Predoctoral Program Overview

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Agenda

- Introduction to IES

- Introduction to Request for Applications

- Review of Application Sections

- Next Steps

- Open Discussion and Q&A

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National Center for Education Research
Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education
Established by the Education Sciences Reform Act, Sec. 131

Sponsor sustained research that will lead to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of education

Support the synthesis and integration of education research

Promote quality and integrity through the use of accepted practices of scientific inquiry

Promote scientifically valid research findings that can provide the basis for improving academic instruction and lifelong learning

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IES Research Training Programs
Building the education sciences workforce of the future

NCSER (84.324B):

- Postdoctoral Research Training in Special Education and Early Intervention
- Early Career Development and Mentoring Program for Special Education Research
- Methods Training for Special Education Research

NCER (84.305B):

- Pathways to the Education Sciences
- Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training in the Education Sciences
- Postdoctoral Research Training in the Education Sciences
- Methods Training for Education Research
- Early Career Development and Mentoring Program for Education Research, including Early Career Mentoring Program for Faculty at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

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Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Program in the Education Sciences

Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Program in the Education Sciences (84.305B)

Predoctoral Training Program grants are awarded to institutions of higher education to create cohesive graduate training programs in which fellows receive training in conducting education research while earning their doctorates within a traditional academic discipline.

Components:

- Two-to-four years of financial support for fellows (stipends, tuition, health insurance, normal fees, and research/travel funds)

- Coordinated curriculum

- Ongoing lecture series or proseminar

- Opportunities for fellows to conduct research and to collaborate with education practitioners and researchers

- Career Development

- Education Sciences certificate that signifies that fellows have completed the training program's requirements
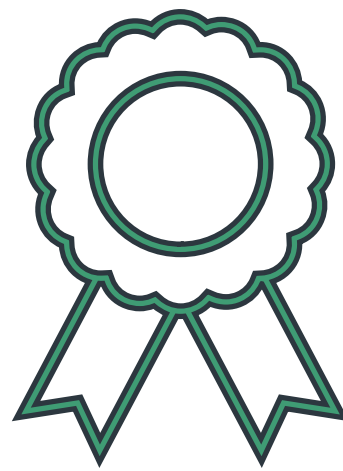
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NCER Investment in Predoctoral Training
Spanning 20 Years: 2004 to 2024

≅ **$209 million**

47 grants

21 institutions

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FY 2025
Next Gen of Predoc Programs

IES is soliciting applications for new predoctoral programs to seek new ideas and broaden participation in IES training.

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Getting Started

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.305B

Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences

Request for Applications

Letter of Intent	December 12, 2024	https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit
Application Package Available	November 14, 2024	https://www.grants.gov
Application Deadline	11:59:59 Eastern Time on March 7, 2025	https://www.grants.gov
Possible Start Dates	September 1, 2025	

See the companion IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/submission_guide.asp) for guidance on preparing and submitting applications through Grants.gov.

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Application Submission Guide

https://ies.ed.gov/funding/

General Requirements

Requirements vs. Recommendations

Requirement = Must

The RFA includes general requirements as well as program-specific requirements. If your application does not include a required element, it will not be sent forward for scientific review.

Recommendations for a Strong Application = Strongly Encouraged

The RFA includes recommendations that are intended to improve the quality of your application, and the peer reviewers will use these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

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FY 2025 Predoctoral Training Grant Awards
Award Limits, RFA pg. 28

- Maximum award is 5 Years
- Maximum award amount is $5 million (indirect + direct)
    - Up to $3,628,000 for fellows (2-4 years of support per fellow)
    - Up to $1,372,000 for program costs (including indirect costs)
- Awards structured as Cooperative Agreements

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Predoctoral Application Requirements

Various Requirements, RFA pgs. 29-30, 45, 61-62

In order for an application to be forwarded for peer review, it **must** meet RFA requirements for:

- Eligible Applicants
- Key Personnel
- Education Settings
- Training Program Narrative

Your application **must** also:

- Be complete and in the proper format
- Be submitted on time
- Fall within budget and project length

Eligibility Requirements for Institutions

General Requirements, RFA pg. 29

Academic Institutions
in the U.S. and its territories that grant doctoral degrees in fields relevant to education

Eligible:
New Applicants

Not Eligible:
Institutions with 2020 Awards

Caution:
*Institutions may only submit **1** predoctoral application.*

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Key Personnel Requirements
General Requirements, RFA pg. 29

- One Principal Investigator (AKA Training Director) **must** be identified.
    - Has overall responsibility of the award
    - Interacts with IES
- Co-PIs are allowed.
- Core Faculty **must** be identified.
    - Core Faculty conduct training activities including teaching courses, mentoring fellows, supervising research, and monitoring fellows' progress
- Key Personnel may be from any field, but **must** be able to provide intensive training in education research or statistics.

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Research Setting Requirements

General Requirements, RFA pg. 29-30

The research experiences proposed for fellows **must** be relevant to formal education in the United States and **must** address factors under the control of U.S. education systems, with the exception of research proposed to improve education statistical and/or research methods.

See the RFA, pg. 30 for a list of potential settings

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Your Application Should Tell a Compelling Story

It should . . . .

1. Clearly convey all required elements (**Throughout**)

2. Include recommended elements (**Throughout**)

3. Clearly describe your proposed research training program (**Significance**)

4. Propose a specific, well-designed plan to implement your research training program (**Training Plan**)

5. Show reviewers you have the capacity to implement training program successfully (**Personnel, Resources**)

Significance

What is the Focus of Your Training Program?

General and Significance Requirements, RFA pgs. 29-30

Training Program must:

1. Propose to train doctoral students to conduct education research

2. Address U.S. education at any level: pre-k to 12, postsecondary, adult education

3. Address the focus of at least one of these NCER research grant programs:

   – The Education Research Grants Program

   – The Statistical and Research Methodology in Education

   – The Accelerate, Transform, Scale (ATS) Initiative

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Examples of Possible Training Program Foci

- **Predoctoral Training Program on Rural Education** (spans age ranges, content, and methods)

- **Adult Literacy Predoctoral Training Program** (addresses adult education and reading/writing, spans methods)

- **Predoctoral Training Program on Educating Homeless & Highly Mobile Populations** (addresses education systems and other content areas, spans age ranges, content and methods)

- **Predoctoral Training Program on Statistical Methods in Education Research** (spans age ranges and content, but focuses on education research methodology)

- **Predoctoral Research Training Program on Generative AI** in Education (spans ages and methods, but focuses on the study of Gen-AI in education and education research)

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What Skill-sets & Knowledge Will Your Training Program Provide?

Fellow + **Research Training** = **Employed Education Researcher**

Fellows' backgrounds, pre-existing knowledge, home departments, interests, etc.

What fellows will learn to do over the course of the fellowship

The experiences provided for fellows

A person with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be employed as an education researcher (in various contexts)

How will Your Training Program be Structured?

Financial Support and Additional Parameters, RFA pgs. 34-35

The designs of training programs can vary.

– For example, you may propose a 2-year, 3-year, or 4-year training program (or some combination).

– Fellowship length should reflect the time needed to adequately provide training.

Restrictions:

– Minimum Number of Fellowship Years: **30**

– Maximum Number of Fellowship Years: **68**

– Minimum Number of Years of Fellowship Support per Fellow: **2**

– Maximum Number of Years of Fellowship Support per Fellow: **4**

– Minimum number of Fellows: **15 (2 years each)**

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What Disciplines will be Included?

- At least two different disciplines should be represented

- Can be a mix of schools/colleges, departments, programs, institutes, etc.

- Should include at least 2 degree granting units that offer participating fellows a traditional doctoral degree (e.g. Ph.D. in Political Science or Ed.D in Educational Psychology)
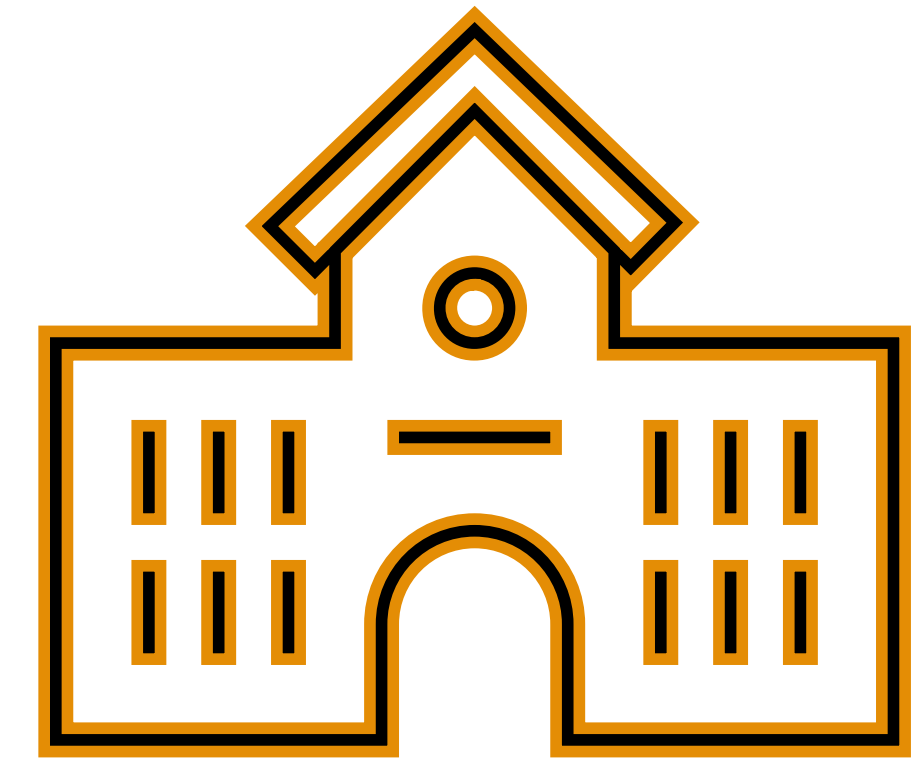
Training Program Design FAQ

- **Can I have a five-year training program?** IES assumes that programs will recruit fellows for the second year of the grant and therefore is only providing up to 4 years of funding per fellow. Five-year programs would require your institution to cost-share.

- **I looked on the IES website and I only see training programs that do ABC. Is IES interested in a training program that does XYZ?** We encourage you to submit an application that addresses your institutions' interests and strengths. It does not have to resemble any existing training program. We encourage you to solicit feedback on your idea by submitting a LOI or contacting the Predoctoral program officer.

- **We want to submit a training program that focuses on qualitative research methods. Is this allowed?** A strictly qualitative training program would not fully prepare fellows to conduct research under one of IES' research programs. However, a program that included qualitative and quantitative research methods would be appropriate.

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Research Training Plan

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Research Training Plan Components

Research Training Plan, pgs. 32-34

In this section, you should detail your proposed training program. This includes everything from describing how you will identify fellows to how you will help them transition to new positions:

- Fellow Eligibility and Recruitment
- Financial Support
- Training activities
- Placement
- Evaluation

Fellow Recruitment

Recruitment Plan, RFA pgs. 31-32

The application **must** include a recruitment plan. Detail your recruitment plan, strategies, and timeline.

Specifically describe:

- the types of fellows you wish to train and the appropriate venues for finding them
- your explicit strategies for recruiting members of groups underrepresented in the education sciences
- your explicit strategies for recruiting fellows from multiple disciplines
- your eligibility and selection criteria

Note: IES encourages programs to develop avenues to recruit fellows from smaller, less research intensive, less-resourced, or less well-known undergraduate programs, including those at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

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Fellow Requirements

Training Requirements and Additional Parameters, RFA pgs. 31, 34-35

- Predoctoral fellows **must** be enrolled full-time in a doctoral program for each term during which they receive fellowship support.
  - Fellows can be from any academic discipline or department.
  - Fellow cohorts should be drawn from at least two different degree-granting schools/colleges or departments.
- Predoctoral fellows **must** be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

- Other requirements:
  - Predoctoral fellows' research (including dissertations) **must** be relevant to practical issues in U.S. education.
  - Fellows' relevant publications **must** be submitted to ERIC.
  - Fellows **must** have persistent identifiers such as an ORCID number.
  - Fellows **must** receive recognition of participation in the training program (Education Sciences Certificate).
  - Fellows are expected to respond to an annual fellows survey (when requested).

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Timing of Requirement
Recruitment Plan, RFA pgs. 32-33

- Your recruitment timeline should reflect the type of fellowships your program will offer (2, 3, and/or 4 years).

- In most cases, programs should plan on recruiting fellows for the second year of the grant (i.e., the 2026-27 academic year).

- The earliest fellows can start the training program is the 2025-26 academic year.

Letters of Agreement for Fellows

Appendix D, RFA pg. 48

- Fellows accepted into your training program **must** receive a Letter of Agreement that outlines **all** conditions of their fellowships including IES requirements and financial support.

- The Letter of Agreement **must** be signed by the PI and fellow.

- You **must** include a sample Letter of Agreement in Appendix D.

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Financial Support for Fellows

Participant Support Costs, RFA pgs. 31, 36, 44

Fellows financial support packages **must** be described in the application. The training grant can directly support up to **$53,500** per fellow, per year, including up to:

- $37,000 in stipend per fellow per year (12 months) for 2 to 4 years,

- Up to $14,000 per fellow per year for tuition, health insurance, and normal fees; and

- Up to $2,500 per fellow per year in support of research, travel, and conference attendance

Reminder: To receive the fellowships, fellows **must** be enrolled full-time.

Financial Support FAQ

- **Can we offer fellowship packages less than the maximum of $53,500** Yes

- **Can we supplement the fellowship package with other funds?** Yes, the IES-portion of the fellowship is capped at $53,500 but you may use other funds to increase the fellowship. **Two caveats:** This is considered cost-sharing which **must** be reflected in the budget, and this **must** be made clear in the Fellows' Letters of Agreement.

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Research Training Program Components

Research Training Plan, RFA pgs. 31-35

The application **must** describe the research training activities.

Components

- Doctoral degree requirements
- Coordinated curriculum
- Research apprenticeship
- Practice/policy apprenticeship
- Career development activities
- Proseminar
- Other training activities
- Education Sciences Certificate

Knowledge and Skills

- Content area knowledge and skills
- Methodological area knowledge and skills
- SEER Principles
- Research skills and ethics
- Entrepreneurship
- Collaboration with practitioners and policymakers
- Communication
- Research administration and grant management
- Grant-writing
- Career Development

The Doctoral Degree is the Foundation of the Training Program

Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

Therefore your training plan should:

- Account for departmental requirements that fellows will have to fulfill in order to receive their doctorates.

- Provide "value-added" training activities for the fellows.

- Acknowledge and accommodate the fact that fellows' obligations and training needs will vary by home department.

Coordinated Curriculum
Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

The Coordinated Curriculum is the primary means by which fellows will gain subject matter expertise as well as methodological knowledge and skills.

It should:

- Be interdisciplinary

- Specify courses fellows are required to take as part the training program, including those that are fulfilled as part of disciplinary requirements

- Prepare fellows to carry out research in your training plan's area of focus

Proseminar or Lecture Series

Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

The Proseminar (sometimes referred to as a lecture series) supplements the coordinated curriculum by providing additional interdisciplinary training in the foci of the training program.

It can:

- also be used to address the other knowledge and skill areas
- be restricted to fellows or open to other graduate students
- be weekly, bi-weekly, or on another schedule

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Apprenticeship Opportunities with Researchers and Policymakers/Practitioners

Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

IES requires predoctoral training programs to provide apprenticeships for fellows to:

- Conduct mentored education research **and**
- Work with practitioners/policy-makers

These are two separate requirements, but they may overlap in practice.

Describing Research Apprenticeships

Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

You should describe:

- Requirements for research apprenticeships

- Specific research projects fellows can work on and the type of work fellows will be expected to do

- The link between these activities and fellows' development into independent researchers

- Opportunities for fellows to do independent research and/or collaborative research with other fellows

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Describing Specific Research Projects
Research Training Activities and Appendix C, RFA pgs. 33, 47-49

When describing the specific research projects that fellows will have access to as part of their research apprenticeships…

- Discuss what fellows will learn from their work on the grant projects.

- Elaborate both the topical and methodological focus of each project and how these support the focus of the training program.

- Include a **required** summary table in Appendix C of the ongoing education research projects for which core faculty serve as PIs or Co-PIs and fellows may work on.

- Include **required** Letters of Agreement from key personnel and institutions that are providing research apprenticeship experiences.

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Describing Policymaker/Practitioner Apprenticeships

Research Training Activities & Letters of Agreement, RFA pgs. 33, 49

You should describe:

- Requirements for apprenticeship and practicum experiences with practitioners and/or policymakers

- Specific opportunities for fellows to work directly with local and state education agencies, consortiums, etc.

- The practitioner/policymaker partnerships that will be involved

- How these opportunities overlap the research requirements (if applicable)

Note: You **must** provide Letters of Agreement from these partners in Appendix E.

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Career Development Activities

Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

Career development activities should support the fellows' transition to their next positions after the fellowship at institutions such as

– Institutions of higher education

– Research institutions

– National, state, regional, local and other educational agencies

– Postsecondary educational systems

– Policy organizations

– Other education-focused organizations, including technology firms, small businesses, and non-profits

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Other Training Activities
Research Training Activities, RFA pg. 33

You should describe:

– Any other activities as appropriate

– How these activities will develop fellows' knowledge, skills, and abilities.

– How the program will monitor the activities' contribution to the fellows' professional development.

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Education Sciences Certificate

Various Sections, RFA pgs. 28, 29, 31, 34-35, 39

Your institution **must** establish an Education Sciences Certificate (a formal credential reflecting the fellows' work in the field of education sciences)

You should describe:

- Requirements for receiving the certificate.
- Procedure for establishing the certificate

Note: In Appendix E, you **must** include a letter of agreement from your Institution agreeing to establish/award the Certificate.

Tracking Fellows' Progress

Research Training Plan, RFA pgs. 31, 34

In the Training plan, you **must** include a description of how you will measure fellow's progress toward meeting the program's and his/her own goals.

You should describe how the program:

- Will identify fellows' strengths and weaknesses (and how to address them).
- Will assess and document whether fellows have made satisfactory progress (in order to continue to receive their fellowship awards).

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Evaluating the Predoctoral Training Program

You **must** also include a plan to evaluate the success of the program itself.

Basic measures

- Did you recruit the type of fellows you intended to?

- Did they complete their training? Receive Education Science Certificate? Receive their doctorates? Obtain employment in education research? Publish?

More complex measures

- Analysis of cost per fellow training year including recruitment efforts.

- Assessments of how well fellows have learned the skills that were taught and how well they progressed toward being independent researchers?

Other potential measures

- Self-defined measures that you value as signs of a program's success (should be aligned to the program goals mentioned in the Significance section).

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Personnel and Resources

Describing Key Personnel

Personnel, RFA pgs. 29, 31, 34-35

You **must** describe all key personnel on the project team

- Identify all key personnel, including the PI, any Co-PIs, program coordinator (if there is one), and core faculty (including research apprenticeship supervisors and mentors).

- Describe relevant expertise of key personnel, their responsibilities, and time commitments to the program.

- Elaborate on how their expertise aligns with goals of the program and specific responsibilities, and how their expertise reflects the content and methodological foci of the Training

- Demonstrate that the core faculty have the ability and commitment to conduct research of the type funded by NCER. In the narrative you should describe the "collective expertise" of the faculty

Note: You **must** include Letters of Agreement from key personnel in Appendix E.

Describing Resources

Resources and Appendix E, RFA pgs. 31, 35,48-49

You **must** describe the institutional resources you have access to and how these resources will support the program.

- Institutional resources (overall and participating departments)
- Specific resources fellows will have for conducting research and collaborating with practitioners and policymakers.

Note: You **must** include Letters of Agreement in Appendix E from the University, participating departments (colleges, etc.) and outside institutions that provide opportunities for research and/or collaborations with practitioners and policymakers.

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Training Program Support Costs

Award Limits and Additional Paramenters, RFA pgs. 28, 35-36, 54

When developing your training program, keep in mind that you may request up to **$1,372,000 total** for training program support, including

- – Indirect Costs (limited to 8%, see RFA pg. 54)

- – Travel to Annual PI meeting in DC (required)

- – PI/Co-PI Salary (2 months maximum per year)

- – Program Coordinator Salary (up to 12 months per year)

- – Salary Support for Curriculum Development (5 months total)

- – Salary Support for New Faculty Member (1/2 salary per year)

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Training Program Support Costs, cont.

Additional Parameters, RFA pg. 36

Program support may also include funds for:

– Support for the Policy/Practitioner apprenticeship

– Short-Term Visiting Faculty

– Guest Speakers or Trainers

– Workshops, Colloquia, and Seminars

– Fellow Recruitment

– Tracking of Fellows Progress & Program Success

– Training program website

– Cooperative activities with other IES-funded training programs

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General Restrictions on Use of Funds

Additional Parameters and Special Considerations, RFA pgs. 36, 54

Grant funds **may not** be used to support:

- Faculty research
- Faculty salaries for purposes outside the limited set of personnel expenditures allowed
- Facility construction, renovation, or maintenance
- Food, refreshments, and entertainment

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Next Steps

Import Dates and Deadlines

Application Deadline (Grants.gov)	Letter of Intent Due Date (iesreview.ed.gov)	Application Package Posted (Grants.gov)	Start Dates
11:59:59 Eastern Time on March 7, 2025	December 12, 2024	November 14, 2024	September 1, 2025

Submitting an LOI

LOIs are non-binding, optional documents that tend to be about a page or so long.
https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit

LOIs contain seven elements:

1. Descriptive title
2. Research Training Program topic
3. Brief description
4. Name and contact information for PI and Co-PIs
5. Name and affiliation of other key collaborators
6. Duration of the project
7. Estimated total budget

If you miss the **Dec. 12th** LOI due date, reach out to the program officer to receive feedback on your proposed idea.

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Working with Program Officers

To contact a program officer
– Submit an optional letter of intent
– Email a synopsis
– Email short questions

Program Officers can
– respond to questions
– discuss LOIs
– discuss ideas
– provide feedback on drafts of applications
– discuss peer reviewer comments and provide feedback on how to respond to reviewers if resubmitting

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For Questions and More Information

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