



# Institute of Education Sciences **Funding Opportunities Webinar** How to Apply

**May 2, 2011**

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**IES Funding Opportunities Webinar: How to Apply  
U.S. Department of Education  
Institute of Education Sciences**

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**Transcript  
May 2, 2011**

**Slide 1**

Hello, and welcome. My name is Emily Doolittle. Today I'll be talking to you about the application process for submitting a grant application to IES. We'll go through a lot of material today. We have a lot of things to cover, so we're going to jump right in. And I did just want to reiterate that please do feel free to submit questions as we're going, and I will do my best to answer those questions as they come in.

**Slide 2**

Today we're going to go over a number of things. First, I'll talk to you about how to find the material that you need to submit your application. We'll spend a bit of time talking about Grants.gov so you understand how to work through that website and find things that you need. I'll also describe for you what goes in an application, how to format your application, and then I'll go over some program-specific information.

**Slide 3**

So first, finding application materials—

**Slide 4**

You need three things to submit an application to IES. The first is the Request for Applications. This provides the substance of requirements for a proposal. The second thing you'll need is the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. That is also found on the IES website and provides all of the specific information about completing the application package. So much of the content of today's webinar is also to be found in the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. Finally, the third thing that you'll need is the application package itself.

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## Slide 5

The fiscal year 2012 Requests for Applications and the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide are to be found on the IES website on the “Funding Opportunity” page. That’s the first link you see here on the screen. I also, at this time, wanted to let you know—or to remind you—about a service that IES provides, which is the News Flash. You can sign up for the IES News Flash, and you are given some different options about the kinds of information to be sent in the News Flash. This is essentially an email alert system, and one thing that you can sign up to learn about is funding opportunities, both current and upcoming.

## Slide 6

This is a picture of the IES “Home” page, and I’ve circled two things here. At the very top you see the News Flash. That’s where you sign up for our email alert system. And then, the second thing I’ve circled is our “Funding Opportunities” page.

## Slide 7

So clicking on that “Funding Opportunities” page takes you here, and as you can see, there’s quite a bit of information on this page. But at the very top, I’ve circled the “Click Here” link that will take you to the page that has all of the Requests for Applications and the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide.

## Slide 8

Today’s webinar will be focused on applications that are due for our first competition deadline this year, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. The National Center for Education Research, NCER, has one competition deadline for June. For June 23<sup>rd</sup> we are accepting applications to the Education Research Program, and here in parentheses I have the CFDA number—which is the numeric identifier that we have for this program—84.305A.

The National Center for Special Education Research, NCSER, has two competitions that are accepting proposals on the June 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline. The first is a Special Education Research Competition, and that number is 84.324A. NCSER is also accepting applications for the Special Education Postdoctoral Training Program, and that numeric identifier is 84.324B.

## Slide 9

So how do you find the packages and the instructions? All of the fiscal year 2012 application packages are available now on the Grants.gov website. So how do you find these packages?

## Slide 10

This is the Grants.gov “Home” page, and most of the information that you’ll need, and that you’ll find useful, is on the top left-hand side of that screen in red, and I have circled the “For Applicants” header there.

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## Slide 11

When you're on the Grants.gov website, you need to be certain that you're downloading the correct application package. When you go into Grants.gov a number of different application packages will be listed. You need to find the one for the competition and the deadline that you're submitting to.

What I'm going to show you today is how to find those packages by searching and using that number that I described. This is the CFDA number, "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance." And if you are interested in submitting an application to the NCER, you need to use the CFDA number 84.305. If you are interested in submitting an application to the NCSER, you would need to use the CFDA number 84.324.

## Slide 12

When you're on the Grants.gov page, I recommend that in the red field on the left you click on "Find grant opportunities." When you click that, you will come to this page that will allow you to search for grant opportunities, and I recommend that you search using the "basic search" function, which I have circled here.

## Slide 13

We're going to search today for an application to the NSCER. So in the bottom field there on the page, search by CFDA number, you would enter 84.324, and that will take you to all of the application packages currently available for the NCSER.

## Slide 14

Now when you type in that CFDA number, the Grants.gov search will turn up more than one application package. So I, again, want to remind you, you need to find the package that's designated for your competition and your deadline date, and the way you'll find this out is by looking at the opportunity title and the CFDA number.

## Slide 15

I did my basic search using the CFDA number 84.324, and you'll see here that it takes you to a screen listing four different opportunities or application packages. The one at the very top is to the Special Education Research Program, 84.324A, which I have circled. The third one in the list is the application package location for the Special Education Research Training Program, which is the CFDA number 84.324B. So you need to do a check at this point. Look at those opportunity titles to make sure that you get to the correct application package.

## Slide 16

I have selected 84.324A, which is the Special Education Research Program. Notice also that the CFDA number here has a number "1" appended to it. That number "1" tells you that this is the first competition deadline this year for the Special Education Research Program. So just to go back quickly, the second one on that list is 84.324A-2. That is for the package that would be due at our

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second competition deadline in September. So if you want to submit an application for the June deadline to the Special Education Research Program, you need the package marked 84.324A-1.

Here you can do a quick check. I have circled the closing date for those applications with the June 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline, so you're certain that you have the correct package. And at the top right there I have circled the tab that says "Application."

### **Slide 17**

You click on that, and should again make sure that it's the correct application package. It's got the title of the program that you need, Special Education Research; the CFDA number, 84.324A; and the number that signifies which deadline you're submitting to: the "1" signifies the June competition.

### **Slide 18**

Now I'm on the page where I can download the application package. And at the very bottom right I have circled the link that you would click to download. You can again do a quick check here, competition title, special education research, competition ID. You see the 84.324A. There's a 2012 in there so that you know it's for this fiscal year or 2012, and then the "1" to tell you that it's for the first competition deadline.

### **Slide 19**

I am at the page where you can both download the application package and the application instructions. Just quickly, the application instructions posted here are in the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide, and you can also find them on the IES "Funding Opportunities" page. But the second link there is for downloading the application package itself.

### **Slide 20**

Now, I've clicked that link to download the application package, and this is what I see. This is the package itself. Again, I encourage you to do a quick check to make sure that you have the correct package. Check the CFDA description, in this case it is Research in Special Education. We also should see the competition ID, 84.324A 2012-1, and the opportunity close date, which is the deadline date of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. You also should see agency contact information there, someone you can contact for general questions about the program. And that is what the package looks like.

### **Slide 21**

Toward the bottom of the screen shot there, you see a field that says "Mandatory Documents." That's where you find all of the forms that are included in the application package. And what I have shown you here is that I have moved a form to complete, the SF 424 form, and it goes over to the mandatory documents for submission. So you will see a number of mandatory documents and a couple optional documents, and we will begin to walk through all of those in just a moment.

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## Slide 22

Before we do so—oh, I have a question.

**Questions:** *Can I submit a grant application if I didn't submit an LOI, or a letter of intent?*

**Answer:** *And the answer is, yes, absolutely you can. If you did not submit a letter of intent, I would encourage you, however, to contact the program officer for the competition that you're submitting to because that program officer can provide you some important information as you prepare your application. That's a great question. Letters of intent are strongly recommended and encouraged but not mandatory.*

## Slide 23

There are a couple really important things that you need to take note of. First of all, you need to be registered on Grants.gov in order to submit an application, and you must begin this registration process early. Grants.gov recommends allowing as much as 4 weeks to complete the registration process. If you are planning to submit an application for the June 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline, you really need to begin the registration process now if you have not yet done so. The other thing to remember is that you need to update your registration every year on Grants.gov, and that can take 3 days to complete. So make sure you get all the registration pieces taken care of sooner rather than later.

## Slide 24

Grants.gov software requirements: All of these forms require Adobe software to open additional forms, and to attach PDF files. So you must make sure that you have Adobe software on your computer, and you need to be sure that you have the right version of Adobe. Grants.gov says that you need at least Adobe Reader 8.1.2, and here I have provided a link where you can go check if the software you have is appropriate and if you have the right version of Adobe in order to complete this application and submit your application through Grants.gov.

## Slide 25

Please know that all applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov. Do not email an electronic copy of your application to a program officer. This is not an official application and it will not be sent forward for peer review.

## Slide 26

Also, it's very important to know that applications, that Grants.gov receives, get a date and a time stamp. Your application must have the following: It must be fully uploaded, submitted, and date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system (no later than 4:30 and zero seconds p.m., Washington, DC time) on the application deadline date. If you submit your application on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, and it gets a date and time stamp of, let's say, 4:30 and 25 seconds by Grants.gov, that will be considered late, and it will not be sent forward for review. So it is very, very important that you submit this application on time.

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## Slide 27

Also, know that your application will be rejected if you submit it in paper format, unless you qualify for one the following exceptions: either you don't have access to the Internet or you don't have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system.

## Slide 28

If you meet either of those qualifications for an exception to the electronic submission, you need to submit a written statement to IES no later than 2 weeks before the application deadline.

## Slide 29

If you have a problem submitting your application through Grants.gov, you must contact the Grants.gov support desk, and here I have provided you the 800 number and the email address. When you contact the support desk at Grants.gov, they will give you a case number. Please keep a record of that case number, and once you have reported the problem and you have your case number, contact your program officer and give an explanation of the technical problem that you have experienced.

## Slide 30

If you have a technical problem with the Grants.gov system that affected your ability to submit that application on time, then we will accept your application; however, this needs to be reviewed and it is, therefore, very, very important that you have a case number and that you describe the technical problem to both the program officer and to the support desk at Grants.gov.

And it looks like I have a question.

**Question:** *What is the lag time between uploading to Grants.gov and being given a date or time stamp?*

**Answer:** *That's an excellent question. It varies quite a bit, and it really depends upon the volume that Grants.gov is experiencing. So, for example, if you submit 2 days before the deadline, in all likelihood, that upload process is probably a matter of minutes, and you will get that date and time stamp very quickly. As you approach the 4:30-and-zero-second deadline on the deadline date, there's a lot of traffic on Grants.gov, and it can take longer. I don't know how much longer, but this is why it's really important that you not delay.*

*The other piece to that is the following—and I'll describe this as we go through the submission process—if there is a problem with your upload and there is an error, Grants.gov will reject it. You then need to figure out what the problem is and go and reload that application before the deadline date. So we recommend you start your submission 3 days ahead of the deadline, just to be certain. That being said, it's usually a fairly quick upload process. But there are no guarantees on that deadline date as you're close to the time that it's due.*

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## Slide 31

Once you submit your application through Grants.gov, you're going to get confirmation of your submission, and you really need to pay close attention to the submission confirmation that you receive. Your submission confirmation comes by email, and you're going to get four emails in total. You need to pay attention to all of them. The first three emails come from Grants.gov, and the fourth email comes from the U.S. Department of Education.

## Slide 32

From Grants.gov you're going to get a first email, and I think it's fairly close in time to when you first start attempting to upload through Grants.gov. That first email will simply state that Grants.gov notices that you're trying to do something. It's like, okay, we see you're trying to upload something. And at this point, Grants.gov will assign a tracking number to your application, and I have given an example of that number there. It starts with the word "Grant," followed by several numbers.

After that first email, you're going to get a second email, and that will tell you that the application was successfully validated by Grants.gov, or that it was rejected with errors. Now Grants.gov—and this is relevant to the question I had earlier—Grants.gov states that you'll get these three emails within a span of 2 days. So they are giving themselves 48 hours to do all of this, and so, again, depending on volume and how much traffic they're having, it can take a little bit of time for Grants.gov to validate your application.

Finally, the third email from Grants.gov will say that the U.S. Department of Education has retrieved your application from Grants.gov. So when you submit to Grants.gov, Grants.gov validates the package and then sends it to the U.S. Department of Education.

## Slide 33

Once you have those three emails, then you'll receive confirmation from the U.S. Department of Education. This fourth email will come from the department, and it gives a PR award number that is unique to your application, and I have given an example of that number here. It starts with the letter "R" and then it has that portion of the CFDA number that's unique to the competition. So here is an application to Special Education Research Program, and it has the digits and letter 324A, and then it is followed by a 12, which signifies the school year of the submission, and then the final four digits are unique to your application.

This PR award number is how you track your application from this point forward. So once the application is at the department, you can't find your application or track it in Grants.gov using that Grants.gov tracking number any longer. Also know that if your application was late, as determined by the time stamp that Grants.gov gives it, this email from the department will tell you that it was late and your application will not be reviewed.

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## Slide 34

In addition to that email confirmation, we also strongly encourage you to track the application on Grants.gov to see when it gets to the department. Grants.gov has a link, “Track my application,” and you also, this way, verify that it was on time and valid.

## Slide 35

And here is a screen shot of the “Track My Application” page on Grants.gov.

## Slide 36

We are going to move on now and go over the contents of an application.

## Slide 37

The first component of an application is the set of forms. These are the SF-424 form family that are OMB approved, and these are the forms that are contained in the application package. Another important component of the application is the project summary or abstract, the project narrative. There are three appendices that you can include in your application. A bibliography and reference is cited, a narrative describing the research with human subjects that you’re proposing, a budget justification narrative that explains and provides an explanation for the costs that you’re going to charge to do this research, biographical sketches of key personnel on the project that you’re proposing, and lists of current and pending funding for those key personnel.

## Slide 38

Now I’m going to move into describing all of these components of the application. First, the research and related R&R forms: When you go into the application package and open up those forms for completion, you will notice that the fields that are required to be filled out are marked in three different ways. They have an asterisk next to them, are highlighted in yellow, and are outlined in red. So it’s pretty clear in those forms what must be filled out.

I also recommend that you use the “Check package for errors” button at the top of the application package. When you click that, it will immediately take you to whatever piece of your application has a problem. If you’ve forgotten to put an attachment in or if you forgot to fill out a required field, this is a really useful thing to do to make sure that that application has a good chance of being validated by Grants.gov. It is also recommended that you complete the SF 424 coversheet first, because that form will pre-populate other forms in the package.

## Slide 39

So here we are back to our grant application package for an application to the Special Education Research Program. I have circled the “Check package for errors” button at the top there. That’s a really important tool for you. And there is the SF 424 R&R coversheet that is now in the field for a mandatory document for submission.

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## Slide 40

Here is a picture of that coversheet, and here you can see how that form has been marked with fields that are required to be completed. So number one, type of submission, you see it is outlined in red, has an asterisk, and is highlighted in yellow.

I have circled here, however, a field that is not required to be filled out, so if this is left blank this application won't be rejected by Grants.gov; however, this item, which is item 4B, the agency routing identifier, is a really important field for IES. This tells us where you are intending to submit your application.

## Slide 41

We look at the agency routing identifier for two reasons things—first, to screen the application for responsiveness to competition requirements and then to assign the application to the right scientific peer review panel. If you don't fill in that field for item 4B, there's a chance that your application could be rejected as nonresponsive or assigned inaccurately for peer review. So although this is not a required field on the form, we strongly encourage you to fill out that field so that we can appropriately screen it and assign it to a panel review.

## Slide 42

Here are the codes that would go in item 4B on the coversheet. These codes can be found in the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. These are the codes that you would use if you were submitting an application to the Education Research competition in NCER, so the CFDA number 84.305A. Notice that there are codes for the different programs within education research and codes for the goal of your application. So if you're interested in submitting an application to the Reading and Writing Program, you would need to put the code NCER-RW in item 4B. In addition, if you're submitting an Efficacy and Replication project to the Reading and Writing Program, you would also need to put the word "Efficacy" in item 4B.

## Slide 43

Here we have codes for a submission to the Special Education Research Program, CFDA number 84.324A. Notice that all the research program codes have NCSER to signify the National Center for Special Education Research, and then the different content areas. So a proposal to the Mathematics and Science Education topic would get NCSER-MS. Again, the application goals also have codes.

## Slide 44

Moving on, this is another form within the application package, the Other Project Information form, and it is important. This is where you fill out different information about the human subjects that are involved in your research, and attach the PDF files that really form the substantive portion of your application. We will talk about those now.

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## Slide 45

On this Other Project Information form, you submit your project summary abstract for your proposal. This is limited to one single-spaced page. It's added as an attachment, a PDF file. All attachments will be PDF files in this application package. And you attach this as Item Number 7 on the Other Project Information form. I'll talk to you about margin format and font size requirements a little bit later.

Also, note that you really should include the research topic and goal in your project summary abstract, and ensure it matches what you have put in item 4B of the SF-424 form. So, if you're submitting a Reading and Writing, Goal 3 Efficacy and Replication project, you need to have NCER-RW and Efficacy in Item 4B, and your abstract needs to state "Reading and Writing Efficacy and Replication project."

I have a question coming in.

***Question:** On the SF-424 form is a state executive order 12372 required? Can we go onto fill in other forms until we get that answer?*

***Answer:** I'm going to need to table that question for a moment. I need to go do some research. I think there might be information in the Grants.gov Guide, but can we hold that question for a moment. And what you may want to do is send me an email about that. My email address is on the IES website, but it's my name. It's [EMILY.DOOLITTLE@ED.GOV](mailto:EMILY.DOOLITTLE@ED.GOV), and we can look into that for you.*

## Slide 46

The second attachment on the Other Project Information form is the project narrative. There are different page limits for the project narrative depending on the competition you're submitting to. So you need to check the relevant RFA. Again, this is a PDF file, and it's attached at Item 8 of the Other Project Information form.

## Slide 47

The project narrative has four or five sections, depending on, again, the competition you're submitting to. The four main sections are a significance section, a description of your research plan, description of the personnel on your project, and the resources that you're going to bring to this project. Please look at the relevant RFAs for information about the project narrative. Look at part two, research grant topics, and part three, requirements of the proposed research.

## Slide 48

It's really important with the project narrative that you be concise because, for example, to the Education Research and Special Education Research Competitions, the project narrative must be no more than 25 pages. You want it to be easy to read. Also, it's very important that you number the pages of the project narrative. And, again, different font size and format specifications are adhered to, and we'll go over those a little bit later in the presentation.

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## Slide 49

Appendix A: There is a page limit for Appendix A of 15 pages single-spaced. And Appendix A, if you include it in your application, needs to be put at the end of the project narrative and submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment, with the same margin format and font size requirements.

## Slide 50

Appendix A is where you put supplementary information, that is, things that supplement the project narrative. So, if there are figures or tables or charts that add to the research text, they would go in Appendix A. Appendix A is also where you can put examples of measures that would be used in your project.

Also importantly, if you are resubmitting an application, this is where you can use three pages of the appendix to describe how your revised proposal is responsive to prior reviewer feedback. I strongly encourage you, if you are resubmitting an application—and a resubmission is an application that was previously submitted and received peer reviewer comments—that you take those 3 pages of Appendix A, because this is how reviewers decide if your revised application is responsive to the feedback you received.

## Slide 51

A second appendix that can be included in your application is Appendix B. Appendix B is limited to 10 pages. It is included at the end of Appendix A, if you have included an Appendix A, which is following the project narrative, and it's all submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment.

## Slide 52

Appendix B is where you can include things like curriculum materials, screen shots of computer programs, test items that you might be planning to develop, or any other kinds of materials that would be used in your intervention or assessment that are part of your research project.

## Slide 53

Then finally, new this year, we have a third appendix, Appendix C. There is no page limit to Appendix C. This appendix also follows the other appendices, if you have included them, and is submitted as part of the same PDF file attachment.

## Slide 54

Appendix C is where you include the letter of agreement that you have from research partners. So, for example, you could include letters from the schools where you'll be doing your research, or consultants, or whoever is a partner in your research project.

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Do not reduce the size of these letters because you want to make sure that the peer reviewers can read them. And also make sure that the letters really show that the author of the letter understands what's required of them to be a partner in this research. So, for example, if you're randomly assigning schools to an intervention or control condition, those letters should state that the schools understand that they will be part of the random assignment process. So these are important things to consider as you get letters of agreement from your partners.

### Slide 55

Bibliography and references cited: No page limit here. We recommend you use APA styling. This is also an attachment, a PDF file, and this is a separate attachment. It goes at Item 9 of the project information form. You again need to follow all the margin format and font size requirements, and please make sure that you've included complete citations.

### Slide 56

The human subjects narrative: This is another PDF file that doesn't have any page limits that you attach, and this goes at Item 12 on the other project information form, which is titled "Other Attachments." This narrative that you submit here is to describe either the exempt research or the non-exempt research that you're proposing.

### Slide 57

A human subjects narrative for exempt research needs to address one or more of the six exemptions that we list in the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. Here you need to include information that allows us to see whether the involvement of human subjects is really exempt from our review approval.

### Slide 58

Human subjects narrative nonexempt needs to describe how human subjects are involved, the materials that are being used, how they'll be recruited, the types of informed consent procedures you'll follow, any potential risks and how you'll protect your subjects from risk, the importance of the knowledge to be gained, and any collaborating sites that are part of the research.

I have a couple questions coming in.

**Question:** *As we prepare our narrative, can we assume that the peer review panel or NCSER projects will be familiar with special education methodology?*

**Answer:** *That's a great question. Yes. Our Standards and Review Office here at IES ensures that reviewers have familiarity with the content of what the research is that you're proposing. So special education methodology is something that our peer reviewers are familiar with and have expertise in, and you can be assured that there are different panels that are composed to review these applications, and they have the appropriate expertise for reviewing.*

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*This is where the letter of intent is very helpful. Make sure that you submit a letter of intent, or if you missed the deadline submit a letter of intent directly to the program officer to the program you're planning to submit to, so that we can make sure that we have the appropriate reviewers together who could review your proposal. That's another really important purpose of the letter of intent.*

Now I have a letter of agreement question.

**Question:** *Should letters of agreement adhere to the font and margin requirements?*

**Answer:** *That's a really good question. Make sure that they're readable, so you don't want them to be too small. And as this person notes in their question, often there are side graphics, header information, et cetera, that will not meet those guidelines. That's fine. I mean any kind of standard letter that would be issued, let's say by a school district, could be included as is in your proposal.*

**Question:** *The RFA does not indicate that letters must adhere to margin formats.*

**Answer:** *That's right. And so I think that's because, depending on who is composing the letter, where it's coming from, it may be different than what you've got in your project narrative. But here is what you need to make sure. You need to make sure it's readable. So you don't want the font to be too small. That's why we also encourage you not to reduce the size of letters—to shrink it so you can include more things or more letters from folks. That's why there is no page limit. So those are great questions.*

## **Slide 59**

The Research and Related Budget form, is the form where you will enter all of the costs associated with the research that you're proposing. Again, notice the fields highlighted in yellow, and outlined in red with the asterisk.

## **Slide 60**

I wanted to go over a couple common mistakes that applicants make when they fill out the budget form.

## **Slide 61**

The first, and a frequent error that we have seen, has to do with Section E of the budget form, which is the participant trainee support cost category. And I have shown a screen shot of that form here, and I have circled in red the Section E that I'm referring to.

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## Slide 62

Only use that category on the budget form if you're submitting a training grant application. So if you're submitting, to the June 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline, a proposal to the Special Education Postdoctoral Training Program, 84.324B, you would use Section E, participant trainee support cost. But if you're submitting to the Education Research, 305A or Special Education Research, which is 324A, you would not use the participant trainee support cost category. Only fill in that part of the budget form if you're submitting a training grant application.

## Slide 63

Another common mistake on the budget form has to do with the time commitments of senior key personnel on the project. What I'm showing you here is the budget for where you would list senior and key persons, and what I have circled are three fields for each person on that form, both calendar months, academic months, and summer months.

## Slide 64

It's really important that you fill in all three of those, as appropriate. We want to know how many calendar months a senior key person is working on the project or how many academic and summer months that person is working, because we need to see the time commitments of key personnel in order to understand whether they actually have the time commitments for doing the research. Reviewers will also look at this information.

## Slide 65

The narrative budget justification: There is no limit for the budget justification. This is attached as a PDF file to the budget form that I just showed you. That narrative budget justification needs to follow all margin format and font size requirements. Please note that the budget justification is a single document that provides justification for all years of the entire project that you're proposing. The single budget justification needs to be attached as a PDF file to Section K of the first budget period.

## Slide 66

So I have shown you a screen shot here: At the top right of that form you see that this is Budget Period 1, and there on the sheets I have circled Section K, budget justification, outlined in red and highlighted in yellow. If you don't put a budget justification there as a PDF file, the form will not open up, so you must submit that budget justification in order to open up budget period two and budget period three, if you have a 3-year budget you're proposing. Keep in mind that the budget justification you attach here needs to describe the costs for the entire project, so in the case of the 3-year proposal, the budget justification is for all 3 years.

Somebody submitted a question in terms of the time commitment, so let me go back to that screen shot.

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**Question:** *Do you mean calendar months or academic and summer? Both would double the amount of time committed.*

**Answer:** *No, we don't want you to double the amount of time committed. We just want you to break it out. What is the most important thing for IES to know is how much you're working over a 12-month period, so that could be in calendar months; however, for academics for example, it's important to also show whether it's a summer month or an academic month or some combination because sometimes folks become overcommitted in the summer.*

## **Slide 67**

Moving on to more information on the narrative budget justification. This is a pretty important piece of your application. The narrative budget justification has no page limit, so take advantage of this and provide enough detail so that reviewers and IES can decide whether the costs you're proposing are reasonable.

It's also important that the narrative justification aligns with the budget itself. So, for example, you can organize the narrative justification within a year by category, so you might say "year one" to your key personnel time commitments and then move down through those different sections of the budget form. Or you may organize it within category by year, so describe all the senior key personnel time commitments for years one, two, three, et cetera (however many years your project is), again, just making sure that the budget justification aligns with the budget itself so that IES staff and the peer reviewers can decide whether the costs you're proposing make sense.

## **Slide 68**

Make sure that if you include a sub-award in your project that you are not duplicating those costs of the sub-award and the main award. Here in the narrative budget justification you really need to just describe the time commitments, expressing the calendar year percent effort and the descriptions of the responsibilities of the PI and other key personnel. If you have any cost shares on your project, something like personal time that's being donated to the project or use of lab space, this is a good place to describe that.

## **Slide 69**

In the narrative budget justification you also need to provide information about your indirect cost rates. You need to use your institution's negotiated federal indirect cost rate, and we encourage you to use the off-campus indirect cost rate when it's appropriate. Also, make sure that you're not including as direct costs things that might really be a part of indirect costs. So, again, look at the negotiated agreement that your institution has and how those costs are defined to decide what should be included as a direct cost versus an indirect cost. Also, know that you need to have an indirect cost rate agreement in place at the time of the award, if your proposal is recommended for funding, in order to claim those indirect costs.

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So if you submit a proposal to the June 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline and you don't have an indirect cost rate agreement in place, that's okay. You are allowed to put a temporary indirect cost rate of 10 percent in, and then you would have 90 days following an award in order to get that negotiated federal indirect cost rate in place. But just know that without a negotiated indirect cost rate you would not be able to claim indirect cost if your grant application receives an award.

### **Slide 70**

Moving on to sub-award budgets: If your project includes sub-awards or one sub-award or multiple sub-awards, you need to use a separate form to fill out budgets for those sub-awards. It's the R&R sub-award budget form, and this is an optional document in the application package because not all grant applications will have sub-awards. This is going to be below the mandatory documents in the optional documents category of the application package. The sub-award budget form allows you to extract and attach a budget form that is essentially a PDF document for each institution that will hold a sub-award on the grant. You only need separate budgets if you have a sub-awardee organization that is performing a substantial portion of the project.

### **Slide 71**

This is a screen shot of the sub-award budget attachment form, and you see that at the top in the middle it says "Click here to extract the R&R budget federal/non-federal attachment." So if you have a sub-award on your project, you click that button, and it will open a PDF file that is the budget form I showed you earlier. You have the sub-award institution fill out that budget form, save it with a file name that indicates that sub-awardee organization, and then you, the applicant, need to take that sub-award budget and attach it here to this form. If you don't extract the PDF budget form from this sub-award budget form and attach it here, there will be a problem with the application. There will be an error according to Grants.gov. So if you have a sub-award, you must use this form to create the budget for that sub-award.

### **Slide 72**

Now we are going to keep moving on to biographical sketches of key personnel. For each key person on the project you will attach a single PDF file that describes their credentials, expertise, et cetera. There is a page limit for each biographical sketch of four pages, so this is essentially an abbreviated CV. It has to follow the margin format and font size requirements, and each PDF file for the biographical sketches is attached at "Attach biographical sketch field of the research and related senior key person profile expanded form."

### **Slide 73**

Here is a screen shot of that form, and so you see here at the top we have the project director principal investigator, and you see, again, fields highlighted in yellow and outlined in red. And at the bottom there, I have circled the field where you would attach that four-page biographical sketch.

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## Slide 74

New this year, IES is asking you to use the other attachment space on the senior key person profile form to attach a list that describes current and pending support. So this list would be attached as a single PDF file for each key person on the project, it has a page limit of one page per key person, and it is attached as a separate PDF file at the attached current and pending support field of the research and related senior key person profile expanded form.

## Slide 75

So here is that form, and you would attach the list of current and pending support right below the biographical sketch.

## Slide 76

There are three additional mandatory forms that are included in the application package. The Project Performance Site Location form, which allows for eight sites to be listed; the assurances for non-construction programs, the SF 424B form; and then the Department of Education combined assurances form.

## Slide 77

Here are screen shots of all of those. So this is the Project Performance Site Location form. Again, this allows for up to eight sites to be added. Here you list the primary performance site for your project. Notice that things like a DUNS number are not required on this form; however you do need to fill in the congressional district of that particular project site, and there's information in the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide about finding codes of things that you would need to include here.

## Slide 78

This is a screen shot of the assurances for non-constructions program form.

## Slide 79

And then finally the Department of Education combined assurances form.

## Slide 80

I have a question coming in.

**Question:** *Is substantial defined for the substantial amount of work performed by a subcontractor? Thank you.*

**Answer:** *It is really kind of up to you and your institution and the way you want to create the budget in order to determine if a sub-award is necessary or not, but typically sub-awards are to organizations that are partners, and which are really doing a substantial amount of work on the project. So, for example, in addition to, let's say a co-PI that is at that sub-award institution, that co-PI may have graduates students or undergraduate students working on the project. They may have travel costs that would be included in that sub-award. So if you have questions, you may*

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want to talk to a program officer about this, and also just talk with your office of sponsored project folks about how they would like to set that budget up and what makes the most sense for your particular project.

I have a question about the bio sketches.

**Question:** *So the Application Guide indicates bio sketches from the PI and other key personnel, which is parenthetically identified as co-PI/ co-investigators. Are only those identified as PI and co-investigators to submit bio sketches, or should we also submit for others thought of as key, for example an evaluator not identified as co-investigator?*

**Answer:** *It's really up to you who you want to include bio sketches for. I believe that form, the senior key pending person profile form will allow for as many as 40 bio sketches and lists of current and supports, so I don't think you're going to run out of room in determining who you can include bio sketches for. But at a minimum, IES would like you to include the PI, any co-PIs, and any co-investigators.*

I have a question about the current and pending support.

**Question:** *Do you mean we should indicate all grant applications submitted and pending review or actual awarded support?*

**Answer:** *Great question. We're talking about things that have been awarded to you and things that are pending at the time that you submit your application. So we want to know all grants that you currently have awarded and any that you have submitted and that may be awarded by the time you would receive this grant from IES if you're recommended for funding.*

I have a question about sub-awards again.

**Question:** *Can sub-awards be used to compensate a site for training time; for example, working in a school on an intervention and you need to train the personnel?*

**Answer:** *That's a good question. So the way I'm interpreting the question is the following: You're doing a project, you're going to be in schools, and you need to train, let's say, the teachers in that school. And so you're going to compensate the school in some way for the time you're taking these teachers away from their work. Maybe you're hiring substitutes to cover the classes or doing something of that nature to compensate for that time that's taken away. That typically, I believe, is included in the primary project budget under other direct costs. But I also think, again, there's some discretion at your site in terms of how you want to create that budget, so I would consult with your sponsored projects office to decide the way that makes the most sense. But I would say, typically, I've seen that included in the primary budget under other direct costs.*

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## Slide 81

Now we are going to move on to talk about the formatting requirements for the PDF files that I have described to you. So just to review, there are a number of attachments that you will include in your application. They're all PDF files, and so we're talking about the abstract; project narrative; Appendices A, B, and C the bibliography and references cited; human subjects narrative; the narrative budget justification; the biographical sketches; and the lists of current and pending funding. So for all of these, a page is defined as being 8-and-a-half-by-11 inches, one side only, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

## Slide 82

For all of these attachments, the height of the letters must not be smaller than a 12-point font, and typically, something like a Times New Roman 12-point font works. This seems to fulfill all of these requirements.

And as we had heard earlier with a question about the letters of agreement and perhaps things like the tables or figures or charts that you're including in Appendix A, you have some leeway in terms of these font size requirements, but just remember, the reviewers need to be able to read those, so you want to make sure everything is legible and easy to read. But absolutely, for these documents have listed here, these formatting requirements must be adhered to.

## Slide 83

Also know that for all of these the text is single-spaced.

## Slide 84

So here, speaking to this issue of graphs, diagrams, and tables, make sure that these reproduce well in black and white, because as we provide copies of these things to reviewers, we're only producing these in black and white. If you have color in a diagram or color in a graph, just make sure the graph is still readable and interpretable if it's in black and white. Again, making sure that you're following the type size requirements knowing, though, that it can be smaller in size, but, again, we have to be able to read it.

I have a question here.

**Question:** *Will you allow a header or footer, identifier, and page number in the 1-inch margin?*

**Answer:** *Yes. The 1-inch margin really applies to the text, so you can definitely use the footer to add, let's say, a page number. And the Grants.gov Guide even recommends where that should be placed on the page. I think its bottom right or top right, but double check that in the Grants.gov Guide.*

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## Slide 85

So just a quick reminder about page limits. These are the documents, the PDF files, that you will be attaching that do have page limits. The project summary abstract is limited to one page. For the project narrative, you should check out the relevant RFA to find the page limits. Appendix A is limited to 15 pages. Appendix B is limited to 10 pages. Each biographical sketch can be no more than four pages, and each list of current pending funding must be one page.

## Slide 86

There are no page limits for Appendix C. You're encouraged to include all the letters of agreement that you have. There is no page limit for the bibliography and references cited. There's no page limit for the human subject narrative, and there is not a page limit for the narrative budget justification.

## Slide 87

General program information.

## Slide 88

Eligibility, who can apply? Essentially, as an applicant, you just need to demonstrate that you have the ability and capacity to do the research that you're proposing. So make sure that your description of the personnel on the project and the resources available to you will demonstrate to the reviewers that you can, indeed, do the research that you are proposing to do. Also, know that for IES we don't require cost sharing or cost matching.

## Slide 89

Award information: Awards really depend on a few things—availability of funds, obviously. The number of awards that IES makes depends on the quality of the applications that are received. So applications that come in and that are screened as responsive are assigned to scientific peer review panels, and those peer reviewers read the applications and score them, and based upon those scores, decisions are made about funding. Also know that the size of an award really depends on the scope of the project that you're proposing.

## Slide 90

Now this is important. This is new this year for IES. A maximum dollar amount is described in each RFA for the total funding that will be awarded. So, for example, if you go back to my earlier example, a reading and writing proposal that's falling under the Efficacy and Replication goal, the RFA lists an absolute maximum dollar amount that will be awarded for a 4-year project. So you need to really pay attention to those maximum dollar amounts that are described in the RFAs.

## Slide 91

We are going to move onto some final reminders.

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## Slide 92

An application checklist: I encourage you to use the application checklist that is included in the Grants.gov Submission Guide. It will help you to make sure that you've filled out every form and included every attachment that IES asks for. You can check, using the checklist in the Guide, whether you have put all the information in that is asked for in the mandatory forms in the application package, attached all PDF files to the proper form, and completed those certifications and assurances that I mentioned.

## Slide 93

As part of your application checklist, please make sure to use the "Check package for errors" button on the application package. Also, be certain that you have uploaded your application and confirmed that it was validated by Grants.gov before that 4:30-and-zero-second deadline in Washington, DC, on June 23, 2011. That is a very sharp deadline. Also, use the "Track my application" link on Grants.gov to make sure that Grants.gov has processed it, validated it, and sent it over to the Department of Education.

## Slide 94

Pay attention to the email. Remember to look for four separate emails in total. The final email from the Department of Education will have the PR award number and the date and time stamp. Also remember to register for Grants.gov early. Please also review the Grants.gov Application Submission Guide to find out how to fill out these forms and upload your application, and here is the link where you can find that.

## Slide 95

Also remember that the package that you download from Grants.gov needs to be the one for your competition and for your deadline. Also remember to submit your application early. We really recommend you try to do it 3-4 days before the deadline date, because if you have an error in that package and Grants.gov rejects it, you need to figure out what the error is, fix it, and then upload it before that deadline. Verify that the submission is okay using the "Track my application" link.

## Slide 96

And last but not least, we encourage you to contact the relevant program officer for the competition that you're applying to. When you talk to a program officer at IES, you can learn more about substantive requirements for a proposal, and program officers can help you complete forms in the application package if you have any questions about what to include or not to include.

## Slide 97

And then finally, here are links to the funding opportunities page on the IES website and the link to Grants.gov.

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**Question:** *Can someone submit the same proposal to both the June and September competition?*

**Answer:** *And the answer is, no. You need to submit to either the June deadline or the September deadline because this is the same competition. So if you decide to submit in June, you just need to wait and see the outcome of the review process.*

**Question:** *How can I get copies of funded applications?*

**Answer:** *That's a very good question. Basically you have two options. Through the Freedom of Information Act you can request to see copies of funded proposals, and the Department of Education website will have that information for you. So if there is a proposal you want to see a copy of, you can submit your FOIA request.*

*However, I also encourage you to just consider contacting the PI of the project. So if you're on our website and you see abstracts for projects that we have funded, and one looks interesting to you, reach out to the person who is the PI for that project and see if maybe they'll share something about that proposal with you.*

**Question:** *How long does it take to receive a full application following a public information request?*

**Answer:** *So if you submit that Freedom of Information Act request—that's a very good question. I don't know the average turnaround time. It depends on how quickly PIs respond to the FOIA request, and they're encouraged to respond quickly. So I don't really know the timeline on that. It's quicker just to contact the PI directly, but you should know that when a Freedom of Information Act request comes in, it is attended to as soon as possible.*

*I should say that if you put in a Freedom of Information Act request, let's say today, it's unlikely that you're going to get a copy of that funded proposal in time for it to be helpful to you in preparing an application to the June deadline, so it's not that quick.*

**Question:** *Do the June and September proposals compete against one another. Is there an advantage for submitting in June versus September or vice versa?*

**Answer:** *That's a really good question. No, they do not compete against one another. Proposals are reviewed for IES independently as stand-alone proposals. When the proposals come in, they're screened for responsiveness, and then assigned to peer reviewers. And the peer reviewers score that proposal. They read it. They decide whether it does a good job of addressing all of the requirements and elements that are needed for a research proposal. So, no, there's not necessarily any advantage to submitting in June or September. The only reason for the two deadlines is just so that we don't get all the applications at once.*

**Question:** *Do we need to get IRB approval by the university when submitting the proposal?*

**Answer:** *Good question; and the answer is no, you do not need to have IRB approval in place at the time you submit your application. You do, however, need that human subjects narrative that describes whether the research is exempt or non-exempt. If the proposal is funded, that's when human subjects review will begin on our end, and then you would be contacted with a timeline for getting IRB approval.*

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A copy of the PowerPoint presentation will be available on the IES website later this week, and in a few weeks, copies of a transcript from today's session will be available and posted on the website. Please make sure to check the site frequently for updates.

Thank you so much. I think that finishes the webinar for today. Thank you all for joining in and for submitting your questions, and I did just want to remind you one last time that if you have additional questions, contact your program officer. We are here to help you. Most of this information that we went over today is also available in the IES Grants.gov Application Submission Guide. Thanks very much.