Research Training Programs in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring

KATIE TAYLOR, Ph.D.
National Center for Special Education Research

Transcript

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

(Slide 1)

Hi, everyone. My name is Katie Taylor. And I am a program officer at the National Center for Special Education Research, which I'll refer to as NCSER. And today I'll be talking about one of NCSER's training programs, the early career development and mentoring program.

(Slide 2)

I'll give an overview of IES and NCSER, as well as the research training programs, some specifics about the early career program, and also a brief overview of the application submission and the peer-review processes.

(Slide 3)

I'll start by providing a bit of background on IES.

(Slide 4)

IES is the independent research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act in 2002. We are nonpartisan and are charged with providing rigorous evidence to inform education practice and policy and sharing this information with educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. The overall mission of IES is to describe the condition and progress of education in the United States, identify education practices that improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of federal and other education programs.

(Slide 5)

This graphic represents the organizational structure of IES. We are led by a director who receives advice and consultation from the National Board for Education Sciences. Our science office oversees the scientific peer-review processes for IES grant applications and IES reports. And then we also have four centers within IES. The National Center for Education Statistics is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. Within NCES, you may be familiar The National Assessment of Educational Progress or the NAEP assessment. Within NCES you will also find many large national longitudinal data sets, including, for example, The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance or NCEE, conducts unbiased, large-scale evaluations of education programs supported by federal funds, provides technical assistance, and supports the development and use of research and evaluation throughout the United States. In NCEE you will find The What Works Clearinghouse and The Regional Educational Labs. The Two centers that award grants are highlighted here in blue: The National Center for Education Research, referred to as NCER, and The National Center for Special Education Research or NCSER. Both research centers sponsor rigorous research to address education problems in the U.S. The differences between the two centers are that NCER supports research that's focused on pre-kindergarteners through adults. Whereas, NCSER supports research in children starting at birth and going through postsecondary education. And NCSER also has a focus on students with or at risk for disabilities. So you'll notice here that the research centers are separate from the Science Office

and the Standards and Review staff, meaning that we, the program officers, are not involved in the peer-review process. This allows us to work closely with you providing technical assistance on your applications. And we'll discuss more about this later in the webinar.

(Slide 6)

The objectives of the IES grant programs are to improve education outcomes for all students, particularly those at risk for school failure. The grant programs do this by developing or identifying education interventions that enhance education outcomes and can be widely deployed by identifying what works and what does not work and then encouraging further research in innovation and by understanding the processes that underlie the effectiveness of education interventions and the variations in their effectiveness.

(Slide 7)

So as I mentioned, NCSER sponsors a rigorous and comprehensive program of special education research designed to expand the knowledge and understanding of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with or at risk for disabilities in order to improve outcomes for these children and youth. NCSER is different from the other research center because of our disability focus and the age range of students that are the research targets.

(Slide 8)

Now I will provide a brief overview of NCSER's Research Training Programs.

(Slide 9)

The purpose of these programs is to prepare individuals to conduct rigorous and relevant special education and early intervention research that advances knowledge within the field and addresses these issues that are important to education policymakers and practitioners.

(Slide 10)

So now I'm going to focus specifically on the Early Career Development and Mentoring topic within the Research Training Programs in Special Education. I'm going to discuss the purpose of this program, the requirements, the narrative, appendices, and the budget.

(Slide 11)

The purpose of the Early Career program is to prepare researchers to conduct the type of research that IES funds and submit competitive proposals that address relevant special education and early intervention topics and that meet the methodological requirements specified for IES research grant competitions. So this program provides support for an integrated research and career development plan, which I'll talk more about shortly, and it's specifically for investigators in the early stages of their academic careers. These grants are intended to jump start young investigators to an independent research career.

(Slide 12)

In terms of the award parameters, Early Career projects have a maximum duration of four years and a maximum award amount of 500,000, and this includes direct and indirect costs. You need to adhere to these maximums in your application. And also, I want to note that for training awards there is an indirect cost-rate cap of 8% so make sure you adhere to that as well.

(Slide 13)

Before I move on, I want to note here that throughout the webinar I'll talk about requirements and recommendations. Requirements are the components that you have to include to be sent forward for scientific peer review. Whereas, recommendations are not required, but they'll strengthen your proposal and make it more competitive. With regard to the principal investigator or the PI requirements, eligible PIs or early career researchers can be from a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education, although the focus of the research and training needs to be in the field of early intervention or special education for children with or at risk for disabilities. There are two main eligibility requirements for the PIs. The first is that at the time of applying you have to be within three years of receiving your doctoral degree or completing a postdoctoral program. And the second is that you must hold a tenure-track position or research scientist or research associate position at an institute of higher education in the U.S. or you must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the early career award. If you've accepted a position at the time that you're applying, but you haven't started, then you need to include a Letter of Support in Appendix E, which I'll talk more about a little bit later. This Letter of Support will be from your future home institution and will indicate that an offer has been made and accepted, and it will also specify an agreed-upon start date that is set to begin before the early career award begins. Also, the PI's position must be a salaried position paid by the university without a focus on training, so it can't be a postdoctoral position. And then there are two additional parameters related to eligibility that are not part of the initial screening process, but do need to be met if the early career application is recommended for funding. And those are that the PI must be a citizen or permanent residence of the U.S. and must not have previously served as a PI or co-PI on a research grant from IES. For example, if you apply for an Early Career grant in addition to a Special Education Research grant as a PI or a co-PI and both applications are recommended for funding, you cannot do both. You would need to withdraw your application to one these programs.

(Slide 14)

Okay. So now turning to the requirements and recommendations for the mentors. The research and career development plans will be conducted under the guidance of a mentor or mentors. And you must designate at least one to guide your research in career development. So you can have more than one mentor, but if you do, you should specify who the primary mentor is and you must include a mentor at your home institution. This can either be your primary mentor or a co-mentor. You also need to select as mentors only individuals who are not your primary graduate school or dissertation advisor or your postdoctoral supervisor. In order to meet that requirement, you need to include the names of these individuals in your application. And faculty

members who served on your dissertation committee, but weren't your direct advisor, are fine to serve as mentors. And the mentors can be from academic or nonacademic institutions, as long as these institutions conduct rigorous special education or early intervention research.

(Slide 15)

Here are some tips for selecting your mentors. IES recommends that you do the following to demonstrate the appropriateness of your mentor selection. If you propose multiple mentors, include mentors with a variety of areas of expertise. For example, one mentor may have expertise in the relevant content area, and the other may have more expertise in another aspect of your proposed research plan, for example, the methods or the statistical analysis or some other aspect of the content. You should also select mentors with appropriate expertise in research with infants, toddlers, children or youth with or at risk for disabilities and/or their families, teachers, and other instructional personnel. And they should also have strong experience in the specific topic of interest that you've identified. And then another thing to consider is that when you're selecting a mentor at your home institution, you should choose somebody who can guide your career development there, so someone who can help you navigate the institution's procedures for grant submissions or for obtaining tenure, as well as provide additional content and/or methodological expertise.

(Slide 16)

Here's some other things to consider in choosing mentors: Are the potential mentors committed to training? In other words, do they have experience training doctoral, postdoctoral, or other early career researchers? Do they have the time to devote to mentoring? Are they going to expand your perspective and make a unique contribution over and above the other mentors? Do they have IES funding? It can be useful to have mentors who have IES funding and can provide feedback on this Early Career proposal, as well as future grant submissions to IES.

(Slide 17)

In terms of your research focus, Your research and career development plans must focus on children and/or youth with or at risk for disabilities and/or their families, teachers, related services providers, and/or other instructional personnel. Disability is defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. And then when we say children at risk for disabilities, we mean they're at risk for developing disabilities based on evidence of an association between a risk factor or a set of risk factors and the development of a particular disability, so selection into the study must be made on an individual basis. The determination of risk may include, for example, factors used for moving children and youth to higher tiers in a Response to Intervention model, but risk can't be defined on a general population characteristic, such as low socioeconomic status. So labeling children as at risk for disabilities because they are from low-income families or they're English learners is not appropriate to identify children at risk for disabilities.

(Slide 18)

Okay. So now I'm going to talk about the training program narrative. And this is the majority of the content of your application. Early career applications must include a narrative that has these five sections: Significance, research plan, career development plan, personnel, and resources. And I'll talk about each one of these specifically.

(Slide 19)

Your significance section should lay the foundation for your proposed research in career development, specifically it must explain why additional training is needed or what you need to add to the training that you've already received. And this is especially important if you've already received postdoctoral training. For example, it could be that you need additional training in a specific methodology that you didn't receive training on or received very little training on during graduate school or your postdoc. We recommend that you describe your current levels of knowledge and skills, the proposed mentoring and training activities, and how these activities will lead to the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the proposed research activities. In terms of the research, you'll also need to describe the education problem you plan to address, how you plan to address it, and the empirical and theoretical rationale for your research project. We recommend that you describe typical practice and its shortcomings and how the results of your work will inform the next step in the research process, such as the future development of an intervention or assessment or an evaluation of an intervention. You'll also need to describe and justify your planned program of research, which means describing the progression from your prior research to the currently-proposed research and then also connecting that to your future research. And then we also recommend that you address the significance of the career development plan. For example, you should describe what kind of additional trainings you'll pursue and how the mentoring and training activities support the research activities. Your career development plan really needs to be integrated with your research plan so that the training supports the research and vice versa. And then finally, you'll need to address how your research and career development activities will enhance your knowledge and skills. And in your application, you must identify one special education research topic that identifies your field of research and one project type. And these topics and project types are described in more detail in the Special Education Research Grants RFA, but I'll describe them briefly here.

(Slide 20)

So starting with the research topics, the Special Education Research Grants Program includes 11 standing research topics. In addition, we introduced three special topics last year to provide additional encouragement for research in understudied areas that appear promising for improving outcomes for students with disabilities and that are of interest to policymakers and practitioners. And these include Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities, English Learners with Disabilities, and Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities. When you're determining the most appropriate topic for your research, it is helpful to refer to the RFA for our Special Education Research Grants Program. All of these research topics don't cover the same population. For example, all topics, except for early intervention, require children to be in at least kindergarten. Also, starting this year, NCSER is supporting research in postsecondary settings under the topics of STEM, CTE, and Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities. In addition,

each topic has certain parameters and certain considerations. So it's important to carefully review the topic descriptions in the Special Education Research Grants RFA when you're crafting your application.

(Slide 21)

The project type is the other thing that you need to identify in your application. And this specifies the type of the work you'll be doing. The five types that you can choose from are: Exploration, Development and Innovation, Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up, Replication, and Measurement. For those of who are familiar with the previous IES goals, you'll notice that IES is now referring to these as project types, and they're no longer numbered. So for the Early Career program you can identify any one of these project types, however, the cost maximums may not be sufficient for conducting rigorous evaluation studies. I'll provide a brief overview of each of these types. But You can get a more detailed description of the requirements and recommendations for each of these in the Special Education Research Grants RFA, but there is one caveat. This year IES is not accepting Replication projects applications under the Special Education Research Grants Program, instead it's initiating a more targeted strategy for supporting replication, a research competition focused on systematic replication. As such, Replication projects are not described under the fiscal year 2020 Special Education Research Grants RFA, but you can still conducted them as part of an Early Career project. For guidance on what to include in a Replication project application, you should refer to last year's Special Education Research Grants RFA.

(Slide 22)

The purpose of Exploration projects is to identify relationships between individual, educator, school, and policy-level characteristics and education outcomes. These projects can also identify factors that influence those relations. Exploration projects are intended to build and inform theoretical foundations to support the development or evaluation of interventions or assessment frameworks. You can propose a variety of methodological approaches for an Exploration project, including secondary-data analysis, primary data collection and analysis, meta-analysis or a combination of any of these.

(Slide 23)

Development and Innovation support the development and pilot testing of new or modified education interventions that are intended to produce beneficial impacts on learner outcomes. The Development and Innovation project will result in a fully-developed intervention, evidence of the intervention's theory of change, and data that speak to the intervention's feasibility, fidelity of implementation, cost, and promise for improving learner outcomes.

(Slide 24)

Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up supports two types of studies. Initial efficacy studies of interventions that have not been rigorously evaluated previously and follow-up studies to examine the longer-term effects of an intervention that has been shown to have beneficial

impacts on education outcomes in a previous or ongoing evaluation study. For Initial Efficacy studies you can either collect and analyze primary data or conduct secondary-data analyses to test the impact of an intervention implemented in the past. As I mentioned, the cost maximum for Early Career grants may not be sufficient for conducting a rigorous Initial Efficacy or Follow-Up project, however, there may be some instances given characteristics of the intervention or the research design where these trials actually are possible given the cost maximums. And if that's the case, then you can propose to do this type of study under the Early Career Program.

(Slide 25)

Replication projects can include three types of studies, including Effectiveness Studies that are independent evaluations of an efficacious intervention when implemented under routine or typical conditions, Efficacy Replications, which replicate an intervention with prior evidence of efficacy under the same or different conditions as the previous study or studies, and Re-Analysis studies, which reanalyze existing data from a previous efficacy or effectiveness study to determine the reliability or reproducibility of previous findings. Similar to the Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up projects, the cost maximums for an Early Career project may prohibit applicants from being able to conduct a rigorous Replication project, especially in Effectiveness Study, but if a Re-Analysis or an Efficacy Replication is possible, then this can be proposed and justified. And as I noted earlier, the fiscal year 2020 Special Education Research Grants RFA does not describe Replication projects, as it is not accepting them this year. So for guidance on what to include in a Replication project application, you should refer to last year's RFA, the fiscal year 2019 Special Education Research Grants RFA. And that RFA is linked in the Early Career RFA.

(Slide 26)

And then lastly, Measurement projects support the development and validation of new assessments or the refinement and validation of existing assessments for a specific purposes, contexts, and populations. These projects will result in a valid assessment that can be used by educators or researchers to measure learner outcomes or these projects can also address purposes, such as measuring educator knowledge, skills and abilities, guiding instruction, improving educator practice, evaluating educator job performance, or assessing the effectiveness of schools or school systems.

(Slide 27)

Okay. So now I will discuss the research plan and the career development plan in more detail. Both of these plans are designed to enhance your knowledge and skills. And as I mentioned, these plans must be integrated, which means that your career development plan must support the research plan and vice versa.

(Slide 28)

Okay. Let's focus on the research plan specifically. So here you'll describe your design and the actual research process. Your design should be appropriate for your chosen project type and for your specific research questions, which should also by stated in this section. For example, if

you're proposing to develop an intervention, you'll explain the iterative process of developing and refining the intervention, the procedures for collecting data on its feasibility and usability and the research design that you'll be using to pilot test its promise for improving education outcomes and collecting data on its cost. For the sample description, you'll need to specify your population of interest, your sample size, the disability category or categories represented, and your criteria for defining disability or at risk for disability and your inclusion criteria. You must measure education outcomes, which include developmental outcomes, school readiness, academics, social and behavioral outcomes, functional postsecondary and/or employment and earnings outcomes. And these are defined and examples are provided in the RFA. For your key outcome measures you'll need to describe each measure that you'll use to collect data, including information about their reliability and validity. And if you're doing secondary data analysis, you'll need to explain the variables that you intend to use from the extant data set. Then in the data analysis section you'll describe your planned analysis procedures for all quantitative and qualitative data. So you need to be explicit about how the analyses address each research question and tie them directly to a specific research question.

(Slide 29)

When you're developing the research plan, the RFA for the Special Education Research Grants Program may be a helpful guide for identifying research activities appropriate for your specified project type. Keep in mind though that your research plan should be feasible, so it will likely be smaller in scope than a project under the Special Education Research Grants Competition. A common pitfall for Early Career applicants is to propose something overly ambitious and does not seem feasible to accomplish with the amount of time and money and given the training needs and activities. So we encourage you to work with your mentors on the development of this plan. Even though the research plan must be included in the proposal, certain aspects, for instance, the research design or the data analysis plan, on which you propose to receive additional training may be described in less detail compared to proposals submitted to the Special Education Research Grants Competition. So we anticipate that there will be further development of these plans based on your training experiences and guidance from your mentors. That being said, the level of detail that you do provide here should align with your expertise and the proposed training activities. For example, if you have expertise conducting single-case experimental designs, then IES would expect a detailed description of the design requirements. On the other hand, if your career development plan includes training in single-case design, then IES would not expect a detailed description of the design requirements. However, you should describe the type of single-case design you propose to conduct and how it's an appropriate design to address your research question. So bottom line is the reviewers need enough detail to be able to judge the feasibility and appropriateness of your research plan.

(Slide 30)

New this year, in your research plan you should describe how you will follow the principles outlined in the Standards for Excellence in Education Research or SEER to ensure that your research is transparent, actionable, and focused on meaningful outcomes that have the potential to dramatically improve education. So these standards include preregistering studies, making findings, methods, and data open, identifying interventions for core components, documenting

treatment, implementation, and contrast, analyzing costs, focusing on meaningful outcomes, facilitating generalization of study findings, and supporting the scaling of promising results.

(Slide 31)

Okay. So now I am going to move on to the career development plan. And there are two components of this plan, the mentoring process and then the additional training opportunities. Both of these components must be integrated with and support the research plan. In your career development plan you'll describe your training goals and how the proposed activities will help you reach those goals, as well as the roles that your mentor or mentors will play in helping you achieve those goals. For each mentor you want to describe their expertise and how it's relevant to your particular area of research, specify how the mentors will guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan, as well as helping you progress towards independent research. You should also describe how your mentors will assist you in acquiring new expertise and guide your development as a scholar. So mentoring activities can include regular meetings, review of your career development plan, and any additional guidance that would be useful to you in your development as a scientist, for instance, reviewing manuscripts for publication, developing grant applications, or helping you with your dissemination plan. Be specific about what the mentoring activities will entail and how often you will meet. You should also describe a plan for coordinating mentoring activities, if you have multiple mentors. For the career development plan it's really helpful to include a timeline of the mentoring and training activities, as well as the research activities to show how these are integrated and how the training that you receive will be able to inform the research plan.

(Slide 32)

Here are some examples of other training or educational opportunities that you could incorporate in your career development plan. You could include the IES Methods Trainings. You can propose to participate in grant-writing workshops or advance statistical workshops or coursework that's related to either a content area or a statistical technique. Just be sure to describe how these educational opportunities will help you reach your concrete training goals and how they'll support the proposed research.

(Slide 33)

Okay. The personnel section is the next component that's required for your training program narrative. The focus of this section is mainly on you as a PI, as well as on your mentors. However, you should also include other personnel, such as consultants, if you have them on your project. As the early career researcher, you may want to spend a little bit more time documenting your skills and your past experience than a more experienced researcher might. In this section you should include how your research expertise and your mentors' expertise reflect the focus of IES in terms of both content and methodology. So think about the research topics and the project types that I discussed earlier. You want to describe your mentors' prior experiences with mentoring early career researchers, and also describe the special education research projects conducted by your mentors. Also in this section you should make the time commitments of your mentors very clear in terms of the percent of effort in the calendar year. This is really important,

and I would suggest highlighting this in multiple places in your application, for example, in the personnel section, as well as your Letters of Support from your mentors, which I'll talk more about in a minute. You should also discuss your time commitment and you and your mentors' experience disseminating research findings to a range of audiences, including practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

(Slide 34)

 In addition, you must specify the date on which you were granted your doctoral degree and, if applicable, the date you completed your postdoc. You'll also need to specify the names of your dissertation advisor or primary graduate school advisor and, if relevant, your postdoctoral supervisor.

(Slide 35)

The last component of the narrative is the resources section. In this section you want to demonstrate that your institution has the capacity to support you in conducting the project that you're proposing. So here you should not use the university boilerplate language. Instead you want to make sure that this section specifically addresses the needs of this particular project, including both the research and the training components. So you should describe the institutional training support. For instance, do they offer workshops? Maybe they offer sessions related to grant writing. There may also be research groups at the university that you can join that are related to your area of research or to a specific analytic skill. And then you'll also want to describe any startup packages that are provided by your institution. For example, if as a new faculty member the institution gives you extra money or reduces your course load, then you can include that as a resource as an example of how the institution is supporting you. And then we also recommend that you describe the resources to carry out your plans to disseminate the results of your early career project. This dissemination plan should be detailed in Appendix A, which I'll talk about in a minute, but in terms of the resources, you should include a description of the resources to carry out your plan to disseminate your results in terms of any offices or organizations that are expected to take part in the dissemination plan, like a communications office that can assess with dissemination, as well as resources to disseminate through electronic means, such as a website, social media account, electronic newsletter, list serve or other electronic dissemination approaches.

(Slide 36)

Okay. So this slide shows the required and optional appendices for the early career program. As I mentioned, Appendix A is required for all applications to the Early Career program. And it should include your plans to disseminate the findings from the project. The dissemination plan should be tailored to the audience that will most likely benefit and discuss the different ways in which you'll intend to reach those audiences. This plan also needs to reflect the type of project you propose, for instance, findings from an Exploration type projects are likely to be most useful in pointing out areas for further attention, rather than providing proof or strong evidence for taking specific actions. Appendix B is only required if you are resubmitting a previous application. And this is where you would want to include your responses to the previous reviews.

Also, include Appendix B if your application is one that you consider to be new, but that is similar to a previous application. Appendix C is required for all applications. And this is where you include a summary table of you and your mentor's ongoing and recently completed special education or early intervention research projects. Appendix D is also required and should include Letters of Agreement from all of your mentors. And these letters should include enough information to make it clear that your mentors understand the nature of the commitment, the resources, and the mentoring activities required if the application is funded. So this is another place to make it really clear the percentage of time the mentor will be devoting to the project. Appendix E is also required and should include Letters of Agreement from your institution, as well as from your school partners, data sources, and consultants, if applicable. So the Letter of Agreement from your institution should include enough information to make it clear that they understand the nature of the commitment, time, space, and the resources that will be required if the project is funded. And if you haven't started your position by the time you submit the application, this letter should include your start date, as well as details of the offer and of the acceptance. As far as the Letters of Agreement from your school partners, these will be from the education settings that you intend to partner with. And here again, you just need to make sure there's enough information so it's clear that your partners really understand what they'll be asked to do if the application is funded. And if you're proposing to do secondary-data analysis, then you'll also want to include Letters of Agreement from the data sources, for example, state agencies that hold the administrative data your proposing to use. And if you have any consultants on your project, then you will need to include Letters of Agreement from each consultant in Appendix E.

(Slide 37)

And then lastly, Appendix F is optional. You can use this space to provide examples of research or training materials and tables and charts that support the training program narrative. For instance, you can include your project timeline, a table of the research and career development activities. You could also include examples of materials that will be used in the intervention or the assessment that's the focus of your project, as well as any figures, charts, and tables that supplement the project narrative. You can also include examples of measures to be used in the project.

(Slide 38)

The RFA includes specific information about the budget for early career grants, but I'll just highlight a couple of things. So you can budget your salary up to 50% of your salary and it can be used for a protected time or buying out classes – so you can concentrate on the research. This is not required, especially if you have a startup package that already includes this, but you can budget for it, if you need to. You can also provide honoraria for mentors for up to $5,000 total per year. So if you have more than one mentor, this $5,000 limit needs to be divided up among the multiple mentors. Your budget is expected to cover costs directly associated with the research project, as well as the career development plan. So it can include things like salary, staff, supplies, incentives, local travel for data collection, registration for workshops and training institutes, as well as travel, including travel for you and your mentors to meet, if you're not in the

same institution, travel for conferences, and then definitely travel for the IES PI meeting, which happens annually and is required for all IES PIs.

(Slide 39)

The last thing I'll talk about today is the application submission and the peer-review process.

(Slide 40)

All important dates and deadlines are included in the RFA. We encourage you to submit a Letter of Intent, if you're interested in applying, but these are optional. So if you miss the deadline or didn't submit one, you can still submit an application. I would, however, encourage you to e-mail me, the Program Officer, with a brief description of your early career project and just let me know that you intend to apply. And then be sure to leave yourself plenty of time to submit your application because we do not accept late applications.

(Slide 41)

Okay. So now let's talk about how to apply. Please be aware that there is an IES application process webinar. And in that webinar IES staff will go into more detail about the application process, but for now, I'll talk broadly about how this process works. So you need three things to apply. First, you need the RFA, which contains information for writing your training program narrative. Second, you need the IES Application Submission Guide, which is a newly-separated document that describes information related to submitting your application and provides an overview of the funding process. Lastly, you need the application package, which can be found on grants.gov. In terms of registration for grants.gov, the first tip and perhaps the most important is to start this process early. So initial registration can take more than five business days. And even if you're already registered, the annual update that you have to complete could take more than three days. So just be sure to start this process early. And it's actually your institution that needs to register, so not you as an individual. For most institutions the sponsored projects office will take care of the registration, if it hasn't already been done, but you want to make sure to check in with them to ensure that it has been completed. Then applications received by grants.gov are date and time stamped to the second, so your application must be fully uploaded and submitted on the date and time specified in the RFA. As I mentioned, we won't accept late applications.

(Slide 42)

Okay. So once you successfully submit your application, it will go through a review process. First, applications are reviewed for compliance and responsiveness to the RFA. And compliance is the process of screening applications for inclusion of a project narrative or Training Program Narrative and the required appendices. Responsiveness involves determining whether you adhere to the requirements of the competition, the components that are the minimum necessary to be sent forward for peer review. And these include the general program requirements, as well as the requirements for each section in the Training Program Narrative. If your application is found to be both responsive and compliant, then you'll be assigned to a review panel. And two to three

panel members will conduct a primary review of your application and provide feedback about it. And then once a primary review of each application has occurred, the most competitive applications are then forwarded for a review by the full panel of reviewers. And then during the panel review, applications are discussed and then rated by all reviewers on the panel. From that point we make funding decisions and then contact all applicants giving them statements from their reviewers so that those who do not receive funding can potentially resubmit depending on whether we repeat the competition in subsequent years and you're still eligible to apply.

(Slide 43)

If you want to learn more about the peer-review process, you can follow this link to find out more information from the Standards and Review Office who oversees this process.

(Slide 44)

In terms of notification about your application, all notifications will come through the Applicant Notification System, which is the system that you're prompted to sign up for once you've submitted an application. So if you have submitted before, you should already have an account. This will provide you with information about the status of the award. And then when summary statements of reviewer comments are released, it will also allow you to access those. If you're not granted an award the first time around, I encourage you to review your summary statement and talk to me to get some insight into what you can do differently and ways to think about the reviewer comments to help you improve your application. And if you submitted in a previous year and plan to resubmit, I would also be happy to discuss your previous reviews with you.

(Slide 45)

There are a few things I want to leave you with before we finish this webinar. First, read the request for applications and the submission guide carefully. There's a lot of important detail in these documents. IES has spent a great deal of time over the years making the RFA a user-friendly guide to developing a high-quality application, so be sure you know the requirements and recommendations. Browse through the abstracts of previously-funded Early Career projects to get a sense of the type of projects that IES has funded. IES will also post on-demand webinars or webinars that you can access at your convenience, covering a wide range of topics, including a grant-writing workshop, webinars about specific funding competitions, etcetera. We also have a Resource for Researcher's page that includes methodological resources to assist you in preparing an IES research grant application. It also includes videos from past IES training institutes, information about available data sets and tools, among other things. And then lastly, e-mail me if you want to schedule a phone call to talk more in depth about your proposal or just ask me quick questions through e-mail. If it's within a reasonable timeframe, I can also review draft proposals or parts and pieces of proposals and provide feedback. And then as I mentioned, if you are resubmitting a previous application, contact me to schedule a time to discuss your reviews.

(Slide 46)

Okay. So this concludes the webinar. Here's my e-mail address again, if you would like more information or if you want to talk more about your proposal, but I hope this is helpful. And thank you all for listening.