

Funding Opportunities for
Minority Serving Institutions

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Transcript

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Welcome to today's presentation, Funding Opportunities for Minority Serving Institutions. I am Samantha Walte and this presentation was created by Katina Stapleton, a program officer for the National Center for Education Research.

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This webinar focuses on minority-serving institutions. The primary purpose of the webinar is to increase awareness of IES funding opportunities both for our research and research training programs.

The second purpose is to provide specific tips for MSI applicants. There's also a full series of webinars available for applicants. If at the end of this webinar you do decide to apply for funding, we strongly suggest that you also view our grant writing and application process webinars.

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The primary audiences for this webinar are faculty, staff, and sponsored program officers from minority-serving institutions.

For the purpose of this webinar, there are a wide range of institutions that we consider minority serving institutions. Please note that if you're applying for other competitions within the Department of Education or other federal agencies, they may have different definitions of minority-serving institutions. Please also note that there are no restrictions on the type of academic institutions that apply for IES grants. MSIs can apply to all current funding opportunities.

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IES is the independent research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act in 2002. We are non-partisan. We 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 to evaluate the effectiveness of federal and other education programs.

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This bridge graphic represents how we think about the infrastructure at IES to support our overall mission.

We intend for our work to form a bridge from research to practice and back again recognizing the critical linkage and interplay between research and practice. So, how do we do this? We provide data that describe how well the United States is educating its students. We conduct surveys and sponsor research projects to understand where education needs improvement and how these improvements might be made.

We fund development and rigorous testing of new approaches for improving education outcomes for all students. We conduct large-scale evaluations of federal education programs

and policies. We provide resources to increase use of data and research in education decision making, and we support advancement of statistics and research through specialized training and development of methods and measures.

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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. The Board consists of 15 voting members who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Our Standards and Review Office oversees the scientific peer review processes for IES grant applications and IES reports.

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 with the NAEP assessment, the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Under NCES, you'll 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 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. The grant opportunities that we will be talking about today are managed through these two research centers.

You'll notice here that the research centers are separate from the Standards and Review Office, meaning that we, program officers, are not involved in the peer review process, so this allows us to work closely with you providing technical assistance to you on your applications. We will discuss more about that later in this webinar.

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You would apply to IES if you are interested in working in authentic educational settings, you are interested in improving student education outcomes, or you are committed to sharing your research findings with education practitioners.

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There are two research centers in IES. They are similar both in structure and purpose which is to fund research that helps improve student outcomes.

The major difference is in population. NCER focuses on students from early childhood to adults, while NCSER focuses on children with or at risk for disabilities from birth through the end of high school. Both NCER and NCSER have core research grant programs that share the following objectives: develop or identify education interventions (those are practices, programs, policies, and approaches) that enhance academic achievement and can be widely developed, to identify what does not work and thereby encourage innovation and further research, and to understand the processes that underlie the effectiveness of education, intervention, and the variation in their effectiveness.

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All of our research must address student education outcomes, though this covers a wide range of outcomes in addition to traditional academic outcomes. This ultimate focus on student outcomes even applies to research on improving education systems such as school busing or tiered systems of support and applies to research on adults such as teachers or principals.

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As mentioned earlier, one of IES's critical features is that we are independent and non-partisan by law. Our awards are driven primarily by scientific merit as determined by peer review. One important thing to note is that the research centers are separate from our Standards and Review Office, meaning that the staff in the research centers are not involved in the peer review process.

This allows program officers to work closely with you on your applications. We will discuss this more later on in the presentation. Program officers are available as a resource throughout the process from idea generation through application, and program officers are also available for consultation during the resubmission process.

If you have a question, don't keep it to yourself. You can contact an IES program officer at any time during the application process for assistance, from simple questions about, "Is this a good idea?" or, "How do I respond to reviewer your feedback?" to advice on anything that is in your application from significance to your resources and dissemination plan. Program officers primarily prefer to be contacted by email, so please seek out the program officer related to your topic of interest if you have any questions.

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Similar to other federal funding agencies, IES supports rigorous research at all stages including basic research, iterative research to inform research and development of new interventions or refine existing interventions, pilot studies, and later rigorous studies to determine efficacy or effectiveness of interventions program, policy or practice.

This chart lists the three major federal funders of education research, IES, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health. IES and NIH are similar in that we have independent scientific review offices that are separate from the program offices.

At NSF, the program officers manage the review process, so this limits the amount of technical assistance they can give applicants since they are directly involved in the review process. IES is as competitive or even more competitive than other funding agencies. In terms of the types of things we fund, there is some overlap and, certainly, complementary research happening among the agencies, but there are key differences.

For instance, NSF is more STEM-focused than IES, though we do both fund science, technology, engineering and math grants. NIH, and specifically the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Institute of Mental Health supports more foundational research (brain-related, genetics, such as with autism spectrum disorder) that we don't fund at IES.

Results from this work, however, could certainly inform the work that we do at IES and could guide researchers to develop a grant to IES. So, that was a quick overview of IES. And now we will turn to talking about our current funding opportunities.

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What makes us different from other funding programs within the Department of Education?

Grant funds are to cover research, not program support or service provision. A good application is a good application. We don't have priorities or competitive preferences that result in extra points for applicants. And reviewers have flexibility to assign points based upon overall scientific merit. We don't ask reviewers to use a rubric as they score.

For example, other programs may assign a maximum number of points that you can obtain for your significance section. We allow reviewers flexibility to weight each section as they see fit on determining the overall scientific merit of your application.

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At this point in the presentation, you're probably asking yourself, "Does IES have funding opportunities for MSIs?"

The answer is yes, but there's a caveat. For fiscal year 2019, we do not have any targeted funding opportunities for MSIs. We have previously. In fiscal year '16 and '17, we had a competition called Pathways to the Education Sciences Research Training Program. Information about Pathways awards is available on our website.

What does that mean for MSI applicants? We absolutely still encourage you to apply but we just want you to know that there are no targeted funding opportunities for MSIs this year in IES, rather we encourage MSIs to apply for grants through our regular education research programs from the National Center for Education Research as well as our regular special education research programs from the National Center for Special Education Research.

NCSER also has training grant programs this year that you would be eligible to apply for.

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Now we would like to change gears. One of the things that we're trying to get across in this presentation is the idea that grant applications do not come fully formed out of thin air.

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The actual process for successfully applying to and receiving a grant from IES is a long-term endeavor. It might take you a few weeks to several months to figure out what it is that you would like to do, identify the opportunity, write your application, and submit it to IES. Once you have submitted your application, the entire application process might take eight to nine months from the time you press submit until you are notified.

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Now, for the next couple of slides, I'm speaking directly to sponsored program officers.

Sponsored program officers should be thinking about what areas of expertise they have on their campus, and then start scanning federal notices to see where there are funding opportunities that your faculty might want to apply for.

All IES funding opportunities are initially posted in the Federal Register. However, if you'd like to know more and do a deeper dive, you should start on our actual website,

ies.ed.gov/funding which will give you a list, again, of what is being competed in fiscal year 19.

Each of the items is hyperlinked to an overview of the particular competition, as well as the full request for applications, which gives you details about what's required.

Once you have that overview of what it is that we fund here at IES, then you can convey that to faculty and staff on your campus who do education research. One thing that's really critical to note is that these researchers do not need to come from your education department or school. IES actually funds researchers from a wide range of disciplines, so don't forget to reach out to your psychologists, economists, sociologists, political scientists, cognition researchers, ED technology experts, and engineers.

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When spreading the word across your campus, make sure to tell your faculty and research staff the most important part of this presentation is that IES program officers are available to talk to them. They do not have to go into this application process blind.

They should definitely contact the program officer in their area of interest to discuss their ideas further. You can also take more of an active role by coordinating calls, and even occasionally in-person meetings for faculty and staff at your location to talk to us en masse.

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Another way you can support applications from your university is if you strengthen research partnerships. Many people come into the application process thinking that research is a solo endeavor, but it's not. Many of our most successful applicants come from research teams. Research teams could be formed on your campus within individual departments, across departments, and/or across disciplines.

Partnerships also don't have to be limited to your campus. Your university might find it very beneficial to partner with other research organizations, whether that's partnering with another university in your regional area, or another university that shares your research interests, or being part of some sort of a research consortia or research network that's place-based or formed around an idea.

Many of our researchers, especially in our partnership competitions, partner with LEAs, SEAs, and regional labs. Many MSIs don't have to develop anything new because these partnerships are already in place. In this case, make sure that the researchers on your campus are fully aware of all of the partnerships that exist and are available to them when applying for applications for funding from IES.

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For the rest of this webinar, we're going to give you an overall view of IES's current funding opportunities. It is very similar in content to our general overview webinar, so it's not necessary for you to view both. But before we go on with the webinar, I wanted to pause and highlight some of the assumptions that we made as we put this presentation together.

So first, we assume that you, as researchers, probably have some similar goals with overlapping and divergent interests, and that you also have varying levels of expertise with grant writing.

So, what do we think you have in common? We think that all of you want to help improve education, that you'd like to carve out your own research agenda, and that it would be helpful to you if you could get federal funding to do so.

We assume that on this webinar, listening, there are people with a wide range of expertise and topic areas. We also think there's going to be a wide range of methodological expertise. And then, we also assume that there's going to be varying levels of familiarity with grant writing.

So, during this presentation, I'm going to give a general overview that we think will answer questions that people with these varying levels of expertise and writing experience might actually have.

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So, let's move into the nuts and bolts of getting started with an IES application. First, you need to identify which competitions are open for fiscal year 2019.

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So how do you get started with putting together an application for IES? The most important step is identifying what your current research interests are. For example, you might say, "I am interested in improving the education outcomes of students who are in preschool." Then, you would look at our current research funding priorities to see if we have any funding opportunities for people who are interested in doing work on preschool students.

How do you find that out? You start by reading our Requests for Applications. What you'll see when you go to our website is that there are a fairly large number of Requests for Applications that cover a fairly wide range of topics.

If you become confused, you can simply email a program officer saying, "Here's my idea. What's the closest funding opportunity?" And the program officer will be able to give you some guidance on whether or not there is a funding opportunity that aligns with your research interests and your strengths.

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In our application process, the Request for Application is perhaps the most important document that you'll see. What's an RFA? An RFA is a solicitation or requests for applications. As I mentioned, IES has several RFAs each year, which you can find on our website: ies.ed.gov/funding.

How do you differentiate between the RFAs? RFAs that start with the number 84.305 are from the National Center for Education Research and RFAs that start with 84.324 are for the National Center for Special Education Research. Our RFAs tell you what IES expects your proposal to include and the criteria that reviewers will use to evaluate your proposal.

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As you may imagine, our Requests for Applications are jam-packed with information. They include an overview and general requirements. They include topic and goal requirements, and we'll discuss this a little bit in a few more minutes.

They include our competition regulations and review criteria, as well as a section that discusses how to prepare your application and how to submit your application to IES through grants.gov.

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How are our RFAs different from other RFAs that you might see from other agencies, or even from the rest of the Department of Education? First, we provide a great deal of detail in our RFAs. In each RFA, there's a section that tells you the strict requirements that have to be fulfilled for your application to be reviewed, as well as a set of recommendations that we think will help strengthen your application.

We include the application submission process in the RFA instead of in separate documents. This is in order to reduce confusion. And we think that, no matter what RFA you're applying to, you should probably still read the 84.305A and 84.324A RFAs just so that you can get a general idea of what IES funds, even if you ultimately decide not to apply to us under that particular competition.

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To identify open funding opportunities, we have a suggested set of steps to follow. First, begin at the IES website, ies.ed.gov/funding. If you aren't already signed up, you should sign up for the IES Newsflash. You can do that at ies.ed.gov/newsflash/#ies.

As I mentioned earlier, all of our funding opportunities are announced in the Federal Register, but RFAs found on the IES website are more detailed. Once you are on the funding page, navigate to the Requests for Applications page, and review current Requests for Applications, or RFAs.

And, most importantly of all, but only after you have read the relevant RFAs, contact relevant program officers for the topics of interest in the relevant Center.

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This is a screenshot of our funding page, ies.ed.gov/funding. You'll see, toward the top left, we have a list of the steps that we think that you should progress through while applying for the grant. Again, they start with identifying a funding opportunity and end with submitting your application to grants.gov.

To the right, you'll see a full list of our Request for Applications. When you click on the hyperlinks, it will give you the details of that particular request, as well as the full Request for Applications. In the center, you'll see our links to our webinars. You're watching one now, so we know that you know where that link is.

And then you'll see a section where it discusses our Standards and Review process, and so there you can learn more about our scientific peer review process and about our peer reviewers.

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As you are reading through the RFAs, make sure to review the current list of research topics and any methodological requirements. If you still need help narrowing your list of possible topics and/or RFAs, it can often help to review the abstracts of previously funded projects.

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Our primary grant programs are CFDA numbers, 84.305A and 84.324A. We recommend that all applicants be familiar with either 305A or 324A, even if you don't intend to apply under that competition.

Within the "A" RFAs, you will need to apply under one topic/goal combination. Over the next few minutes, I will provide a high-level summary of the topics and goals being competed in fiscal year 2019.

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The Education Research Grants Program has 12 standing topics and the Special Education Research Grants Program has 11 standing topics, some of which mirror each other. You must select one that identifies your field of research. In addition, both Centers are competing special topics in fiscal year 2019.

Certain topics have special requirements. For instance, the grade range varies by topic. There are also recommendations for student outcomes to address as well as considerations or research gaps under each topic.

The special topics are intended to encourage research in under-studied areas that appear promising for improving student education outcomes and that are of interest to policymakers and practitioners. NCER is competing two special topics in FY 2019: Foreign Language Education and Social Studies. NCSER is competing three special topics: Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities, English Learners with Disabilities, and Systems-Involved Students with Disabilities.

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The Institute uses a goal structure to encourage focused research along a continuum of research, development, and evaluation activities necessary for building a scientific research enterprise. For all applications, in addition to identifying one research topic, you must also identify one research goal.

The five research goals, which are the same across the research centers, are: Goal 1 Exploration, Goal 2 Development and Innovation, Goal 3 Efficacy and Follow-Up, Goal 4 Replication: Efficacy and Effectiveness, and Goal 5 Measurement.

For those of you who are familiar with the IES goals, you will notice that we have made changes to both Goals 3 and 4. All initial tests of the efficacy of an intervention must now be submitted under Goal 3, Efficacy and Follow-Up, and all Replication projects, including effectiveness studies, should be submitted under Goal 4.

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The Exploration goal supports the identification of malleable factors associated with student education outcomes and/or the factors and conditions that mediate or moderate that relationship. By doing so, Exploration projects are intended to build and inform theoretical foundations for the development of interventions or the evaluation of interventions or the development and validation of assessments.

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The Development and Innovation goal supports the development of new interventions and the further development or modification of existing interventions that are intended to produce beneficial impacts on student education outcomes when implemented in authentic education settings.

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The Efficacy and Follow-Up goal supports the initial evaluation of fully developed education interventions with evidence of promise for improving student education outcomes, as well as education interventions that are widely used but not yet rigorously tested, to determine whether they produce a beneficial impact on student education outcomes relative to a counterfactual when they are implemented in authentic education settings.

The Efficacy and Follow-Up goal also supports follow-up studies of students or education personnel and retrospective studies.

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The Replication: Efficacy and Effectiveness goal supports replication research under two broad categories: Efficacy Replications and Effectiveness Studies.

Under this goal, the Institute supports Effectiveness studies, which carry out the independent evaluation of fully developed education interventions with prior evidence of efficacy to determine whether they produce a beneficial impact on student education outcomes relative to a counterfactual when they are implemented by the end user under routine conditions in authentic education settings.

In addition, under this goal, the Institute will now also support Efficacy Replications and Re-analysis Studies. The main differences between Efficacy and Follow-Up, Goal 3 and Replication: Efficacy and Effectiveness, Goal 4 are that, under Goal 4, the intervention must already have been found to have beneficial impacts on student education outcomes by at least one prior causal impact study and the research plan must include a plan to conduct analyses of implementation and factors that moderate and/or mediate the impacts of the intervention.

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The Measurement goal supports the development of new assessments or refinement of existing assessments, Development and Refinement Projects or the validation of existing assessments for specific purposes, contexts, and populations, Validation Projects.

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In addition to the changes in Goals 3 and 4 that we have already discussed, there are several other changes that I'd like to draw your attention to. And additional information about this is available in Part 1.E of the RFA.

First, there are revised requirements for cost analysis, adding expectations to Goal 2 for assessing cost during the pilot study. Second, there have been some revisions to the standing and special topics. In the Education Research Grants Program, CTE is now a standing topic, and the Arts and Highly Mobile special topics are no longer offered as special topics.

If you are planning to resubmit an application submitted under one of those two special topics, please reach out to the relevant program officer so that they can help you select where to best to submit your application in fiscal year 2019.

Third, all pre-kindergarten research in NCER must be submitted to the Early Learning topic. Neither the Cognition and Student Learning, nor the Education Technology Program are accepting applications focused on pre-kindergartners this year.

Fourth, employment and earnings outcomes are now considered to be student education outcomes for appropriate topics. And finally, reviewers will evaluate the contribution of the proposed dissemination plan to the significance of the project and whether there are sufficient resources available to fully implement the proposed plan.

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There is also an emphasis on dissemination as something to think about at the time of your application, not after you have completed your study. In addition, all applicants must adhere to the IES Public Access Requirements. All awardees will be required to submit their accepted peer reviewed manuscripts to ERIC, the Department of Education's online library, in order to ensure that the findings of federally-funded research are available to the public.

And, all applicants who are seeking funding to test the causal impact of an intervention, under Goal 3 or Goal 4, must include a data management plan which specifies how the data collected with federal funds will be made available at the conclusion of the study to allow independent replication of findings and/or to explore other research questions.

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The award parameters, including the maximum duration and the maximum award, vary across goals. Please be sure to refer to the RFA for other information about how the funds requested should be allocated.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.305A and 84.324A. Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than August 23rd, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019 and September 1st, 2019.

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NCSEER is offering one research training program this year, the Early Career Development and Mentoring Research Training. Early Career Program supports grants that prepare researchers to conduct independent, rigorous, and relevant early intervention and special education research.

The intention is to support researchers who are addressing issues that are important to infants, toddlers, children, and youth with or at risk for disabilities, their families, special education practitioners, and policymakers, and whose research contributes to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education.

Early Career is defined as an investigator within three years of receiving their PhD or completing a post-doctoral program. The principal investigator must hold a tenure-track

position, for example Assistant Professor, or a research scientist position, for example not a visiting faculty or adjunct position, at an institution of higher education, or must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the award.

The program requires you to have a mentoring plan and a research plan. The Narrative should clearly demonstrate the integration of your research and career plans. Please note that the research and career plans may influence one another bi-directionally, as the proposed research conducted may inform which skills need enhancement just as the training and mentoring will provide those needed skills to conduct successful research.

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These are the award parameters for the Early Career grant 84.324B, including the maximum duration of 4 years and the maximum award amount of \$500,000.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.324B. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than August 23rd, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC Time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on Grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019, and September 1st, 2019.

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For fiscal year 2019, the Institute is competing two new Research and Development Centers through the Education Research and Development Center Program, 84.305C. The Improving Rural Education Center will examine how to build the capacity of rural schools and post-secondary institutions to use high-quality, scientific research to improve student education outcomes.

The Writing in Secondary Schools Center will conduct research on how students develop writing skills across secondary school and how best to support or measure writing skills in this population.

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These are the award parameters for the Research and Development Grants, 84.305C. For both grants, there is a maximum duration of 5 years. For Improving Rural Education grants, there is a maximum award amount of \$10 million. For Writing in Secondary Schools, there is a maximum award amount of \$5 million.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.305C. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than August 9th, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between January 17th, 2019 and March 17th, 2019.

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The goal of this research program is to provide a wide range of methodological and statistical products. The Institute defines products to include new or improved methods, guidelines or

methodological resources and software that will better enable applied education scientists to conduct rigorous education research.

The Institute is interested in the development of practical, statistical and methodological products, for example new or improved methods, guidelines or other methodological resources and software that can be used by most education researchers rather than only by statisticians and researchers with highly sophisticated statistical skills, to improve the designs of their studies, analyses of their data, and interpretations of their findings.

Some current identified methodological needs include understanding variability in effects; ascertaining methods and procedures to increase the generalizability of findings; improving methods used to support single-case designs; analyzing big data; improving ways to reduce selection bias effects in quasi-experimental designs; tools to help policymakers and practitioners to interpret impacts reported from evaluation studies; and increasing our ability to address sources of missing data, especially to the degree that the data is not missing at random.

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These are the award parameters for the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education grants, 84.305D. For regular grants, there is a maximum duration of 3 years and the maximum award amount of \$900,000. For Early Career grants, there is a maximum duration of 2 years and a maximum award amount of \$225,000.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.305D. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than August 23rd, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC Time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019 and September 1st, 2019.

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The Partnerships and Collaborations Program is intended to support research that is carried out by research institutions and U.S. state and local education agencies working collaboratively on problems or issues that are a high priority for the education agencies.

The research may focus on students within a wide range of education settings from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary and adult education, and may focus on typically developing students and/or students with or at risk for disability. The goal of this research grant program is the improvement of education outcomes for all students, particularly those at risk of failure.

For the fiscal year 2019 competition, the Institute is accepting applications to the Research Collaborations Program under two topics: the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research and the Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies.

The Institute believes that education research must address the interests and needs of education practitioners and policymakers as well as students, parents, and community members.

Under the Research Collaborations Program, the Institute encourages the development of partnerships between researchers and education agencies to advance the relevance of

education research and the accessibility and usability of the findings for the day-to-day work of education practitioners and policymakers.

These partnerships are intended to increase the relevance of the research through the required inclusion of education agencies as partners from the start of the work with the identification of the research questions and design of the projects, to carrying out of the research and adoption and dissemination of the results.

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These are the award parameters for the Partnerships and Collaborations grants 84.305H. For Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships grants, there is a maximum duration of 2 years and the maximum award amount of \$400,000. For Evaluation of State Education Programs and Policies grants, there is a maximum duration of 5 years and a maximum award amount of \$5 million.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.305H. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than August 23rd, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019 and September 1st, 2019.

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The next opportunity is the Low-Cost, Short-Duration Evaluation of Education or Special Education Interventions, identified as CFDA 84.305L or 84.324L.

This grant program supports rigorous evaluations of education, or special education interventions, broadly defined as practices, programs, and policies, that state or local education agencies expect to produce meaningful improvements in student education outcomes within a short period of time.

These evaluations are to be conducted for \$250,000 or less and completed within 2 years.

The Institute views Low-Cost Evaluation projects as a means to obtain rigorous evidence of impact that state and district education agencies can use in making timely decisions regarding the scaling up or revision of interventions. To meet these goals, the evaluations are carried out by research institutions and state or local education agencies working together as partners on a topic of high importance to the agency.

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Evaluation will rely primarily on administrative data or other sources of secondary data to provide measures of these student outcomes.

And will use randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity designs, or experimental single-case designs (for special education only) to determine the impact of educational interventions on student education outcomes; and primarily rely on administrative data or other sources of secondary data to provide measures of these student outcomes.

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These are the award parameters for the Low-Cost, Short Duration Evaluation grants. The maximum duration is 2 years and the maximum award amount is \$250,000.

Funds must be used solely for evaluation purposes and funds must not be used to support implementation of the intervention. These costs are to be covered by the state or local agency.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.305L and 84.324L. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than March 7th, 2019 at 4:30:00 PM DC Time. Letters of Intent are due on January 10th, 2019, and the application package will be posted on grants.gov on January 10th as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019 and September 1st, 2019.

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This next funding opportunity is for NCSER only, and it is the Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice in Special Education.

The topic being competed is Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, MTSS, at the elementary school level. This program is intended to focus resources and attention on high-priority issues in special education and to create both a structure and process for researchers who are working on these issues to share ideas, build new knowledge, and strengthen their research and dissemination capacity.

MTSS are frameworks that provide multiple levels of support through coordinated, evidence-based practices, strategies, and structures to meet the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all learners.

For this topic, MTSS must occur at the elementary school level, integrate both academic and behavioral supports, and address the needs of children with/or at risk for disabilities.

Applicants may apply to be one of the research teams, who will carry out their own research projects and participate in collaborative activities with other teams in the network. The network will support up to five research teams.

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The MTSS Network will support up to five research teams to conduct research, at minimum, on the key components of MTSS and the outcomes of students with or at risk for disability.

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The award parameters for the MTSS Network Grants are a maximum duration of 5 years and a maximum award amount of \$4 million.

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This slide includes important dates for 84.324N. Applications must be received at grants.gov no later than August 9th, 2018 at 4:30:00 PM DC Time. Letters of Intent are due on June 21st, 2018, and the application package will be posted on Grants.gov on June 21st as well. The possible start dates for the award are between July 1st, 2019 and September 1st, 2019.

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Applications are reviewed for compliance and responsiveness to the RFA. Applications that are compliant and responsive are assigned to a review panel. Two or three panel members conduct a primary review of each application. After this, a triage process will be used, and the most competitive applications are reviewed by a full panel.

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You can find more about our peer reviewers by going to our IES website and there is a page on the Standards and Review Office that includes a list of prior peer reviewers.

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Okay. Congratulations, you've viewed our webinar. Now you've looked at some of the RFAs, and you think, "I am absolutely going to apply for a grant from IES." Now, you're probably asking yourself, "What do I do next?" So I'm going to walk you through some of the most important steps.

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The first step is for you to put together a strong research team. Your research plan is only going to be as strong as the people implementing it. We cannot stress this too much. To receive a grant, you need a really strong research team. That is actually one of the review criteria that you're going to be judged on. And, as you recall from our earlier conversation in this presentation, for the most part, research proposals are not solo endeavors.

It's very unusual to see an application that only has one researcher in it. So, when you're putting your application together, you want to think about, "What are the roles of different researchers and sorts of tasks and responsibilities that are embedded in the work?" And then, make sure you have a qualified person attached to each and every one of those roles and responsibilities.

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So what does that mean practically? When you're being evaluated on your personnel, you're going to be evaluated on whether or not the personnel have the skills and expertise to implement the proposed work. So, if you look around your campus and you discover that all the expertise you need to conduct the research is not available on your campus, you should consider partnering with another institution.

You should also make sure that you're able to demonstrate your productivity. It's not sufficient to have an interest in an area, you have to show that you have expertise in that area as evidenced by having other grants, having peer-reviewed publications, etc.

You want to make sure that your team, hopefully, includes at least one senior researcher with a strong grant record, though they don't necessarily have to be the principal investigator.

And, again, we cannot stress this enough, you need to show that every aspect of your project, from the quantitative research to the qualitative research, has someone assigned with the expertise to carry out that part of the research. And you should make sure they allocated enough time to complete the work with high-quality.

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There are several strategies for figuring out who should be the principal investigator. We have applications that come in with senior researchers as PIs, and we have applications that have junior researchers as PIs, and all sorts of combinations of co-PIs and co-Is.

The general theory is the same. You have to show that you have the expertise to do the work and have enough time committed. However, if senior researchers are on the proposal, the reviewers will be looking to see if the senior researcher actually has adequate time on the project. If the senior researcher is going to be a PI, and not a co-I or just be on the grant, then the PI has to have enough time allocated to show that he or she is committed to the project.

The other thing is that just because your field may agree that you're awesome and you're the most senior researcher in this area, everyone who reads the application may not be familiar with your work. So you want to make sure that your credentials are as clear as day in the application, not just in the CV that you attach to the back, but in the actual description of personnel.

For junior researchers you have a similar issue, but you'll have more to prove in terms of you having adequate expertise to do the work. In addition to scientific expertise, you also need to show that you have the management skills to oversee a major research grant.

You might find that reviewers might be more comfortable with your application if you have senior personnel on the grant as co-PIs, co-Is, contractors, advisory boards, etc. For all applicants, reviewers may be more comfortable if your project also has an experienced project manager.

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You should also be thinking about how you will show that your institution has the capacity to handle a grant of this size and the capacity to handle the particular type of research that you're planning to conduct.

What you don't want to do is use the university boilerplate: "This is University X, and we have this really cool library with this number of books." That's not what the reviewers want to know. They want to know that you have the resources available for this particular research project.

They're looking for a track record at the institutional level. For example, if your research is about education policy, do you have a large enough research centers that conduct education policy research involved in this application?

If your research involves working with large data sets, do you have a place on your campus where those can be stored? etc. You should also show that every organization that's involved in the project understands their role in the project and agrees to it. You can show this both in the narrative and in your letters.

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As you can imagine, data are important to research grants, and so reviewers are going to be looking at your resource sections in terms of your data. Do you have access and permission to use the data proposed in your application? If you have multiple data sets that need merging, do you have the capacity to do that on your campus? etc.

Please note that you're also going to have to show, both at the time of application, and then again before award, that you actually have access to the data and schools described in your proposal.

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All applications must be submitted electronically through the grants.gov website. This year there have been several changes in grants.gov, including a requirement for all applicants to use the Workspace interface. As you can see, alerts are marked in red, and should be attended to, as failure to follow the grants.gov requirements will result in an unsuccessful application.

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We strongly suggest that all applicants, including researchers and their sponsored program officers, view the Application Process webinar. The webinar walks you through the application process from beginning to end.

There are several trouble spots you should look out for.

As a reminder, your institution must be registered in SAM and grants.gov before you can submit an application to IES. Registration in SAM has changed. New this year, you must submit a notarized letter as part of the registration process, both new and renewals.

Complete the registration process in SAM as soon as possible to ensure an on-time submission. Read more about these important changes in SAM registration by clicking on this link.

Submitting your application on time is crucial. We suggest submitting as early as possible to give you a buffer in case something goes wrong.

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All applicants will receive email notification that the following information is available via the Applicant Notification System: the status of award and the reviewer summary statements.

If you are not granted an award the first time, plan on resubmitting, and talk to your program officer.

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So there are a few things we want to leave you with.

First, read the Request for Applications. There is a lot of detail, important detail, in the RFA. 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 those requirements and recommendations for the topic and goal to which you are submitting.

Browse through the posted abstracts of our funded grants on our website. Our abstracts are fairly detailed, so they will give you a good sense of the quality and type of grant that may typically get funded by IES.

IES will also post on-demand webinars, covering a wide range of topics, including a grant writing workshop, or webinars about specific funding competitions. Those will be posted in the coming weeks.

We also have a Resources for Researchers page, with grant information for you, including methodological resources to assist in preparing an IES research grant application, videos from past IES training institutes, information about available data sets and tools, among other things.

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In addition to all of the great resources I just described, program officers really are your best resource, so please contact them. They want to hear from you and it's always a great idea to discuss your research with a program officer.

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This brings us to the end of this presentation. As I've stated throughout, you can contact any IES program officer to ask questions that you have. If you have questions about a specific competition or a topic within a competition, you can start directly with the program officer that's assigned to that topic. That information is in multiple places, including the RFA and on our website. But if you have more general questions or you're just not sure where to start, please feel free to email Katina Stapleton and she will reply to you as soon as possible.

You can also follow us on Twitter @IESResearch or learn more about our work on Facebook. You can always find information about us on our website, ies.ed.gov or on our blog.