial registration in grants.gov can take more than 5 business days, and grants.gov recommends allowing 4 weeks to register. Even if you are already registered on grants.gov, the annual update that you must complete could take more than 3 days. One thing to note here is that it is actually your institution that needs to register on grants.gov, not you as an individual. For most institutions, especially universities, the sponsored projects office will likely take care of the grants.gov registration if it hasn't already been done, but you may want to check with them just to make sure that it has been completed.

Slide 27

In terms of software requirements, you need Adobe software in order to read and complete the application forms. You can use the Adobe software to convert your documents to PDFs. All of the documents that you are going to upload to your application need to be uploaded as PDFs, so you need to have the capability of converting your files to PDF. Adobe Reader 8.1.2 is the minimum requirement, and grants.gov can help you check the version you have and download the version you need if you don't have the correct version.

Slide 28

You must submit your application through grants.gov. You cannot e-mail your application to the Program Officer. If you do that, your application will not be sent forward for peer review.

Slide 29

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 must be stamped no later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on September 4, 2013. Late applications will not be reviewed.

Slide 30

You cannot submit your application on paper. Your application will be rejected unless you meet one of the following requirements. 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.

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If you qualify for a grants.gov submission exception, you must submit a written statement that you qualify at least 2 weeks before the application deadline.

Slide 32

If you experience technical problems with grants.gov, your first step should be to contact the grants.gov support desk. They will give you a case number, which you need to keep. After this, you should contact your Program Officer and let them know about the problem and the steps that you have already taken to remedy the problem.

Slide 33

If we can confirm that a technical problem occurred 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.

Slide 34

You will get a submission confirmation from grants.gov, and it will come in the form of multiple e-mails. You are going to get four different e-mails. The first three e-mails come from grants.gov, and the fourth e-mail comes from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Slide 35

The first e-mail 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 e-mail 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 e-mail you receive from grants.gov indicates that the ED has retrieved your application.

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Then you will get a fourth e-mail from ED, which will contain a PR award number unique to your application. It will start with R305, and then the letter of the competition. From then on you should use this R305 number to track your application. If your application was submitted late, this e-mail will state that it was late and that it will not be given further consideration.

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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.

Slides 38-39

You access the Track My Application page by selecting *Applicants* from the menu bar at the top of the main grants.gov page, and then select *Track My Application.*

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Next we are going to discuss the materials that are included in the application, and we do have a question related to the forms.

Question: *What are the optional forms in the application package?*

Answer: *That is the same for every package in grants.gov, and grants.gov is the site where all grants to the federal government go. When it says mandatory, it means those are mandatory for the entire federal government. Some of the optional forms are not actually optional for you because IES requires them. The Application Submission Guide, and the rest of this webinar, indicate exactly which of the optional forms you do have to complete. Make sure you pay attention to the Application Submission Guide and make sure that you are completing all the forms that that Application Submission Guide indicates you need to complete.*

Slide 41

Now we will discuss what is included in the application.

First is the Research and Related, or R&R form. This is the SF424 family. You will have a project summary or abstract. You will have the Project Narrative. You will have appendices A, B, C and/or D; bibliography and references cited; the Human Subjects Narrative; biographical sketches of key personnel; Narrative Budget Justification; and lists of current and pending funding.

Question: *What about the Letter of Intent (LOI)?*

Answer: *The Letter of Intent deadline has passed, but that doesn't mean that you cannot submit an application. The LOI is not required, so if you didn't manage to send one in, or you sent one in and you have now changed your mind about the project you want to do, you can still submit an application. You should contact the Program Officer listed in the RFA to let them know that you didn't submit an LOI but that you would like to submit an application. The best way to contact your Program Officer the first time is through e-mail, and the Program Officer may request a brief written summary of your idea for your project, or they may request a phone call to discuss it, but definitely, if you have not submitted an LOI, you can still submit an application and you should contact your Program Officer.*

Slide 42

The first set of forms you need to fill out are the Research and Related, or R&R, forms. Again, the required fields are marked by an asterisk, are highlighted in yellow, and are outlined in red. Again, you want to use the *Check Package for Errors* button. You should start with the SF424 cover sheet because it pre-populates all the other forms.

Slide 43

This is a screenshot of the webpage that I have already shown you, and notice the circle around the *Check Package for Errors* button.

Slide 44

This is the SF424 cover sheet. Again, here you will notice the required fields are pretty well highlighted. IES uses Item 4B, which is circled in red on the slide, toward the upper right corner of the screen in front of you. We use Item 4B to correctly route your application, so even though it is not red and yellow, you must complete this item.

Slide 45

The Agency Routing Identifier, Item 4B, is used to screen applications for responsiveness and to assign applications to the appropriate scientific review panel. If your application doesn't include an agency routing identifier or if it is incorrect, your application may be rejected as nonresponsive or assigned inaccurately for scientific review.

Slide 46

The grants.gov Application Submission Guide contains tables that tell you what you should put into Item 4B depending on the competition to which you are applying. This table on the slide is for the competition for CFDA 84.305B, C, D, and H. This is the table that comes from the Application Submission Guide. Find the competition to which you are applying, and use the code from the right-hand column.

Slide 47

If you are applying to 84.305A, you need to identify both a topic and a goal in Item 4B, so you need to include both the topic code and the goal code in Item 4B on the form.

Slide 48

This is the Other Project Information form (shown on slide), which is where you will attach your abstract and your narrative. You will also attach other materials here like your bibliography.

Slide 49

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 requirements, which we are going to go over later. You should include your research topic and goal in the Project Summary or Abstract if you are applying to 84.305A. This information should match the information provided in Item 4B of the SF424 form.

Slide 50

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 eight on the Other Project Information form.

Slide 51

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.

Slide 52

We recommend that your Project Narrative be concise and easy to read and that you number your pages consecutively. This helps the reviewers to find the information that they need during the review process. You also must adhere to type, font size, and format specifications for the entire Project Narrative, including any footnotes.

Slide 53

Appendix A has a page limits of 15 pages single-spaced. 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 requirements.

Slide 54

Appendix A should include figures, charts, or tables that supplement the text of your Project Narrative, and can include examples of measures to be used in the project. If this is a resubmission, 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 A.

Slide 55

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

Slide 56

Appendix B should include curriculum materials, computer screenshots, test items of measures you will be developing, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment.

Slide 57

Appendix C has no page limit. 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 requirements.

Slide 58

Appendix C 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.

Slide 59

Appendix D is required only for the Effectiveness Goal application, under 305A. There is a page limit of five pages single-spaced. Appendix D should be included at the end of Appendix C and submitted as part of the same PDF attachment. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size requirements.

Slide 60

Again, Appendix D is only for the Effectiveness Goal application, and it should include your data sharing plans.

Slide 61

For your bibliography and references cited, there is no page limit. You should use APA style; that is the American Psychological Association. You should add it as a PDF file under number nine on the Other Project Information form. Make sure you adhere to margin, format, and font size requirements and that your citations are complete.

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 the 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 Project Narrative or a nonexempt Project Narrative.

Slide 63

There are six exemptions listed in the IES grants.gov Application Submission Guide. Include information on the involvement of human subjects to determine whether your exemption is appropriate.

Slide 64

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

Before I move on to the budget form we have some questions.

Question: *Should the Project Narrative and appendices A, B, C, and D be one PDF file?*

Answer: *Yes. Your Project Narrative file should include the Project Narrative and all of the appendices that you are including, so that is A, B, C and/or D in one file. That goes under item number eight on the Other Project Information form.*

Question: *Does each proposal have to submit a Human Subjects Narrative?*

Answer: *Yes, you have to submit a Human Subjects Narrative. Again, you need to submit a narrative indicating that your research is exempt or that it is not exempt, but you absolutely have to submit that narrative.*

Question: *After this current IES grant cycle ends with submissions on September 4, when will the next cycle begin?*

Answer: *The next cycle will be for fiscal year 2015. We can't exactly predict when that cycle will begin. We aim at releasing RFAs in the early spring, but we can't make any promises about when they will be released, or even if they will be released for 2015 although we anticipate they will. This is a good reason to sign up for the IES Newsflash because if you sign up for the Newsflash, then you will get an e-mail telling you about new RFAs when they are released, but typically we release RFAs in the early spring and typically the submission deadlines are in the late summer or early fall.*

Slide 65

Next we are going to talk about the Research and Related form. This is the budget form. This is the total federal plus non-federal form. Again, notice the red and the yellow and asterisks that are highlighting the required fields.

Slide 66

Here are a few common mistakes that applicants make when filling out the budget form. We are going to go through them just so that you don't make the same mistakes.

Slide 67

On this form you will notice, circled in red, there is a category called Participant/Trainee Support Costs. Only use the Participant/Trainee Support Costs category on a training grant application. If you are applying, for example, for the Pre-Doctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training, that is 84.305B, you should use that category. Otherwise you shouldn't be using that category at all.

Slides 68-69

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. You will see that that is circled in red. We are going to go over that in a little bit more detail in just a moment.

Slide 70

For the time commitment of each person, on the SF424 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 also, for the budget, 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 requirements. This should be a single document with all of the budget justification for all years of the entire project in one file. You are going to attach that 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 in the upper right corner, which has two highlighted buttons that say, “Next Period.” That is how you move between periods 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 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.

Slide 74

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.

Question: *Please provide further explanation by what is meant by calendar versus academic or summer months.*

Answer: *What we mean by this is that the calendar year is out of the full 12 months, versus academic and summer months, which a lot of professors use. They will refer to the 9 months that they are in their academic year in their institution as a certain percentage of time and what their summer months time will be, and generally that is only done by people in universities; whereas people who are in the nonprofit/for-profit world will generally use calendar months.*

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 where appropriate. 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 indirect costs. 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 forms 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 the optional documents, but if you do, then you need to complete these forms. 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.

Question: *How do you define indirect costs versus direct costs?*

Answer: *Indirect costs are generally negotiated; there should be a negotiated document that is between some federal agency—it does not have to be with the U.S. Department of Education—and your institution. I would reference your institution's indirect cost to find out more on what that covers.*

Question: *Are DUNS numbers required from each sub-awardee?*

Answer: *Yes.*

Question: *Do you need a sub-award budget for collaborators?*

Answer: *It depends. I believe, in the Application Submission Guide, it is recommended that a sub-award only be included for a collaborator or a partner who is doing a substantive amount of work, and substantive is really up to you to decide. IES doesn't have a preference. If you don't create a sub-award for a collaborator you can include the collaborator as a consultant within the main budget. There is a place in the Other Direct Costs category, I believe, where you could do that.*

Question: *For the partnership grant, which is 305H, if your partner is a school district, would you necessarily create a sub-award budget for the school district?*

Answer: *Yes, you would make a sub-award. How that sub-award would be designed would depend on the school district, in terms of paying for personnel and information related to that. They would be either the sub-awardee, or they would be the primary. So, yes, in the partnership, you would need to have them in one of the roles, either as the primary or as the sub-awardee.*

Slide 77

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 you 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 and you need to attach three separate forms on this page under one, two, and three.

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I am going to pause for a moment to answer a couple questions.

Question: *Is cost sharing required?*

Answer: *No, it is not required. Cost sharing is not required under any of these grants.*

Question: *Does the proposed research need to be approved by our institutional review board prior to submission to IES?*

Answer: *No, you don't need to have IRB approval before you submit your application. You do need to have IRB approval before you can collect any data. So if your grant is awarded, then IES and ED will work with you to make sure that you have IRB approval, and that is the point at which you would go through the IRB at your institution and you would need to send that information to IES. You don't need to worry about that in order to apply. You only need to worry about that if your grant is funded.*

Question: *Please clarify what a collaborating site is in the Human Subjects Narrative. Is that a district that is permitting access to its teachers of students? What is the difference between a collaborating site and being engaged in the research?*

Answer: *Collaborating sites for the Human Subjects Narrative are any sites where you will be collecting data. If you are working with a district and you are getting access to the teachers and the students, then that is considered a collaborating site. There isn't really a difference between a collaborating site and being engaged in the research. It is just different terminology depending on whether we are talking about the Human Subjects Narrative. There is more information and more detail about the Human Subjects Narrative in the Application Submission Guide, so you can also look there if you have further questions.*

We are 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 requirements. It should be attached as a PDF at the Attach Biographical Sketch field of the Research and Related Senior Key Person Profile.

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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.

Question: *Can biographical sketches be in National Institutes of Health (NIH) format?*

Answer: *We have no requirements for the format of your biographical sketch except that it needs to be four pages or less and it needs to adhere to our margin, format, and font size requirements. Other than that you can use any format that you would like.*

Slide 80

For each key person you need to attach a list of current and pending support as a single PDF file, so a separate file for each person. This list must be a maximum of one page single-spaced. This should be attached as a PDF at the Attach Current and Pending Support field of the Research and Related Senior Key Person Profile. We recommend, also, that you include the date of each project on your list of current and pending support so that reviewers and IES can see which of the projects will overlap with your application.

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This is where the Attach Current and Pending Support (shown on slide) field is; this is where you would attach that list.

Question: *Is there a standard form or format for the biographical sketch?*

Answer: *There isn't a standard form or format for the biographical sketch. I think most people submit abbreviated CVs, but there is no form or format for that; so whatever you think is the best or most appropriate is fine.*

Slide 82

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 ED Combined Assurances form. I am going to show you what they look like (on the slides).

Question: *To clarify, we have four partners, and we consider them equal partners, but their budget amounts differ. Some are much smaller than others. Are you saying that we can choose not to submit sub-award budgets from them, but add them under the principal investigator (PI) budget as a collaborator?"*

Answer: *This, again, is up to you. Things to consider are both the budget and the time—the amount of the budget that is given to that individual or to that sub-awardee, and then the time commitment listed. You want to be able to show they can have a small budget, but can also have a significant amount of time on the project. That is one way of showing that they are in some way an equal partner in the application. The decision of whether they are actually treated as a sub-awardee or a consultant really depends on you. I would recommend, if you have questions about your specific circumstance, that you contact your Program Officer to discuss that further, since they may be able to give you additional guidance.*

Slide 83

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

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

Slide 85

This is the Combined Assurance form (shown on slide). There is more information about those forms on each of the forms and also in the Application Submission Guide.

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Question: *Do IES grants allow a fee-for-profit; are for-profit agencies allowed to charge a standard fee?*

Answer: *That is an excellent question. I don't believe that for-profit agencies are allowed to charge a standard fee. For-profit agencies can apply for grants, absolutely.*

My understanding is that they are not allowed to charge a standard fee. This would be a good question about which to contact your Program Officer.

Our last topic will be application format requirements.

Slide 87

The same format requirements are used for the Abstract, the Project Narrative, the appendices, the bibliography, the Human Subject Narrative, Narrative Budget Justification, biographical sketches, and list of current and 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 8-1/2 by 11 inches and one side. You should have 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of the page.

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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. You also have to make 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 requirements. We have these requirements 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, etc.

Question: *Is there a standard form or format for the current and pending funding information that gets uploaded for each person?*

Answer: *There is not a standard form and format for that information either. I think, most commonly, people make a small table that includes the start and end dates of each project, the percent effort on each project, and whether the project is pending or already funded. I think that is sort of the minimal amount that you probably want to include, but again, we don't have a form or format for that, so it is up to you.*

Question: *Is there a particular font that you prefer?*

Answer: *There isn't necessarily a particular font that we prefer. Please choose one that is easy to read for the reviewers. As I said a moment ago, I think that if you choose Times New Roman in a 12-point, then you should be fine in terms of your type size and font size, so that is probably a safe bet, but we don't really have a preference for any font.*

Question: *Please confirm if the page numbers and footnotes are within the 1-inch margin or if they can be outside the 1-inch margin.*

Answer: *They can be outside the 1-inch margin if you need them to be. I would be especially careful about footnotes because you don't want to run the risk of your footnote being cut off. If you can move the footnote outside of the 1-inch margin, I think that that would be a safer bet, but you can go in the 1-inch margin if necessary.*

Question: *If we have key personnel that are included under sub-awards, do we include that person under the main personnel section or the sub-award section?*

Answer: *If they are being paid through the sub-award, they should be included in the sub-award budget and budget narrative justification. You don't want to duplicate the cost of the funds devoted to that person, so if they will be paid through the sub-award, then they should be in the sub-award.*

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All your text must be single-spaced.

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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. Your graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts should conform to the same type size requirements 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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Some reminders about page limit. The Project Summary/Abstract has a limit of one page. The Project Narrative has a page limit, and you need to check your RFA to see what the page limit is. Appendix A has a limit of 15 pages. Appendix B has a limit of 10 pages. Appendix C has a limit of five pages. Each biographical sketch has a limit of four pages and each list of current and pending funding has a limit of one page.

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There are no page limits for Appendix D, the bibliography and references cited, the Human Subjects Narrative, and the Narrative Budget Justification.

Question: *Is there any way to see a completed application sample, especially of the attached documents?*

Answer: *There is. You can make a request through the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, and if you Google that you can find the FOIA information on the ed.gov website, and it tells you the process that you need to go through. That is the formal avenue for seeing a completed application. No one at IES can send you an application. We don't have any samples. So if you would like to see an application, you would need to put in a FOIA request. If you put that request in, then you will get all of the information that is not personally identifying information, including all of the attachments.*

We will go over some general program information.

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In terms of eligibility, applicants must have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically-valid research. I have already said this, but here it is again: cost sharing or matching is not a requirement.

Question: *Are footnotes in 12-point font?*

Answer: *The answer is yes, but I will add a little bit to that. You are allowed to put in footnotes, and I know that programs like Microsoft Word will automatically format footnotes in a smaller font size, which is okay. I think the idea here is that we are trying to create equity in these applications, which is why we have all these requirements about font sizes. So I would strongly recommend that you either avoid footnotes altogether or use them very, very sparingly, and don't use them as a way to include a lot of additional information. You can use footnotes. They can be smaller font size, but I wouldn't use them excessively. I hope that helps.*

Question: *Should the narrative be single-spaced?*

Answer: *Yes.*

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Awards will 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.

Question: *You mentioned that sub-award budget dollars shouldn't be duplicated in the prime budget but at Other Direct Costs there is an item number five which says Sub-Awards Consortium Contractual Costs. Does the sub-award budget dollars go in here?*

Answer: *Yes. You want to do your sub-award budget separately. So fill out a separate form for each sub-award. Once you do that, you take that number you come up with at the end and put it into number five for Sub-Awards Consortium Contractual Costs on the main budget form. So yes, that is absolutely correct. What I meant when I said they shouldn't be duplicated is that you don't want to, for instance, pay the same person under key personnel for the main award and pay them again through the sub-award. You don't want to buy two computers when you really only need one, once through the main award and once through the sub-award. So that is what I meant by duplicating. You are right that that number itself does need to go into the main form. That is a great question.*

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There is a maximum dollar amount for total funding for each grant. You should refer to the RFA to see what the maximum dollar amount for total funding is for the competition to which you are applying.

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Here are a couple final reminders.

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Use the application checklist in the Application Submission Guide 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.

Question: *A question came in earlier about where key personnel should be listed. Let's say you have a key person on a sub-award. I think you also want to make sure you list them, for example, on the Key Personnel form. The question here is about whether a key person who is being paid through a sub-award should be included in that Section A, and the answer is yes.*

Answer: *Yes, and have the biographical sketch for them and a current and pending funding.*

That means that you put their contact information in, you upload their bio, and you include a list of current and pending funding. So your key personnel, whether they are on your sub-award or your main award, should be included on that form, should have a bio, and should have a current and pending funding list. In terms of budget, they go on a different form, but in terms of the key personnel form, you do want to include them there also.

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You should use the Check Package for Errors button on 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. Washington, DC time; that is Eastern Daylight Time, on September 4, 2013. 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 e-mails; you should get four in total. Look for the PR award number and the date/time stamp in one of the e-mails to ensure that your application was received in 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.

Review the grants.gov Application Submission Guide for information about filling out the forms and uploading the application. I have included a link here, but it is on the IES funding page. The Application Submission Guide is also available through grants.gov.

Make sure that you download the application package designated for your competition and your deadline.

Question: *Appendix C—should you conform to the font and format requirements? What if you have letters coming from many different institutions?*

Answer: *You probably will have letters coming from many different institutions. I would say that it is not very strictly enforced, in terms of the formatting of the letters. The most important thing is that you make sure that they are legible, that is what we mean when we say you shouldn't shrink down the letters, what we mean is don't make them smaller and put multiple ones on a page or something like that. This really is just so reviewers* *can read the letter. So you want to make sure that the letter is legible and that nothing gets cut off in the margins. You don't need to contact all of your schools and force them into certain formatting requirements as long as their letter is legible.*

Slide 101

Also, remember to submit your application early, we would recommend 3 or 4 days in advance. This is so that you can verify your submission is okay. Again, use the Track My Application function on grants.gov to make sure that your application is validated.

Question: *What do you recommend in terms of running heads on any or all parts of the application documents?*

Answer: *I am not sure that I have a recommendation for that. I would say don't waste your space. The other thing people ask about a lot is a table of contents. In theory, tables of contents are really nice, but they take up a page, and if you include a table of contents it is going to count toward your page limit for the narrative. Running heads take up space, so I would recommend, unless you are sure you have space for them, not including a running head. One of the things to keep in mind is that when all of your PDFs and forms are put together, there is a footer that is added on every page that has your unique assigned number. You don't need to identify each page of your application because that is done automatically through the system.*

Question: *Is it too late to contact a Program Officer to discuss a proposal?*

Answer: *The answer is absolutely not. It is never too late to contact a Program Officer. How should we contact the Program Officer? Should we e-mail for a phone conference with a brief description of the project? That sounds great. Program Officers are more than happy to talk with you on the phone, but I think your best bet is to e-mail them ahead of time and request a time to speak with them. If you can include a brief description of your project that will help them a lot too, so that they can have an idea of your project before they speak to you on the phone.*

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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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Here is the website for grants.gov and our funding page.

Question: *In terms of budget, how specific in detail should the Budget Narrative Justification be?*

Answer: *It needs to be pretty specific. You need to talk about each key person, talk about the role that they play on the project, the jobs that they are going to do on the project, and be clear about their percent effort. In terms of other items, if you are talking about travel, for example, make sure you indicate how many trips per year and how many people are going to be on each trip. You also need to itemize cost estimates for airfare, hotel stays, and meals and incidentals. You need to estimate all of that. Your sponsored projects office will have guidance on the per diem that you are allowed to use for your hotel, etc. When we are talking about materials or equipment, you need to itemize that also. You need to say, "I need to purchase five computers at $1,000.00 each for a total of $5,000.00." All that needs to be itemized in your Budget Narrative Justification. I would say you want to err on the side of being overly detailed. It is better to have more information and to be more specific than to be too general.*

Question: *Can the budget be an estimate or does it need to be precise?*

Answer: *You should be as precise as you can. We recognize that the cost of things change sometimes between the time that you have submitted your application and the time that your grant is awarded. For instance, if you look up airfare to a conference, that is just an estimate. Do the best you can with your estimates. Price out the costs of all the assessments you need, the cost of the equipment and the computers and the materials you need, and just do the best you can.*

Question: *Does IES have any limitations with regard to including non-American citizens as collaborators or consultants on applications? What about post-doctoral fellows?*

Answer: *I don't believe we have any limitations on including non-American citizens as collaborators. You can also include institutions outside of the United States. They can be included as sub-awards. An important thing to note, though, is that those institutions outside of the United States cannot charge indirect costs. Otherwise, we don't have any limitations on non-American citizens or post-doctoral fellows.*

Question: *Which e-mail confirms on-time submission?*

Answer: *The fourth e-mail you receive, from the U.S. Department of Education, confirms that your application was on time. The first e-mail tells you that you have uploaded it into the system. The second e-mail tells you that it has been validated. The third tells you that the U.S. Department of Education has retrieved it. It is the fourth e-mail that tells you that it is on time. You do not need to receive that e-mail from the U.S. Department of Education before the deadline. However, I would recommend that you submit your application early. That way you don't need to be concerned about whether your submission was on time. So the earlier you can do it, the better.*

Question: *How do we find out who the Program Officer is?*

Answer: *You can find that out through the RFA or through the IES website. All of the RFAs will have the Program Officer listed. Some RFAs only have one Program Officer; for instance, if you are applying to 305C or 305D, there is only one Program Officer. If you are applying to 305A, which is our main education research program, then there is a different Program Officer for each topic, and if you look at the beginning of the topic in the RFA, it will have the name and the contact information of the Program Officer for that topic.*

Question: *I recently heard that NIH is no longer funding yearly cost-of-living increases. Is this true for IES as well?*

Answer: *We have not put any restrictions on that.*

Again, please e-mail your Program Officer if you have any other questions after this webinar is over. Thank you so much for joining us today.

This concludes today's webinar, Application Submission Process, part of the Funding Opportunities webinar series. Copies of the PowerPoint presentation and a transcript from today's webinar will be available on the IES website shortly. Thank you and have a wonderful day.