

NCSER Webinar  
Research Training Programs in Special Education

Katie Taylor:

Hi everyone! I am going to begin today's webinar on NCSER's Research Training Programs in Special Education. My name is Katie Taylor and I'm a program officer at the National Center for Special Education Research, which I'll refer to as NCSER. Today I'll be talking about the Research Training Programs in Special Education, and specifically, the Early Career Development and Mentoring Program (Early Career).

In today's webinar I'll be giving an overview of IES and NCSER as well as the Research Training Programs in Special Education, some specifics about the Early Career program, and also a brief overview of the application submission and the peer review processes.

I'll start by providing a bit of background on IES. IES is the Independent Research arm of the U.S. Department of Education and its overall mission is to describe the condition and progress of education in the U.S., identify education practices that improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of Federal and other education programs.

IES is comprised of a National Board of Education Sciences; a Standards and Review Office, which oversees the peer review process; and four centers. The National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE) conducts large-scale evaluations of education programs and supports the development and use of research and evaluation throughout the U.S. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is responsible for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations. And there are the two research centers -- the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) - where the grant programs are housed. Both research centers sponsor rigorous research to address education problems in the U.S. The differences between the two centers are that NCER supports research focused on students in pre-K through adults, whereas NCSER supports research on children from birth through grade 12. And NCSER also has a focus on students with disabilities. You'll notice here that the research centers are separate from the peer review process. This separation allows the program officers to work closely with the applicants on their proposals.

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

Now, I'll turn the attention to the National Center for Special Education Research specifically. As I mentioned, NCSER sponsors a rigorous and comprehensive program of special education research designed to expand the knowledge and understanding of infants, toddlers, and students with or at risk for disabilities from birth through high school. NCSER is different from the other

research center because of our disability focus and the age range of students that are research targets -- birth through high school.

Now I'll provide a brief overview of NCSE's Research Training Programs.

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

There have been a few changes to the FY 2017 Request for Applications (RFA) -- things that are different from the 2016 RFA. The first change is that we are accepting applications under one topic only -- the Early Career topic. In the past, we've also competed a Postdoctoral Research Training Program and also Methods Training Using Single-Case Design. However, in 2017 we're only accepting applications under the Early Career topic. Some other changes and clarifications are that in 2017, Early Career awards will be made as grants as opposed to cooperative agreements. We've also revised some language to make it clear that you can have consultants on these grants. Just a reminder that co-PIs are not allowed on Early Career grants, but you are required to have a mentor or mentors and can also have consultants. Lastly, in 2017 you also have the option of using SciENcv to create an IES biosketch for yourself and other key personnel. There's more information about SciENcv in the RFA, but it's just a new electronic system to help you create and maintain biosketches that are submitted with grant applications and annual reports.

Now I'm going to talk specifically about the Early Career topic, including the purpose, requirements, the narrative, the appendices, and the budget.

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

Here is some general information about the award parameters. In 2017, we will make no more than five awards under this topic area. The projects themselves have a maximum duration of four years and an award amount up to \$400,000 (direct and indirect costs). I want to stress here that you have to adhere to these maximums, the duration and the budget maximums, in your application because if you don't, your application will not be sent forward for review. So just make sure that you don't even go a dollar over that amount. It's important to work closely with your office of research so that they understand these limitations as well. And also I'll note that for the training award, there's an indirect cost rate cap of 8%. So make sure you adhere to that as well. I do want to note here that throughout the webinar, I'll talk about requirements and recommendations. Requirements are the components that you have to include to be sent forward for peer review. Recommendations will strengthen your proposal and make it more competitive.

Eligible principal investigators (i.e., the early career researchers) can be from a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education. The focus of the research and training needs to be in the field of early intervention or special education for children with or at risk for disabilities. There are two main eligibility requirements for principal investigators (PIs). The first is that you must have completed a doctoral degree or postdoctoral program no earlier than April 1, 2013 and no later than the start of the award period. And the second is that you must hold a tenure-track position or research scientist position at an institute of higher education in the U.S., or you must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the award. If you have accepted a position at the time that you are applying but you haven't started, you have to include a letter of support in Appendix D, which I'll talk more about a little bit later. This letter of support will be from your future home institution, and it will indicate that an offer has been made and accepted, and it will also specify an agreed-upon start date that is set to begin before the award begins. The PI's position must be a salaried position paid by the university without a focus on training. So it can't be a postdoctoral position. By research scientists, that can mean research associates. There are two additional parameters related to eligibility, and those are that the PI must be a citizen or permanent resident of the U.S., and they must not have previously served as a PI or co-PI on a research grant from IES.

You must designate at least one mentor to guide your research and career development plan. You may have more than one mentor, but if you do, you must specify who the primary mentor is. You have to include a mentor at your home institution. The mentor at your home institution does not have to be your primary mentor. And you also need to select as mentors only individuals who were not your primary graduate school or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral supervisor. You'll need to include the names of these individuals in your application. Faculty members who served on your dissertation committee but weren't your direct advisor are fine to serve as mentors. Mentors can be from academic or nonacademic institutions, as long as these institutions conduct rigorous special education or early intervention research.

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

Some other questions to consider when you are identifying mentors are: Are they committed to training? In other words, do they have experience training doctoral, postdoctoral, or early career researchers? Do they have the time to devote to mentoring? Do they have IES funding? It can be useful to have mentors who have had IES funding and can review your proposal and make

sure that the language is consistent with IES, and help guide you so that you are prepared to do the type of research that IES funds.

Your research and training plan must focus on infants, toddlers, preschool children, or students in K-12 with or at risk for disabilities; and/or their families, teachers, related services providers, and/or other instructional personnel. And it must also address student education outcomes. These outcomes can include developmental school readiness, academics, social and behavioral or functional outcomes. These are defined and examples provided in the RFA.

Early career applications must include a training program narrative that has these five sections: significance, research plan, career development plan, personnel, and resources. The training program narrative can't be any more than 25 pages. I'll talk about each of these sections individually.

In terms of the significance, you'll need to justify and describe your need for further career development. This is especially important if you've already received postdoctoral training. So what you'll need to do here is explain why additional training is needed, or what you need to add to the training that you've already received. For example, it can be analytic skills that you need to acquire or a particular content area within special education. You also need to justify and describe your planned program of research, which means describing your progression from your prior research to your currently proposed research and to your future research. And then you'll also need to describe the significance of the proposed research project, which includes the empirical and theoretical rationale for the research and the practical importance of the research questions and the research itself. We recommend that you clearly describe your research questions and hypotheses and shortcomings of current practice as well as the importance of your research plan. And then we also recommend that you address the significance of the career development plan. For example, you should describe what kind of additional training opportunities you will pursue, and how the mentoring and training activities support your research activities. Your career development plan really needs to be integrated with your research plan so that your training activities are supporting the research and vice versa. Finally, you need to address how your research and career development activities will enhance your knowledge and skills.

In your application, you must identify one special education research topic and one research goal. These topics and goals are described in detail in our Special Education Research Grants (84.324A) RFA. Starting with the research topics -- these identify your field of research. Our special education program includes 11 research topics. When you're determining the most appropriate topic for your research, it's helpful to refer to the RFA for the Special Education Research Grants Program. In 2017, this particular grant program has a special focus on teachers and other instructional personnel; as such the RFA for 2017 is a little bit different than in previous years. So it will probably be most useful to you to refer to the previous RFA for FY 2016. If you have any trouble finding this, you can just email me and I'll send you the link. You can also look at the 2017 RFA, but just keep in mind that the special focus on teachers and other instructional personnel does not apply to the Early Career program in 2017. All of the research topics don't cover the same populations. For example, all topics except for early intervention require children to be in at least kindergarten. Each topic has certain parameters, so

it's important to carefully review the topic descriptions when you're crafting your application. And if you submitted a letter for intent for the Early Career program, I probably included a reminder to identify topic and goal and included a link to the previous version of our Special Education Research Grants RFA.

The research goal is the other thing you need to identify in your application. The research goal specifies the type of work you'll be doing. Under the Early Career program, you can propose to do research under Goal 1, Exploration; Goal 2, Development and Innovation; Goal 3, Efficacy and Replication; or Goal 5, Measurement. We do not include the Effectiveness goal (Goal 4) for the Early Career program due to the budget limitations for these awards. I will provide a brief overview of each of these goals; however, you can get a more detailed description of the requirements and recommendations for these in the Special Education Research Grants RFA.

The purpose of the Exploration goal is to explore associations between malleable factors that are under the control of the education system and student education outcomes, and/or identify factors and conditions that may mediate or moderate the relations between these malleable factors and student education outcomes. These projects are intended to build and inform theoretical foundations to support the development or evaluation of interventions or assessment frameworks. You can propose a variety of methodological approaches under the Exploration goal, including secondary data analysis, primary data collection, a meta-analysis, or a combination of any of those.

Goal 2, Development and Innovation projects support the development of an innovative intervention or the improvement of an existing education intervention. These projects also collect data on the intervention's feasibility, usability, and fidelity in authentic education settings as well as pilot data on the intervention's promise for improving student education outcomes.

In general, the cost maximums for the Early Career grants may not be sufficient for conducting rigorous Goal 3, Efficacy and Replication projects. However, there may be some instances given characteristics of the intervention or the research design where these trials are possible given the cost maximums. And if that's the case, you may propose to do a Goal 3, Efficacy and Replication project. There are four different types of studies under the Efficacy and Replication goal: (1) an efficacy study to evaluate whether or not a fully developed intervention is efficacious under limited or ideal conditions; (2) a replication study to generate additional evidence for an efficacious intervention by directly replicating the intervention or varying the original conditions; (3) an efficacy follow-up study to gather follow-up data and examine the longer-term effects of an efficacious intervention; (4) and a retrospective study to analyze retrospective or historical secondary data to test the efficacy of an intervention that was implemented in the past.

Goal 5, Measurement projects support the development of new assessments or the refinement of existing assessments and the validation of these assessments or the validation of existing assessments for specific purposes, contexts, and populations. These projects must link the assessment to student education outcomes.

Now, I'll discuss the research plan and the career development plan in more detail. Both these plans are designed to enhance your knowledge and skills. And as I mentioned, these plans must be integrated, which means that your career development plan must support the research plan.

Let's focus on the research plan specifically. First, you'll need to specify your research topic and your goal as well as clearly lay out your research questions and your aims. The research design should be framed within your chosen topic and goal and it must be aligned with your research questions. So here you'll describe your design and the actual research process. For example, if you're proposing to develop an intervention, you'll explain the iterative process of developing and refining the intervention and the research design that you'll be using to pilot test its promise for improving student education outcomes. For the sample description, you'll need to specify your population of interest, the sample size, the disability category or categories represented, and your criteria for defining disability or at risk for disability, and your inclusion criteria. When we say "children *at risk for disabilities*," we mean that they're at risk for developing disabilities based on evidence of an association between a risk factor or a set of risk factors and the development of the disability. So, selection into the study must be made on an individual basis, meaning "at risk" can't be defined based on a general sample characteristic such as low SES. You can't just say that certain students are at risk for developing disabilities because they're from low-SES families. It needs to be a much more specific association between the risk and the particular disability. Although your focus needs to be on students with or at risk for disabilities, you can include students without disabilities if it's appropriate for your research question. For your key outcome measures, you'll need to describe each measure that you'll use to collect data, including information about their reliability and validity. And if you're doing secondary data analysis, you need to explain the variables that you intend to use from the extant data set. In the data analysis section, you'll discuss your planned analysis procedure, such as HLM or SEM or maybe visual analysis for single-case design. You need to be explicit about how the analyses address each research question and tie them directly to the research questions.

When you're developing the research plan, we encourage you to work with your mentors, and they can assist you with the development of this plan. Although the major elements need to be included, we do expect that your research plan will be less detailed than a regular Special Education Research Grant, because you don't have as much space with the addition of the career development plan. And there's also the expectation that you'll further develop your research plan under the guidance of your mentor. So it's understandable that these proposals will not have the level of detail of a special education research grant; however, reviewers still need enough detail to judge the feasibility and the appropriateness of the plan, and enough information so that they know that you know what you're talking about and taking on. If there is less detail on the data analysis, it should be clear that you aim to receive additional training and mentorship in this area and your research design should be strong.

Here are some other questions to consider when you are writing your research plan. First, think about what education problem that you want to solve and what questions you want to answer. When you're formulating your research plan, think about how your research questions fit with one of the IES research topics. Also, think about the content that you'll address and what sample you'll study. And finally, think about how your research method fits in with the requirements of your identified IES research goal.

So just a little bit more about the research designs that are appropriate under the specific goals. For Goal 2, Development and Innovation studies, the research designs for the pilot study may include but are not limited to: fully powered or underpowered randomized controlled trials (RCTs); single-case design studies; or quasi-experimental studies. For Goal 3, Efficacy and Replication projects, you should use a research design that meets the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards. Designs can include RCTs, SMART designs, regression discontinuity designs, single-case designs, or quasi-experimental designs. And there's more information about these in the Special Education Research Grant RFA.

Now I'm going to move on to the career development plan. There are two components of this plan: the mentoring process and the additional training opportunities. Both of these components must be integrated with and support the research plan. In your career development plan, you'll describe your training goals and how the proposed activities will help you reach these goals as well as the roles that your mentor or mentors will play in helping you achieve these goals. For each mentor, you want to describe their expertise and how it's relevant to your program of research, specify how the mentors will guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan, as well as helping you progress toward independent research. And also describe how your mentors will assist you in acquiring new expertise and guiding your development as a scholar. Mentoring activities can include regular meetings, review of your career development plan, and any additional guidance that will be useful for your development as a scientist (e.g., reviewing manuscripts for publication, developing grant applications, helping you with the dissemination plans, etc.). And you should also describe a plan for coordinating mentoring activities among your mentors if there are co-mentors. For the career development plan, it's really helpful to include a timeline of the mentoring and training activities and the research activities to show how these activities are integrated and how the training that you receive will be able to inform the research plan.

Some example training or educational opportunities include the IES summer institutes; you may propose to participate in grant-writing workshops or advanced statistical workshops, or coursework that is related to either a content area or a certain statistical technique. Just be sure to describe how these educational opportunities will help you reach your concrete training goals and how they will support your proposed research.

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

highlighting this in multiple places in your application -- in the personnel section as well as in your letters of support from your mentors, which I'll talk about in a minute.

The last component of the narrative is the resources section. In this section, you want to demonstrate that your institution has the capacity to support the work that you're proposing. So you shouldn't use the university boilerplate language when writing this section. Instead, make sure that the section specifically addresses the needs of this particular project, including both the research and the training components. You should describe the institutional training support; for instance, do they offer workshops? Maybe they offer workshops related to grant writing. There may be research groups at the university that you can join that are related to your area of research or to a specific analytic skill. And then you'll also want to describe any startup packages that are provided by your institution. For example, if as a new faculty member, the institution gives you extra money or reduces your course load, then you can include this as a resource and an example of how the institution is supporting you. We also encourage you to describe the resources to disseminate the project results. This includes a description of the capacity to disseminate information about the findings from your project. For instance, your university may have a communications office that can assist with disseminating the results of your project, or you may have mentors that are really experienced in disseminating research to certain audiences. You also want to describe the audiences that you expect will be most likely to benefit from your research and the ways you plan to reach these audiences. It could be through major publications, presentations, as well as other products.

The appendices highlighted in green here are required. Appendix A is only required for resubmissions -- this is where you would include your responses to the previous reviews. Also include Appendix A if your application is one that you consider to be new but that is similar to a previous application. Appendix A can be no more than three pages. Reminder -- pay attention to any page limitations for all of the sections, including the appendices. Appendix B is required for all applications. This is where you would include a summary table of you and your mentors' ongoing and recently completed special education research projects. Appendix C is also required and will include letters of agreement from all your mentors. These letters should include enough information to make it clear that your mentors understand the nature of the commitment, the resources, and the mentoring activities that will be required if the application is funded. This is another place to make it really clear about the percent of time the mentor will be devoting to the project. Appendix D is also required and should include letters of agreement from your institution as well as letters of agreement from school partners, data sources, and consultants (depending on what is applicable for your particular project). The letters of agreement from your institution should also include enough information to make it clear that they understand the nature of the commitment, time, space, and resources that will be required if the project is funded. And if you have not started your position by the due date of the application, this letter should include your start date as well as details of the offer and the acceptance. And then as far as the letters of agreement from your partners, these will be from the authentic education setting that you intend to partner with. Here again, just make sure there's enough information so that it's clear that your partners really understand what they'll be asked to do. If you're proposing to do secondary data analysis, then you'll also want to include letters of agreement from the data sources; for example, state agencies that hold administrative data. And then if you have consultants on your project, you would include letters of agreement for each consultant in

Appendix D. Lastly, Appendix E is optional. You can use this space to provide examples of training or research materials and tables and charts that support the training program narrative. For instance, you could include here a project timeline and a table of the research and career development activities.

The RFA includes specific information about the budget for Early Career grants, but I'll just highlight a couple of things. You can budget your salary up to 50% of what your academic year salary is -- it can be used for protected time or buying out classes, so you can concentrate on your research. This is not required, especially if you have a startup package that already includes this, but you can budget for this. You can also provide honoraria for mentors for up to \$3,000 total per year. If you have more than one mentor, this \$3,000 limit needs to be divided up among the multiple mentors. Your budget is expected to cover costs directly associated with the research project as well as the career development plan, so costs can include things like salary, staff, supplies and equipment, participant compensation, local travel for data collection, registration for workshops and institutes, as well as travel -- travel for you and your mentors to meet if you're not at the same institution, travel for conferences, definitely travel for the IES PI meeting, which is required for all IES PIs, and then also travel for specialized workshops or other training opportunities.

The last thing that I'll talk about today is the application submission and the peer review processes. Here are just some important dates and deadlines. The application deadline is August 4, 2016, at 4:30 pm DC time. Submit early! We do not accept late applications. The deadline to submit a letter of intent has passed (i.e., May 19). If you missed the deadline, you can still submit an application. And I would encourage you to email me and just let me know that you intend to apply, and you can also email me a synopsis of your research and career development plan so I can provide more specific feedback. If you did submit a letter of intent, then you should have received feedback from me.

Applications are accepted once a year. The authorized representative at your institution actually submits the grant. And just to reiterate, for 2017, applications are due August 4, 2016 at 4:30:00 p.m. So be sure to submit early and on time!

You need two things to apply. First, you need the RFA, which contains information for writing your training program narrative as well as other information related to submitting. But you also need the application package. The fiscal year 2017 application packages can be found on <http://www.grants.gov>.

Here's a screenshot of <http://www.grants.gov>. There is a separate webinar on the IES application process that will be offered twice this summer. The first one is June 8, at 1:00 pm and EST and there will be a second one offered Thursday, July 14, at 11:00 am. In these webinars, IES staff will go in more depth about the application process. But for now, I'm just going to talk pretty generally about how this works. First, you'll need to download the application package from <http://www.grants.gov>. And in terms of registration for <http://www.grants.gov>, the first tip and perhaps the most important is to start this process early. Initial registration can take more than five business days. And <http://www.grants.gov> actually recommends allowing four weeks to register. Even if you're already registered, the annual

update that you have to complete could take more than three days. So just be sure to start this process early. It's actually your institution that needs to register, so not you as an individual, and for most institutions, the sponsored projects office will take care of the registration if it hasn't already been done, but you just want to make sure to check in with them to ensure that it's been completed. Applications received by <http://www.grants.gov> are date and time stamped to the second. So your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and the date and time must be stamped no later 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on August 4, 2016. We will not review late applications.

Once you successfully submit your application, it will go through the peer review process. First, applications are reviewed for compliance and responsiveness to the RFA. Compliance is related to formatting -- things like font size, if you've used the appendices appropriately, if you haven't gone over the page limit, things like that. Responsiveness screening involves determining whether you adhered to the requirements of the competition (the components that are the minimum necessary to be sent forward for peer review). If your application is both responsive and compliant, then you'll be assigned to a review panel, and two to three panel members will conduct a primary review of your application and provide feedback about the application. And then once a primary review of each application has occurred, the most competitive applications are then forward for review by the full panel of reviewers. During the panel review, applications are discussed and then rated by all reviewers on the panel. And from that point, we make funding decisions and then contact all applicants, giving them statements from the reviewers so that those who did not receive funding can potentially resubmit depending on eligibility and whether we repeat the competition in subsequent years.

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

You'll be notified about whether you've received funding for your application no later than July 1, 2017. You'll receive email notification that information is available in the Applicant Notification System -- in this system you can track the status of your award as well as access the reviewer summary statement. If you are not granted an award the first time, I'd encourage you to review the summary statement and talk with me, or the appropriate program officer, to get insight about what you can do differently and ways you can think about the reviewer comments to help you improve your application. If you submitted last year and plan to resubmit, I'd be happy to discuss your previous reviews with you.

Another thing I want to encourage you to do is go to our website and look at the resources page. This page provides links to different trainings and other information and content that could help you improve your application, such as information about methodology or things of that nature. In addition, there are a number of future webinars that you could benefit from and you can find these webinars by going to the funding opportunities page and then there will be a link to our research funding webinars.

Just some reminders: make sure you attend to page, budget, and grant period limits; make sure you attend to the materials that are allowed in the appendices as well as these recommendations to improve your application. And lastly, read the request for applications really carefully! And

also, email me early on if you want to schedule a phone call to talk more in-depth about your proposal or ask me quick questions through email. As long as it's within a reasonable timeframe, I can review draft proposals or parts and pieces of proposals and provide feedback.

Here's a link to the funding page and also my email address. I'll stop here and take this time to answer questions.

### Q&A:

I just got a request for clarification about the special focus on teachers and other instructional personnel. This focus applies to the FY 2017 RFA for our Special Education Research Grants. The RFA for FY 2016, which was the previous year, did not include this focus. And that's the one I said may be a better resource when you're trying to identify the most appropriate research topic and goal, because it will not include language around the teachers and other instructional personnel.

There's another question about the PI's eligibility if they finished a postdoc in July 2014. If you finished a postdoc in 2014, you are still eligible. You have to have completed your doctoral degree or a postdoc no earlier than April 1, 2013.

There's another question about whether you can apply for the Early Career program if you're currently a postdoc but you anticipate that you'll have a faculty position by the time the award begins. At the time of application, you have to have accepted an offer from an institute of higher education. If you don't have an offer, and you haven't accepted at the time of application, then you're not eligible.

There's a question about whether startup packages should be mentioned in the resource section if the funds or course release have already been exhausted. I would say that you shouldn't include because you're not going to be able to benefit from that.

There's another question about how to work it with your mentor so that you don't go over the \$3,000 honoraria limit but you also include the appropriate amount of time for your mentors to provide guidance. There's several ways you can do this, including cost sharing or in-kind donations -- you're not required to do this and you are not going to get brownie points for it, but you can. You just need to make it really clear in your budget, your personnel section, and in your letters from your mentors.

There's another question about whether the stipends have to be equal among the mentors. They don't have to be equal. It just depends on the time commitment.

There's another question about whether there is a cap for consultant compensation? Compensation should be in line with the consultant's daily rate of compensation. We don't specify any caps in the RFA.

There's also a question about whether the applicant has to be a special education scholar or faculty member. You don't have to specifically be in the field of special education. You can be in a related field, but your research and your training has to focus on infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disability.

There's a question about whether you can pay advisory board members as consultants. First, you can include advisory board members, and you can pay them like you would consultants.

If you have questions that come up after the webinar or if there were questions that I missed, feel free to email me and I'd be happy to address them. Also, if you would like me to send you a link to the FY 2016 Special Education Research Grants RFA, just send me an email and I'm happy to do that. You can find it through a Google search, but it's not easy to access through our main website.

Have a good afternoon!

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