Research Training Programs in Special Education

CFDA Number: 84.324B

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Product of the National Center for Special Education Research

Letter of Intent Due:	June 11, 2020	https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit
Application Package Available:	June 11, 2020	https://www.grants.gov/
IES Submission Guide Available:	April 1, 2020	https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf
Application Deadline:	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 20, 2020	https://www.grants.gov/
Possible Start Dates:	July 1 - September 1, 2021	

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Part I: Overview and General Requirements

A. Purpose of the Research Training Programs in Special Education

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides scientific evidence to improve education practice and policy and shares that evidence in a way that can be used by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. Within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) sponsors research (1) to expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities in order to improve their developmental, educational, and transitional outcomes; and (2) to improve services provided under, and support the implementation of, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

In this Request for Applications (RFA), IES invites applications for the Research Training Programs in Special Education (Training) (CFDA 84.324B).

For FY 2021, IES is accepting applications under two programs:
- [Early Career Development and Mentoring](#) (Early Career)
- [Methods Training for Special Education Research](#) (Methods Training)

IES training programs prepare individuals to conduct special education and early intervention research that advances knowledge within the field and addresses issues important to education policymakers and practitioners. The Early Career program builds the next generation of special education and early intervention researchers. The Methods Training program supports training of current special education and early intervention researchers to expand and upgrade their methodological skills.

Separate funding announcements are available that pertain to other discretionary grant competitions funded through the National Center for Special Education Research (https://ies.ed.gov/ncser) and the National Center for Education Research (https://ies.ed.gov/ncer). An overview of IES research grant programs is available at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/overview.asp.

All applications for the FY 2021 Training programs are expected to address, where appropriate, the IES-wide Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER), which include pre-registering studies; focusing on outcomes meaningful to student success; documenting intervention implementation to inform use in other settings; identifying core intervention components; analyzing costs; facilitating generalization of study findings; making research findings, methods, and data available to others; and supporting the future scaling of interventions. Additional information about the SEER standards is available on the IES website (https://ies.ed.gov/seer). Expectations regarding SEER for each of the training programs are detailed in the sections below.

B. General Requirements

1. Programs

Your application **must** be directed to one of the two training programs listed below and meet the requirements set out for the relevant program as described in [Part II](#) in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

The **Early Career** program provides support for an integrated research and career development plan for investigators in the early stages of their academic careers who have established an interest in special education research, with the ultimate aim of launching independent research careers focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities. The award will provide support for research (including salary for protected time to conduct research) and career development that includes training under the guidance of an experienced mentor or mentors.

The **Methods Training** program funds programs to help current education researchers maintain and enhance their research and analysis skills in order to conduct rigorous and relevant research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities.

2. Award Limits

Applications **must** conform to the following limits on award duration and cost for the specific training program.

Program	Maximum Duration	Maximum Cost
Early Career	4 years	$700,000
Methods Training	3 years	$800,000

C. Getting Started

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES provides technical assistance to applicants that addresses the appropriateness of project ideas for this competition and methodological and other substantive issues concerning research and training. IES program officers work with applicants through a variety of formats up until the time of Grants.gov submission.

IES asks potential applicants to submit a letter of intent at https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit prior to the application submission deadline to facilitate communication with program officers and to plan for the scientific peer review process. Letters of intent are optional but strongly encouraged. If you submit a letter of intent, a program officer will contact you regarding your proposed research. IES staff also use the information in the letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the scientific peer review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

2. RFA Organization and the IES Application Submission Guide

In order to submit a compliant, responsive, and timely application, you will need to review two documents:

1. *This RFA* - to learn how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. Part I sets out the general requirements for your grant application. Part II provides further detail on the specific requirements and recommendations for each program. Part III provides information on formatting, the appendices, and other narrative content. Part IV describes competition regulations and review criteria. **Part V provides a checklist to help**

ensure you have included all required application elements to advance to scientific peer review. Part VI provides the program codes from which you must select and enter in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form.

2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) - for important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure your application is complete and received without errors on time through Grants.gov.

We strongly recommend that both the PI and the authorized organization representative (AOR) read both of these documents, whether submitting a new or revised application.

3. Ensuring Your Application is Forwarded for Scientific Peer Review

Only compliant and responsive applications received before the date and time deadline are peer reviewed for scientific merit. The PI and the AOR should work together to ensure that the application meets these criteria.

(a) On-time submission

See the separate IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf).
- Received and validated by Grants.gov **no later than** 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 20, 2020

(b) Compliance

- Includes the required training program narrative (see Part II)
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see Part III)
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the training program narrative and appendices. IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for peer review
- Includes all required appendices (see Part III)
  - Appendix A (All Applications)
  - Appendix B (Resubmissions Only)
  - Appendix C (All Applications)
  - Appendix D (Early Career Applications)
  - Appendix E (All Applications)

(c) Responsiveness

- Meets the general requirements (see Part I)
- Meets the relevant program requirements, including training program narrative requirements (see Part II)

D. Changes in the FY 2021 RFA

All applicants and staff involved in proposal preparation and submission, whether submitting a new or revised application, **should carefully read all relevant parts of this RFA**. Major changes to

the Training competition in FY 2021 are listed below and described fully in relevant sections of the RFA.

All Programs
- IES is not competing the Postdoctoral Training program in FY 2021. Only the Early Career and Methods Training programs will be competed in FY 2021.
- IES has page limits for the training program narrative and some appendices. If the training program narrative or an appendix exceeds the limits discussed in this RFA, IES will remove any pages after the maximum for the training program narrative or appendix. IES has also reinstituted formatting guidelines, as discussed in Part III, to which applicants must attend.
- IES understands that, due to institution and school closings associated with COVID-19, you may have difficulty providing letters from training partners or education settings that would participate in the proposed research. If you are unable to provide these letters in your application, include a description in Appendix E of why you were not able to obtain letters and your plan for securing them if your application is recommended for funding. **NOTE:** Special conditions may be placed on the grant awards if these letters are not received before the award date. Reviewers will be instructed not to penalize applicants for failure to include these letters of agreement due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Eary Career Program
- The maximum award amount has been increased to $700,000.
- IES has made several major changes to the FY 2021 Special Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.324A) competition that are relevant for applications to the Early Career program, including to the topic structure and the requirements and recommendations for cost analyses. These changes are described in more detail in the 84.324A RFA, which can be accessed at https://ies.ed.gov/funding.
- Early Career applications will be reviewed on six criteria – Significance, Research Plan, Career Development Plan, Personnel, Resources, and Dissemination.

Methods Training Program
- The maximum award amount has been increased to $800,000.
- In previous years, IES has specified the training topic. This year, applicants can propose to provide training on any method that is important for researchers conducting rigorous and relevant research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities. However, IES will not accept applications to conduct training on single-case design, as a training program focused on single-case design was funded in FY 2020.
- Methods Training applications will be reviewed on five criteria – Significance, Research Training Plan, Personnel, Resources, and Dissemination.

Part II: Program Requirements and Recommendations

For the FY 2021 Research Training Programs, you must submit to one of the two programs described in this section. The programs differ by eligible applicants, individuals being trained, the training to be provided, and the outcomes expected. You must identify your chosen program on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance form (Item 4b) of the Application Package (see Part VI for a list of program codes; for more information on the SF-424 form, see the IES Application Submission Guide at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf).If you do not chose the appropriate program code, IES may reject your application as nonresponsive to the requirements of this RFA.

For each training program, refer to the following:
- **The Purpose section** for the types of research training supported under each program
- **The Requirements section** for the specific content that you must address in the training program narrative in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review
- **The Award Limits section** for duration and cost maximums and additional parameters
- **The Recommendations for a Strong Application section** for recommendations to improve the quality of your application. The scientific peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of the quality of your application. IES strongly encourages you to incorporate the recommendations into your training program narrative and relevant appendices. Where appropriate, recommendations are aligned with the SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer) to ensure that research is transparent, actionable, and focused on meaningful outcomes that have the potential to dramatically improve education.

Each program name is linked to a page on the IES website where you can find more information and view abstracts of previously funded projects.

IES strongly encourages you to contact the program officer listed under each program if you have questions regarding the appropriateness of a project for submission under a specific program.

A. Early Career Development and Mentoring

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. (202-245-6716; Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)

1. Purpose

The Early Career program (https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/program.asp?ProgID=79) supports grants that prepare researchers to conduct rigorous and relevant early intervention and special education research. The intention is to support investigators in the early stages of their academic careers who are addressing issues that are important to learners with or at risk for disabilities, their families, practitioners, and policymakers and to prepare them to submit competitive proposals for IES research grant competitions.

Under the Early Career program, investigators complete an integrated research and career development plan with guidance from experienced mentors. By the end of the Early Career grant, investigators should be prepared to collaborate with education stakeholders to conduct the type of research that IES funds. Additional accomplishments may include:
- Conducting a project that addresses the applicable SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer)
- Taking on leadership roles related to special education or early intervention research
- Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with districts, schools, and/or education practitioners
- Developing research products that are of use to practitioners and policymakers in improving outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities
- Disseminating findings that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and theory in special education or early intervention and that have practical implications for education practitioners and policymakers
- Submitting a federal research grant to continue research undertaken as part of the Early Career award

2. Requirements

Applications under the Early Career program **must** meet the requirements set out under (a) Principal Investigator, (b) Mentors, (c) Focus on Children and Youth With or At Risk for Disabilities, and (d) Training Program Narrative in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

(a) Principal Investigator (PI)

Your institution is responsible for identifying the PI on a grant application. The PI is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the training, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports.

The early career researcher **must** be the sole PI. No other PIs or Co-PIs may be identified.

The PI **must** have completed a doctoral degree or postdoctoral program no earlier than April 1, 2017 and no later than the start of the award period. Please note that IES will use the date on which the University granted your doctoral degree. For example, if you defended your dissertation on March 25, 2017, but your university granted the degree on April 2, 2017, you would be eligible to apply.

The PI **must** hold a tenure-track position or research scientist position (not a visiting faculty or adjunct position) at an institution of higher education or must have accepted an offer for such a position to begin before the start of the award. In the latter case, you must include a letter of support in [Appendix E](#) from the future home institution indicating that an offer has been made and accepted. The position must be a regular, salaried position paid by the institution of higher education without a focus on training (not a postdoctoral fellowship).

The following eligibility criteria will not be used in determining responsiveness, but if an application is recommended for funding, the PI must meet the following criteria:
- The PI **must** be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.
- The PI **must** not have served as a PI or Co-PI on a research grant from IES.

The PI may be from a variety of relevant disciplines and fields in addition to special education provided that the focus of their research and mentoring is in the field of early intervention or special education for learners with or at risk for disabilities. Such fields may include general education, human development, political science, psychology, sociology, and statistics.

(b) Mentors

Training **must** be provided under the guidance of a mentor. One mentor should be designated as the primary mentor. Applicants may have co-mentors depending on their training needs and location. The term "mentors" includes both primary and co-mentors.

Mentors may be from academic or nonacademic institutions, such as nonprofit and for-profit organizations or public and private agencies, that conduct rigorous special education or early intervention research.

At least one mentor (primary or co-mentor) **must** be at the PI's home institution.

Mentors **must** include only individuals who have not served as the PI's primary graduate school advisor, dissertation advisor, or postdoctoral supervisor. A faculty member who served on a dissertation committee but did not have a direct advisor-advisee relationship with the PI is eligible to serve as a mentor.

(c) Focus on Children and Youth with or At Risk for Disabilities

Research supported under the Early Career program **must** focus on children and/or youth with or at risk for disabilities and/or families, educators, or other professionals who support the development and education of these individuals.

For the purpose of this RFA, a child or youth with a disability is defined in Public Law 108-446 (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-I/1401). *Risk* for a disability is identified on an individual basis. You should clearly identify the disability or disability categories that your sample is at risk of developing and present research-based evidence of an association between risk factors in your proposed sample and the potential identification of specific disabilities.

The determination of risk may include, for example, factors used for moving learners to higher tiers in a Response to Intervention model. Evidence consisting only of general population characteristics such

as labeling learners as "at risk for disabilities" because they are from low-income families or are English language learners is not sufficient for this purpose.

(d) Training Program Narrative

The training program narrative must adhere to the formatting guidelines (see Part III) and be no more than 25 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 25th page of the narrative. The training program narrative for an Early Career application **must** include five sections - Significance, Research Plan, Career Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

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

(1) Significance
The purpose of this section is to explain why the proposed research and career development plans are important.

You **must**
- Describe your need for further career development.
- Provide an overview of the proposed research project.
- Identify a research topic and project type from the table below and the rationale for your selected topic and project type. The topic specifies the primary focus of your research and the project type identifies the type and purpose of the work you will do. In general, the cost maximums may not be sufficient for conducting rigorous efficacy studies. However, there may be instances, given characteristics of the intervention research methods, where these studies are possible. For instance, the intervention being evaluated is short-term and inexpensive and/or the evaluation utilizes data from administrative records.[1]

Research Topics	Project Types
1. Cognition and Student Learning	1. Measurement
2. Early Intervention and Early Learning	2. Exploration
3. Educators and School-Based Service Providers	3. Development and Innovation
4. Families of Children with Disabilities	4. Initial Efficacy and Follow-Up
5. Reading, Writing, and Language	5. Replication
6. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	
7. Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Competence	
8. Systems, Policy, and Finance	
9. Transition to Postsecondary Education, Career, and/or Independent Living	

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[1] For more information on the topics and project types, see the Request for Applications for the Special Education Research Grants (84.324A) and, if applicable, the Research Grants Focused on Systematic Replication in Special Education (84.324R) available here: https://ies.ed.gov/funding/.

(2) Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe the aims and methodology for the proposed research.

Please note that certain aspects on which the PI proposes to receive additional training, such as the research design and/or data analysis plan, may be described in less detail compared to proposals submitted to the Special Education Research Grants competition. IES anticipates that there will be further development of these plans based on the PI's training experiences and guidance from the mentor(s).

You **must**
- Describe the research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data analysis procedures.
- Measure one or more of the following learner outcomes that support student success in school and afterwards:
  - **Developmental:** cognitive, communicative, linguistic, social, emotional, adaptive, functional, and/or physical development
  - **School readiness:** pre-reading, language, vocabulary, early STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics) knowledge, and social and behavioral competencies (including self-regulation and executive function)
  - **Literacy:** reading, language, and/or writing
  - **STEM:** science (including computer science), technology, engineering, and/or mathematics
  - **Social/Emotional/Behavioral**: social skills, attitudes, behaviors, and mental health important to learners' education and post-school success
  - **Functional**: behaviors and skills across domains that children need to participate in developmentally appropriate routines and activities in the context of everyday living
  - **Secondary/Transition:** persistence and completion of high school course credits in content areas, high school graduation, certificates, and successful transition from high school to work settings, independent living, or postsecondary education and training
  - **Postsecondary**: access to, persistence in, progress through, and completion of postsecondary education; or learning, achievement, and higher order thinking in postsecondary courses. In addition to these outcomes, applicants should consider employment and earnings outcomes such as hours of employment, job stability, wages, and benefits.

(3) Career Development Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe the process for mentoring and additional training. The Career Development Plan should not focus on activities that are expected of any early career researcher, such as attending and presenting at conferences. Training plans should go beyond the typical career development activities expected of every new research scientist/assistant professor.

You **must** describe a training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities to extend your expertise.

(4) Personnel

The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise, responsibilities, and time commitments of the PI, mentor(s), and any other personnel.

You **must**
- Describe your expertise as the PI as well as the expertise of your mentor(s) and, if applicable, other personnel, such as consultants.
- Specify the date on which you were granted your doctoral degree and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program.
- Specify the names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if relevant) the postdoctoral supervisor in order to demonstrate that the mentors have not served as your primary graduate school or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral supervisor.

(5) Resources
The purpose of this section is to describe the institutional resources to support the PI in successfully completing this project and disseminating the results.

You **must** describe the resources to support you in conducting the proposed project.

3. Award Limits

Awards made under the Early Career program **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

(a) Duration Maximums

The maximum duration of an Early Career award is 4 years.

(b) Cost Maximums

The maximum award for an Early Career project is $700,000 (total cost = direct + indirect). See the discussion of indirect cost rate for training grants in Part IV.

4. Recommendations for a Strong Application

These recommendations are intended to improve the quality of your application and the peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

(a) Significance

Describe the specific issue or problem your work will address, including its overall importance to education stakeholders, such as practitioners and policymakers, and how its resolution will contribute to the improvement of learner education outcomes.

Describe the research study, including its theoretical and empirical rationale and practical importance.

Describe current typical practice and its identified shortcomings in your area of research, and how the results of this work will inform the next step in the research process, such as the future development of an intervention or assessment or evaluation of an intervention.

Describe the progression from your prior research to the research that will occur over the award period to the line of independent research that you will develop.

Describe your current levels of knowledge and skills, the proposed career development activities (mentoring and training activities) aimed at enhancing your knowledge and skills, and how these career development activities will lead to the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the proposed research activities.

(b) Research Plan

Describe the aims of the research project, including, as appropriate, your specific research question(s) and hypotheses. The RFAs for the Special Education Research Grants (84.324A) and, if applicable, the Research Grants Focused on Systematic Replication in Special Education (84.324R) may be helpful for determining the types of research activities that would be appropriate under your specified project type.

Propose a research plan that is feasible to carry out within the context of an Early Career grant and provide a justification for its feasibility.

Describe how you will address the SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer) that are relevant for your particular project type.

(1) Research Design
Describe a research design that is directly linked to your research questions.

Provide a level of detail that aligns with your expertise and proposed training activities. For example, if your career development plan includes training in single-case experimental design, IES would not expect a detailed description of the design requirements. However, you should describe the type of single-case design you propose to conduct and how it is an appropriate design to address your research questions.

(2) Sample
Describe your sample, what population it represents, its size, and its relation to addressing the overall aims of the project.

Describe your criteria for defining disability or risk for disability.

Although the focus of your research must be on learners with or at risk for disabilities, learners without disabilities may be included in your sample if appropriate for your research questions. For example, learners without disabilities may be part of the comparison population or part of your research sample for assessment development and validation.

(3) Setting
Describe the setting where your research will take place.

Education for children and youth with disabilities in the U.S. is delivered in a wide range of settings, including homes, natural settings for early childhood special education services, childcare centers, preschools, public and private K-12 schools and alternative schools and settings (such as juvenile justice and residential treatment facilities), and colleges/universities. In addition, there are also formal programs under the control of education agencies that take place outside of school including after-school, distance learning, or online programs. IES does not support research that occurs in informal

contexts outside of U.S. education systems.

(4) Measures
Describe the measures you will most likely use to assess variables of interest, including learner outcomes.

Include information about the reliability and validity of your proposed measures.

If extant data will be used, name and describe the dataset(s), including the measures that will be used for analyses. If applicable, note whether a restricted use license is held or if you plan to obtain one.

(5) Data Analysis
Explain your proposed analyses and how they will address your research questions.

The level of detail in the data analysis plan should align with your expertise and proposed training activities. For example, if you have expertise in analyzing data from single-case experimental designs, IES would expect a detailed description of the approach to analyzing this data. On the other hand, if your career development plan includes additional training on analyzing data from single-case experimental designs, IES would not expect a detailed description of the analytic approach.

(6) Timeline
Provide a timeline for each step in your project including, where applicable, such actions as sample selection and assignment, the development process, validation activities, data collection, data analysis, cost analysis, and dissemination. The timeline may be discussed in the training program narrative and/or presented in [Appendix F].

(c) Career Development Plan

Describe your training goals and how the activities and mentors will help you reach these goals.

Specify how the mentors will guide you through the process of refining and implementing your research plan. Also describe how your mentors will aid you in acquiring new expertise and guide your development as a scholar. Mentoring activities may include regular meetings (primary mentors are expected to communicate with PIs at least once per month); review of your career development plan; and additional guidance that will be useful for your development as a scientist, including reviews of manuscripts for publication, development of grant applications, and development of a plan to disseminate results to a wide range of audiences.

Describe a plan for coordinating mentoring activities among the mentors if there are co-mentors.

Describe your planned training activities and specify whether they are campus-based or external to your home institution. For example, these might include a summer institute, a grant-writing workshop, and/or an advanced statistical course .

Describe how your career development plan will equip you to meet SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer), as appropriate.

Describe how the content and timing of activities in your career development plan are integrated with

the research plan. A timeline may be discussed in the training program narrative and/or presented in Appendix F.

(d) Personnel

Describe your qualifications to be the PI, specifying your accomplishments and experience conducting research related to learners with or at risk for disabilities.

Specify the percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) you will devote to the project. Explain how you will have time to conduct your proposed research and accomplish your training plan given your other responsibilities as a faculty member. IES anticipates that you will allocate a minimum of 20% and maximum of 50% of calendar year time to manage your research training project, with the specific amount depending on your course load and other sources of salary funding.

Describe the qualifications of your mentors, their proposed roles in training, and how their expertise reflects the specific topic and/or project type you have identified.
- Identify which mentor is the primary mentor if there is more than one mentor.
- Include mentors with appropriate expertise in research with learners with or at risk for disabilities, and/or their families or educators.
- If proposing multiple mentors, include mentors with a variety of areas of expertise. For instance, one mentor may have expertise in the relevant content area and the other may have expertise in another aspect of your proposed research plan, such as the statistical methods.
- Specify a mentor at your home institution who can help guide your career development there (for example, by helping you navigate the institution's procedures for grant submission) as well as provide additional content and/or methodological expertise.
- Describe your mentors' prior experiences mentoring early career researchers (including faculty or postdoctoral fellows).
- Summarize the special education research projects conducted by the mentors, including their role on the project (PI, Co-PI, Co-I, consultant), brief description of the research project and the methods used, and the funding source (if applicable).

Describe the time commitments of your mentors for your project. For instance, specify the anticipated number (and length) of meetings per month as well as the amount of time to be devoted to other mentoring activities (such as reviewing your career development plan, manuscripts for publication, grant applications, research materials, and dissemination products).

Describe other personnel (if applicable), including their proposed roles, qualifications, and time commitments. Other personnel, such as consultants, can be used to provide support on specific aspects of your research plan or to fill gaps in your mentorship and training (for example, by providing consultation on statistical analyses). These personnel should have unique and specific roles that are different from those served by the mentors.

For all personnel, describe their experience disseminating research findings to a range of audiences, including in peer-reviewed scientific journals, to policymaker and practitioner audiences, and marketing products for students with or at risk for disabilities.

(e) Resources

Describe your institution's capacity to support early career researchers in managing grants and monitoring spending.

Describe your instiitution's experience supporting early career researchers through training workshops, seminars, and/or discussion groups with senior researchers.

Describe any facilities, such as computers or labs, and resources for new faculty, such as "start-up packages," provided by your institution that are relevant for the successful completion of the project.

Describe your access to resources available at your mentor's institution, if different from your own, to support your research, your training, or both.

Describe your plans for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project, such as equipment, test materials, curricula, or training materials.

Describe your resources, including access to specific offices and organizations, to carry out your plans to disseminate results as described in the required dissemination plan in Appendix A.

5. Additional Budget Parameters

The following requirements for Early Career applications will not be used in determining responsiveness to the RFA, but applications recommended for funding will be required to adjust their budgets, if necessary, to meet these requirements before receiving grant funds.

The budget should include the costs of conducting the proposed research and executing the career development plan. This may include such costs as research and administrative staff salary, research supplies and equipment, participant compensation, local travel for data collection, and registration for training workshops or institutes.

The budget may also include the following:
- Up to 50% of the PI's salary to be used for academic year support and/or summer salary.
- **Up to $5,000 per year for mentors**. If there are co-mentors, this maximum allowable sum must be divided among all the mentors. Institutions may have different ways for allocating $5,000 across mentors. Mentors may be compensated using honoraria, salary including fringe benefits, or cost sharing or in-kind contributions. Regardless of compensation method, the Federal government contribution cannot exceed $5,000. Although in-kind contributions and cost sharing are allowed, they are not taken into consideration during the review of the application, nor do they influence the funding decision.
- Funding for travel, including to the annual IES PI Meeting, for the PI or mentor(s) to meet, for professional research conferences, and for specialized training workshops available through other entities (such as summer institutes in methodology or statistical analysis).

Grant funds **must not** be used for the following:
- Facility construction, renovation, or maintenance
- Support for graduate students beyond their direct work on the grant. For example, grant funds

should not be used to support graduate student research or travel to conferences
- Mentors' research

B. Methods Training for Special Education Research

Program Officer: Katherine (Katie) Taylor, Ph.D. (202-245-6716; Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)

1. Purpose

The Methods Training program (https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/program.asp?ProgID=96) supports the training of current education researchers to maintain and enhance their research and analysis skills in order to conduct rigorous and relevant research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities. Supported training should respond to the ongoing development and adaptation of methods concerning the design of early intervention and special education studies, analysis of the data collected, and practical interpretation and dissemination of the results.

IES is not specifying the methodologies to be addressed. However, applications to provide training in the following areas are encouraged:
- Designing and evaluating adaptive interventions using sequential, multiple assignment, randomized trial (SMART) designs
- Designing and analyzing mixed methods studies that include group design, single-case design, and qualitative studies
- Conducting syntheses that include group design and single-case design studies
- Using digital learning platforms to conduct and replicate interventions to identify what best improves student learning and identify for which types of students those improvements are most likely to occur
- Engaging in open science practices to ensure research transparency and accessibility of early intervention and special education research
- Designing, conducting, and analyzing replication studies of early intervention or special education interventions

In FY 2021, IES will not accept applications to conduct training related to single-case design.

You may also propose training in other methods and should document the need for the training and how it will advance the field. IES is interested in projects that provide researchers with targeted, relevant training they can immediately apply in their work rather than supporting broad methodological education of the type provided by certificate or degree programs.

IES encourages you to provide methods training opportunities for researchers at minority-serving institutions[2] in order to increase the capacity of their faculty and other research staff to carry out rigorous education research and to prepare participants for more advanced training.[3]

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[2] Minority-serving institutions (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html) include Alaska Native-Serving Institutions; American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities; Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; Hispanic-Serving Institutions; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Minority Institutions; Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions; Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions; and Predominantly Black Institutions.
[3] For an example, see the 2014 Research Design Workshop for Faculty from Minority-Serving Institutions hosted by Michigan State University and Northwestern University as part of their IES grant (R305U110001) to conduct training on randomized control trials: https://ies.ed.gov/ncer/whatsnew/conferences/14MSIworkshop/.

2. Requirements

Applications under the Methods Training program must meet the requirements set out under (a) Eligible Applicants and (b) Training Program Narrative in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

(a) Eligible Applicants

(1) Applying Institution
Applicants located in the territorial United States that have the ability and capacity to conduct training in scientific research methods are eligible to apply.

An applying institution may hold more than one award from IES and may submit more than one application as long as each actual or proposed training program addresses a different issue and includes a different set of key personnel.

(2) Principal Investigator (PI)
The institution is responsible for identifying the PI on a grant application and may elect to designate more than one person to serve in this role. The PI is the individual who has the authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of the research, including the appropriate use of federal funds and the submission of required scientific progress reports.

If more than one PI is named, the institution identifies these PIs as sharing the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically. All PIs will be listed on any grant award notification. However, institutions applying for funding must designate a single point of contact for the project. The role of this person is primarily for communication purposes on the scientific and related budgetary aspects of the project and should be listed as the PI. All other PIs should be listed as Co-PIs.

(b) Training Program Narrative

The training program narrative must adhere to the formatting guidelines (see Part III) and be no more than 20 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 20ᵗʰ page of the narrative. The training program narrative for a Methods Training application **must** include four sections – Significance, Research Training Plan, Personnel, and Resources.

(1) Significance
The purpose of this section is to describe the focus of your training program (the methodological training to be provided) and justify why this focus is important to improving early intervention and special education research and practice.

You **must** describe
- The specific methodologies that will be the focus of your training program
- The intended participants

(2) Research Training Plan
The purpose of this section is to describe the training to be provided, including recruitment for and outcomes of the training.

You **must** describe
- A recruitment plan
- The training content, format, and activities
- A plan for determining the success of the training program

(3) Personnel

The purpose of this section is to describe the relevant expertise of your research team, the responsibilities of each team member, and the time commitments of each team member.

You **must** describe all key personnel on the project team, including the PI, any Co-PIs, and other trainers.

Applications **must** name the experts in specific methodologies who will provide the training.

Applications that propose to hire methods experts once the grant is received will be considered non-responsive to the RFA and not forwarded for scientific peer review.

(4) Resources

The purpose of this section is to describe your institutional resources to conduct the training program and provide opportunities for non-participants to access the training.

You **must** describe the institutional resources of both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions.

3. Awards

Awards made under the Methods Training program **must** conform to the following limits on duration and cost:

(a) Duration Maximums

The maximum duration of a Methods Training project is 3 years.

(b) Cost Maximums

The maximum award for a Methods Training project is $800,000 (total cost = direct costs + indirect costs). See the discussion of indirect cost rate for training grants in Part IV.

4. Recommendations for a Strong Application

These recommendations are intended to improve the quality of your application and the peer reviewers are asked to consider these recommendations in their evaluation of your application.

(a) Significance

Detail the specific methods that the training will teach and their importance to improving early intervention and special education research and/or the use of research in practice. When applicable, note which SEER principles (https://ies.ed.gov/seer) are aligned with the focus of the training.

Describe the type of participants that you intend to recruit, noting their field of work and pre-existing skills and expertise.
- Justify why this is an important group to train in these methods.
- Discuss the importance of these methods for the work of the expected participants.
- Note the number of participants to be trained and whether there will be one or multiple cohorts of participants.

Identify any existing sources from which potential participants could currently obtain the training you propose and how your training will be different from or supplement these resources.

Provide a conceptual framework that ties together the training needs of the participants to be recruited, the training to be provided, the specific skills and knowledge that participants will acquire, and how the skills and knowledge will improve participants' ability to carry out their work.

(b) Research Training Plan

(1) Recruitment Plan, Eligibility Requirements, and Selection Criteria
Discuss how the recruitment plan addresses the type of participants you intend to recruit, as described in the Significance section.
- The focus of the Methods Training is on participants who have received their doctorate prior to beginning the training and are currently working on research in early intervention, education, and/or special education.
- Eligibility is limited to citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

Describe how you will announce the training opportunity and how you will specifically target education, special education, and early intervention research communities (training cannot be restricted to only the members/employees of a specific organization).

Discuss your strategies for recruiting individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the field of education research (for example, racial/ethnic minorities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, veterans, individuals with disabilities).

Describe the eligibility criteria for participants and the application process.

Describe the selection criteria, how these will be applied to the applicants, and who will make the decisions regarding admission to the training. Discuss how you will make the selection process fair and avoid any appearances of conflict of interest.

Provide a timeline (either in the Research Training Plan section or Appendix F) delineating when the expected recruitment and training of each participant will take place. **NOTE:** The training should be provided at least once in each year of the project. Methods Training projects can start between July 1 and September 1, 2021.

(2) Training Activities
Detail the format of the training and identify the number of participants to be included.

Discuss how the proposed format provides the training in a cost-efficient way.

Describe how the training structure and delivery are organized to reflect adult learning theories. For example, training should engage participants in activities that are relevant and timely, linked to their work, and applicable to the real-world problems of their field.

Note whether the format of the training is intended to build networks among the participants and, if so, how joint learning and collaboration will be encouraged both during the training and afterwards.

Describe the specific training activities for the methods you are teaching. For example, training activities could include lectures or webinars, readings and discussion, small group or individual applications of the methods, and opportunities to consult with experts.

Describe the specific content to be taught within each activity and how it will develop the expected knowledge, skills, and abilities in the participants.

Identify who will lead each activity and how long it will last (a detailed syllabus should be provided in Appendix F).

Indicate whether participants will bring a specific research issue to work on during the training or will work on developing a plan to further their understanding of the method.

(3) Tracking Participants' Progress and Program Success
Discuss how you will identify the strengths and needs of participants upon their entry to the program and how you will provide opportunities for participants to apply their strengths and address their needs.

Describe how you plan to solicit and respond to feedback from participants.

Describe the measures you will use to determine that the training program is developing researchers who can use the methods taught.

Describe how you will estimate the cost of training per participant, including recruitment efforts.

(c) Personnel

Describe the PI's qualifications and experience for managing a research training grant.

Briefly describe the following for each key personnel:
- Qualifications and how these contribute to the focus of the training program
- Roles and responsibilities within the training program
- Percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) to be devoted to the training program
- Previous experience providing training for education researchers
- Expertise in disseminating information to a range of audiences. For example, if key personnel have previously received a Methods Training grant, discuss how training materials were made accessible to non-participants.

Discuss how the combined expertise of the key personnel reflects the methodological focus, format, and activities of the proposed training program.

(d) Resources

Describe your institutional capacity and experience to manage a training grant of this kind.

Describe your access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions.

Describe your plan for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project, such as equipment or training materials.

If applicable, describe your access to any datasets that you will require for training purposes.

Describe the success of and lessons learned from any previous Methods Training grants you or the other key personnel have had from IES (these are to be detailed in Appendix C).

Describe your resources to carry out your plan to provide opportunities for non-participants to have access to the training as described in the required dissemination plan in Appendix A.

5. Additional Budget Parameters and Application Requirements

The following requirements for Methods Training applications will not be used in determining responsiveness to the RFA, but applications recommended for funding will be required to adjust their plans and budgets, if necessary, to meet them before receiving grant funds.

The budget must include potential costs of accommodations for trainees with disabilities; for example, a sign language interpreter and/or assistive listening devices. These costs should be reasonable given the duration and format of the training and should be budgeted for each training.

Under the Methods Training program, you must certify that your training participants and the support you provide to them meet the following guidelines. Grant funds proposed to be expended on participants in ways that do not meet these guidelines will be disallowed (your institution will have to return such expended funds).

(a) Participant Characteristics

Training participants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

Training participants should have received their doctorate prior to beginning the training and are working in the field of early intervention, education, and/or special education research.

Participants' research must be relevant to education in the United States.

(b) Participant Support Costs

Methods Training participants and their institutions cannot receive financial recompense for attending a training program.

Participants are expected to cover their own travel costs; however, with IES approval, exceptions are permitted when participants are accepted to the training but lack travel funds.

Lodging and per diem can be covered by the grant but must not exceed federal government reimbursement rates for place and time of year (see https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287).

In general, grant funds may not be used to pay for food. However, under limited circumstances grant funds may be used to cover the costs of working lunches for attendees of training activities. If you are proposing to use grant funds for working lunches, you should include a clear description of the work to be accomplished during the meal as well as the per person cost. IES will determine whether these working lunch costs are allowable if the grant is awarded. Other meals or snacks should not be included in the grant budget.

Part III: Preparing Your Application

A. Overview

The application contents–individual forms and their PDF attachments–represent the body of an application to IES. IES encourages you to refer to the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for additional information about preparing to submit your application and ensuring your application is sufficient.

B. General Formatting

To ensure that reviewers can read your applications and that all applicants have similar expectations for length and space, IES specifies the following formatting conventions. Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements is necessary so that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using small type or by providing more text in their applications. These requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted, unless otherwise specified. In order for an application to be compliant and sent forward for review, the applicant should ensure that each narrative section follows both the page limit maximums and the formatting guidelines below unless otherwise specified.

1. Page and Margin Specifications

For all IES grant applications, a "page" is 8.5 in. x 11 in. on one side only with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

2. Page Numbering

Add page numbers using the header or footer function and place them at the bottom or upper right corner for ease of reading.

3. Spacing

Text must be single spaced.

4. Type Size (Font Size)

Type must conform to the following three requirements:
- The height of the letters must not be smaller than a type size of 12-point.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi.
- Type size must yield no more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch.

You should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. The type size used must conform to all three requirements. Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the application. Consequently, the use of small type will be grounds for IES to return the application without scientific peer review.

As a practical matter, if you use a 12-point Times New Roman font without compressing, kerning, condensing, or other alterations, the application will typically meet these requirements.

5. *Graphs, Diagrams, and Tables*

IES encourages you to use black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. If color is used, you should ensure that the material reproduces well when printed or photocopied in black and white.

Text in figures, charts, and tables, including legends, may be in a type size smaller than 12-point but must be readily legible.

C. Required and Optional Appendices

The required training program narrative that is described for each program (see Part II) is followed by several appendices. Some of these appendices are required and some are optional. When you submit your application through Grants.gov, you will create a single PDF file that *contains the training program narrative and all appendices* and include it as an attachment in the application package. Include appendices in alphabetical order and simply skip an appendix if it is not required for your application or if you choose not to include an optional appendix. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/).

1. *Appendix A (Required for All Training Programs)*

You must include Appendix A after the training program narrative. Appendix A **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages.** If Appendix A exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

All applications **must** include a dissemination plan in Appendix A.

(a) Early Career Program

In Appendix A, describe your plans to disseminate the findings from the project. Dissemination plans should be tailored to the audiences that may benefit from the findings and reflect the unique purpose of the particular project type.

Identify the audiences that you expect will be most likely to benefit from your research, such as federal policymakers and program administrators, state policymakers and program administrators, state and local school system administrators, school administrators, educators (including teachers and other school staff), parents, learners, and/or other education researchers.

Discuss the different ways in which you intend to reach these audiences through products, publications, and presentations.

Specify dissemination products and activities that reflect the purpose of your specified project type. For example, findings from Exploration projects are likely to be most useful in pointing out areas for further attention rather than providing proof or strong evidence for taking specific actions.

(b) Methods Training Program

In Appendix A, describe your plan to disseminate resources from the proposed training. Your dissemination plan should reflect the audiences that will benefit from the content and focus of your proposed training.

Identify the audiences that you expect will most likely benefit from your training and discuss the different ways in which you intend to reach these audiences through the materials, presentations, and products you expect to produce.

Discuss how the public will access your resources, whether the resources will be static or updated, and if updated, how frequently.

IES encourages the development of a website that includes the following:
- Video recordings of those portions of the training that may be of use to those not participating in the actual training (be it in person or online)
- The materials used in the training
- User-friendly manuals

The dissemination plan is the only information that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application.

2. Appendix B (Required for Resubmissions)

Appendix B **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages**. If Appendix B exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix B. Use Appendix B to describe how the revised application is responsive to prior reviewer comments.

If you have submitted a somewhat similar application in the past but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should use Appendix B to provide a rationale explaining why the current application should be considered a "new" application rather than a "resubmitted" application.

This response to the reviewers or justification to be considered a new application is the only information that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application.

3. Appendix C (Required for All Training Programs)

Appendix C **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix C exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

All applications **must** include Appendix C.

(a) Early Career Program

Appendix C must include a summary table of ongoing (and recently completed) special education research projects that you have conducted in addition to special education research projects conducted by your mentor(s). In the table, include the following for each project:
- PI and other key personnel
- Brief description, including the topic addressed and methods used
- Funding source
- Duration
- Outcomes and products

(b) Methods Training Program

Appendix C must include a summary table of ongoing (or recently completed) research projects of the key personnel that demonstrate the expertise of the personnel with the proposed methodology. In the table, include the following for each project:
- PI and other key personnel
- Brief description of the research project
- Brief explanation of where the project would fit within the IES research programs
- Funding source
- Duration
- Outcomes and products of the project
- Relevance to your Methods Training application

If the PI or any key personnel on this application have had or currently have an IES-funded Methods Training grant, you must also include a summary table of each training grant that contains the following information:
- Title and award number of the grant
- Key personnel who are key personnel on the current application
- Number of participants admitted to the program
- Number of participants who successfully completed the program
- Research methods learned by participants
- Participant ratings of the training program
- Results from the follow-up with participants

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix C; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

4. Appendix D (Required for the Early Career Program)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix D.

Applications for the Early Career program **must** include letters of agreement from the mentor(s), including the primary mentor and additional co-mentors, in Appendix D.

The letter(s) should include enough information to make it clear that the mentor understands the nature of the commitment of time, resources, and mentoring activities that will be required if the application is funded.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix D; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

5. Appendix E (Required for All Training Programs)

There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix E.

All applications **must** include Appendix E.

(a) Early Career Program

Appendix E **must** include a letter of agreement from <u>your institution</u>. The letter should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands and agrees to the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources that will be required if the application is funded. If you have not yet started your faculty or research scientist position by the due date of the application, you must ensure that the letter of support from your future institution clearly indicates that there has been an offer, an offer acceptance, and an agreed upon start date.

If applicable, include letters of agreement from <u>consultants</u>. These letters should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands and agrees to the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources that will be required if the application is funded.

To the extent possible, include letters of agreement from <u>partners, such as schools or districts and data sources, such as state agencies holding administrative data</u>. **IES understands that, due to school closings associated with COVID-19, you may have difficulty providing these letters as part of your application.**
- If you are unable to provide these letters in your application, include a description in Appendix E of why you were not able to obtain letters from your partners and your plan for securing these letters if your application is recommended for funding. **NOTE:** Special conditions may be placed on the grant awards if these letters are not received before the award date. Reviewers will be instructed not to penalize applicants for failure to include letters of agreement due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- If you are able to provide these letters in your application, ensure that the letters include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. A common reason for projects to fail is the loss of participating schools and districts. Letters of agreement regarding the provision of data should make it clear that the author of the letter will provide the data described in the application for use in the proposed research and in time to meet the proposed schedule.

(b) Methods Training Program

Appendix E **must** include the following letters of agreement:
- Letters of agreement from all key training personnel
- Letters of agreement from all institutions that will take part in providing training
- If applicable, letters of agreement, data licenses, or existing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in documenting access to any datasets to be used in the training

IES understands that, due to institution closings associated with COVID-19, you may have difficulty providing letters from partners who will take part in the training program. If you are unable to provide these letters in your application, include a description in Appendix E of why you were not able to obtain letters and your plan for securing them if your application is recommended for funding. **NOTE:** Special conditions may be placed on the grant awards if these letters are not received before the award date. Reviewers will be instructed not to penalize applicants for failure to include these letters of agreement due to the coronavirus pandemic.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix E; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

6. Appendix F (Optional for All Training Programs)

Appendix F **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than 15 pages**. If Appendix F exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15th page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

Appendix F is optional for all training programs.

(a) All Training Programs

Appendix F may include examples of training materials and tables/charts that support the training program narrative, such as a project timeline, syllabi, course descriptions, and/or a description of mentoring activities or seminars.

(b) Early Career Program

If you are proposing to explore, develop, evaluate, or validate an intervention or assessment, Appendix F may also include examples of curriculum materials, computer screen shots, assessment items, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment to be explored, developed, evaluated, or validated. You may also include figures, charts, tables (such as a timeline for your research and career development plans), or measures (including individual items, tests, surveys, and/or observation and interview protocols) used to collect data for your research project.

These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix F; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

D. Other Narrative Content

In addition to the training program narrative ([Part II](#)) and required and optional appendices (see above), you will also prepare a project summary/abstract, a bibliography and references cited, an exempt or non-exempt research on human subjects narrative (if applicable), and biographical sketches for key personnel to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition on Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/).

1. Project Summary/Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/abstract as a separate PDF attachment.

We recommend that the project summary/abstract be one-page long and include the following information:

Title: Distinct, descriptive title for the training program

Program: The RFA (Research Training Programs in the Special Education) and the program to which you are applying (for example, Early Career Development and Mentoring)

Desciption of the training:
- **For the Early Career program:** A brief description of the purpose of the project that addresses the research and career development plans; a brief description of the research plan including research questions/hypotheses, sample, intervention (if applicable), measures, and data analysis plan; and a brief description of the proposed training and mentoring activities
- **For the Methods Training program:** A brief description of the proposed training and its purpose, the expected number of researchers to be trained and the length/format of training, the specific training activities, and the expected outcomes

See the IES online search engine of funded research grants for examples of the content to be included in your project summary/abstract (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/index.asp).

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You **must** submit the bibliography and references cited as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. There is **no recommended page length** for the bibliography and references cited. You should include complete citations, including the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), titles of relevant elements such as the article/journal and chapter/book, page numbers, and year of publication for literature cited in the training program narrative.

3. Human Subjects Narrative (for Early Career Applications)

You **must** submit an exempt or non-exempt human subjects narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. There is **no recommended page length** for the human subjects narrative. See *Information About the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by the Department of Education* (https://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html) for a brief overview of principles, regulations, and policies which affect research involving human subjects in research activities supported by the Department of Education.

Note that the Revised Common Rule is now in effect with changes that will affect Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of your proposed research protocol. Take care to address how changes to exemption and continuing review procedures, and the use of a single IRB, will be addressed should your application be recommended for funding.

The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit your application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is recommended for funding, the designated U.S. Department of Education official

will request that you obtain and send the certification to the Department within 30 days of the formal request.

4. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel

You **must** submit a biographical sketch (an abbreviated CV plus information about current and pending support) for each person named as key personnel in your application. You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). Each biographical sketch with current and pending support information **must be no more than five pages in length** and follow the general formatting guidelines. If a biographical sketch exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

Biographical sketches are submitted as separate PDF attachments in the application package. IES strongly encourages applicants to use SciENcv (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/) where you will find an IES biosketch form. You may also develop your own biosketch format. If you use SciENcv, the information on current and pending support will be entered into the IES biosketch template. If you use your own format, you will need to provide this information in a separate table.

Be sure to include your ORCID number (Open Researcher and Contributor; https://orcid.org/) if you have one and consider establishing one if you have yet to do so.

The biographical sketch for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, and other key personnel should show how key personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience.

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, and other key personnel, along with the proportion of their time, expressed as percent **effort over a 12-month calendar year**, allocated to each project. Include the proposed IES grant as one of the pending grants in this list.

Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications (RFA) for the Early Career program and cooperative agreements pursuant to this RFA for the Methods Training program. Through the terms of the cooperative agreements, grantees will work with IES to plan and implement their activities.

2. Funding Available

Although IES intends to support the programs described in this announcement, all awards pursuant to this RFA are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of meritorious applications. IES makes its awards to the highest quality applications as determined through scientific peer review, regardless of program.

The size of the award depends on the program and scope of the project. Please attend to the duration and budget maximums set for each program. IES will not make an award exceeding the relevant maximum grant duration and/or award amount as set out below.

Program	Maximum Duration	Maximum Cost
Early Career	4 years	$700,000
Methods Training	3 years	$800,000

Under the Methods Training program, IES intends to award no more than one grant for training programs focused on any particular method. However, should funding be available, we may consider making awards to more than one high-quality application focused on a particular method.

3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

(a) Indirect Cost Rate

U.S. Department of Education policy (34 CFR 75.562 (c)(2)) limits indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or 8 percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. For the purposes of this competition, a modified total direct cost base is defined as total direct costs less stipends, tuition and related fees, and capital expenditures of $5,000 or more. Questions about indirect cost rates should be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Indirect Cost Group https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgindex.html.

Institutions, both primary grantees and subawardees, not located in the territorial United States cannot charge indirect costs.

(b) Meetings and Conferences

If you are requesting funds to cover expenses for hosting meetings or conferences, please note that there are statutory and regulatory requirements in determining whether costs are reasonable and necessary. Please refer to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR, §200.432 Conferences (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=dcd3efbcf2b6092f84c3b1af32bdcc34&node=se2.1.200_1432&rgn=div8).

In particular, federal grant funds cannot be used to pay for alcoholic beverages or entertainment, which includes costs for amusement, diversion, and social activities. In general, federal funds may not be used to pay for food. A grantee hosting a meeting or conference may not use grant funds to pay for food for conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business. You may request funds to cover expenses for working meetings, such as working lunches; however, IES will determine whether these costs are allowable in keeping with the new OMB Uniform Cost Principles. Grantees are responsible for the proper use of their grant awards and may have to repay funds to the Department if they violate the rules for meeting- and conference-related expenses.

4. Program Authority

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq., the "Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002," Title I of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

5. Applicable Regulations

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) codified at CFR Part 200. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99 and 2 CFR 3485. In addition, 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

B. Additional Award Requirements

1. Pre-Award

(a) Clarification and Budget Questions

IES uses the scientific peer review process as the first step in making funding decisions. If your application is recommended for funding based on the outcome of scientific peer review, an IES program officer will contact you to clarify any issues that were raised by the peer reviewers and to address whether the proposed budget adequately supports the scope of work and meets federal guidelines.

(b) Demonstrating Access to Data and Education Settings

The research and training you propose to do will likely require that you have (or will obtain) access to education settings, such as classrooms, schools, and/or districts; secondary datasets; or studies

currently under way. In such cases, you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include letters of agreement in Appendix E from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit your application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, IES will require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds. If you cannot provide such documentation, IES may not award the grant or may withhold funds.

You will need supporting evidence of partnership or access if you are doing any of the following:

- *Conducting research and/or training in or with education settings* – If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the scientific peer review panel and your research and/or training relies on access to education settings, you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary settings in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to conduct the proposed project in the necessary number of settings at the time of application, you will need to provide documentation to IES indicating that you have successfully recruited the necessary number of settings for the proposed research and/or training before the full first-year costs will be awarded. If you recruited sufficient numbers of settings prior to the application, IES may ask you to provide documentation that the settings originally recruited for the application are still willing to partner in the research.
- *Using secondary datasets* – If your application is being considered for funding based on scientific merit scores from the scientific peer review panel and your research relies on access to secondary datasets (such as federally-collected datasets, state or district administrative data, or data collected by you or other researchers), you will need to provide documentation that you have access to the necessary datasets in order to receive the grant. This means that if you do not have permission to use the proposed datasets at the time of application, you must provide documentation to IES from the entity controlling the dataset(s) before the grant will be awarded. This documentation must indicate that you have permission to use the data for the proposed research for the time period discussed in the application. If you obtained permission to use a proposed dataset prior to submitting your application, IES may ask you to provide updated documentation indicating that you still have permission to use the dataset to conduct the proposed research during the project period.
- *Building off of existing studies* – You may propose studies that piggyback onto an ongoing study, which will require access to those subjects and data. In such cases, the PI of the existing study should be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

In addition to obtaining evidence of access, IES strongly advises applicants to establish a written agreement, within 3 months of receipt of an award, among all key collaborators and their institutions (such as the PI, Co-PIs, and mentors) regarding roles, responsibilities, access to data, publication rights, and decision-making procedures.

(c) Assessment of Past Performance

IES considers the applicant's performance and use of funds under a previous federal award as part of the criteria for making a funding decision. Performance on previous Department of Education awards is considered as is additional information that may be requested from the applicant, including compliance to the IES Public Access Policy (applicable for all grants funded from 2012 to present).

2. Post Award

(a) Compliance with IES Policy on Public Access to Results

IES requires all grantees to submit the electronic version of peer-reviewed scholarly publications to ERIC (https://eric.ed.gov/), a publicly accessible and searchable electronic database of education research that makes available full-text documents to the public for free. This public access requirement (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/researchaccess.asp) applies to peer-reviewed, original scholarly publications that have been supported, in whole or in part, with direct funding from IES, although it does not apply to book chapters, editorials, reviews, or non-peer-reviewed conference proceedings. **As the designated representative for the grantee institution, IES holds the principal investigator responsible** for ensuring that authors of publications stemming from the grant comply with this requirement.

The author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all modifications from the peer review process. Submission of accepted manuscripts for public accessibility through ERIC is strongly encouraged as soon as possible but **must occur within 12 months of the publisher's official date of publication.** ERIC will not make the accepted manuscripts available to the public prior to the end of the 12-month embargo period, unless specified by the publisher.

The ERIC website includes a homepage for the Grantee and Online Submission System (https://eric.ed.gov/submit/), as well as a Frequently Asked Questions page (https://eric.ed.gov/?granteefaq). During the submission process, authors will submit bibliographic information from the publication, including title, authors, publication date, journal title, and associated IES award number(s).

(b) Special Conditions on Grants

IES may impose special conditions on a grant if the grantee is not financially stable, has a history of unsatisfactory performance, has an unsatisfactory financial or other management system, has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant, or is otherwise not responsible.

Training grant recipients who have not successfully recruited the number of participants for whom they requested funding will have their continuation funding adjusted.

(c) Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting

On all training grants, the PI is required to attend one meeting each year (for up to 3 days) in Washington, DC with other IES grantees and IES staff. The project's budget should include this meeting. Should PIs not be able to attend the meeting, they may designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

C. Overview of Application and Scientific Peer Review Process

1. Submitting a Letter of Intent

Letters of intent are submitted online at https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit. Select the Letter of

Intent form for the program under which you plan to submit your application. The online submission form contains fields for each of the seven content areas listed below. Use these fields to provide the requested information. The project description should be single-spaced and is recommended to be no more than one page (about 3,500 characters). The letter of intent is non-binding and optional, but strongly recommended.

Elements of the letter of intent:
- Descriptive title
- Training program that you will address
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address of the PI and any Co-PIs
- Name and institutional affiliation of mentors and any key collaborators and contractors
- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the duration maximums for each program)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the budget maximums for each program)

2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to one of the previous IES competitions but that was not funded, you must indicate on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance Form in the Application Package (see the IES Application Submission Guide at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) that the FY 2021 application is a resubmission (Item 8) and include the application number of the previous application (an 11-character alphanumeric identifier beginning "R324" entered in Item 4a). Prior reviews will be sent to this year's reviewers along with the resubmitted application. You must describe your response to the prior reviews using Appendix B. Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2021 Request for Applications.

If you submitted a somewhat similar application in the past and did not receive an award but are submitting the current application as a new application, you should indicate on the application form (Item 8) that the FY 2021 application is a new application. In Appendix B, you must provide a rationale explaining why the FY 2021 application should be considered a new application rather than a revision. If you do not provide such an explanation, then IES may send the reviews of the prior unfunded application to this year's reviewers along with the current application.

You may submit applications to more than one of the IES FY 2021 Training Programs (this competition and the Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences) and to multiple programs within this competition, so long as the applications are substantively different from one another. If you submit the same or similar applications, IES will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

3. Application Processing

Applications must be submitted electronically and received no later than 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Time on August 20, 2020 through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/). You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) and on Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

After applications are fully uploaded and validated at Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Education receives the applications for processing and transfer to the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO) system (https://iesreview.ed.gov). PRIMO allows applicants to track the progress of their application via the Applicant Notification System (ANS).

Approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the application deadline, invitation emails are sent to applicants who have never applied to IES before to create their individual PRIMO ANS accounts. Both the PI and the AOR will receive invitation emails. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks after the application deadline, all applicants (new and existing ANS users) will begin to receive a series of emails about the status of their application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for additional information about ANS and PRIMO.

Once an application has been submitted and the application deadline has passed, you may not submit additional materials or information for inclusion with your application.

4. Scientific Peer Review Process

IES will forward all applications that are compliant and responsive to this Request for Applications to be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Scientific reviews are conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below and the review procedures posted on the IES website, https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/application_review.asp, by a panel of experts who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and Request for Applications (https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/reviewers.asp).

At least two primary reviewers will complete written evaluations of the application, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to each of the review criteria. Primary reviewers will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score, for each application they review. Based on the overall scores assigned by primary reviewers, IES calculates an average overall score for each application and prepares a preliminary rank order of applications before the full peer review panel convenes to complete the review of applications.

The full panel will consider and score only those applications deemed to be the most competitive and to have the highest merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank order. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any application that they believe merits full panel review but that would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

5. Review Criteria for Scientific Merit

The purpose of IES-supported research is to contribute to solving education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. The specific purpose of IES-supported training programs is to support this contribution by furthering the training of special education and early intervention researchers. In doing so, IES aims to increase the quality, accessibility, use, and relevance of special education research. IES expects reviewers for all applications to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed training program will have a substantial impact on that purpose. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is described in Part II.

(a) Significance

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

(b) Research Training Plan

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Training Plan section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application?

(c) Career Development Plan (Early Career Applications only)

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Career Development section for the Early Career program?

(d) Personnel

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Personnel section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application? Do the principal investigator and other key personnel possess appropriate training and experience and will they commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research and training?

(e) Resources

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Resources section for the particular training program under which the applicant is submitting the application? Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed research and training activities? Do the commitments of each partner show support for the implementation and success of the project?

(f) Dissemination

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in Appendix A: Dissemination Plan? Does the applicant present a dissemination plan that is tailored to the purpose of the project and designed to reach the audiences that may benefit from the findings or training content?

6. Award Decisions

The following will be considered in making award decisions for responsive and compliant applications:
- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review
- Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award
- Contribution to the overall program of research training described in this RFA
- Ability to carry out the proposed research training within the maximum award and duration requirements
- Availability of funds

Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

Only compliant and responsive applications will be peer reviewed. Use this checklist to better ensure you have included all required components for compliance and that you have addressed all general and training program requirements for responsiveness.

See the IES Application Submission Guide (https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf) for an application checklist that describes the forms in the application package that must be completed and the PDF files that must be attached to the forms for a successful submission through Grants.gov.

Compliance		
	Have you included a training program narrative?	
	Do the training program narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements?	
	Do the training program narrative and other narrative content adhere to all page maximums as described in the RFA? IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for scientific peer review.	
	For Early Career applications, have you included the following required appendices? • Appendix A: Dissemination Plan • Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application) • Appendix C: Summary of Research • Appendix D: Letters of Agreement from Mentors • Appendix E: Letters of Agreement from Institution and Partners	
	For Methods Training applications, have you included the following required appendices? • Appendix A: Dissemination Plan • Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (if you are resubmitting an application) • Appendix C: Summary of Research and Training Projects • Appendix E: Letters of Agreement	
Responsiveness		
	Have you identified a single training program for your application?	
	For Early Career applications, did you meet the program requirements under (a) Principal Investigator, (b) Mentors, and (c) Focus on Children and Youth with or At Risk for Disabilities?	
	For Methods Training applications, did you meet the program requirements under (a) Eligible Applicants?	
	Does your training program narrative include the required sections? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below?	

		Early Career	Methods
	Significance	• Need for further career development • Overview of the proposed project • Research topic, project type, and rationale for each	• Specific methodologies that will be the focus of your training program • Intended participants
	Research/ Research Training Plan	• Research design, sample, key outcome measures, and data analysis procedures • Measures of education outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities	• Recruitment plan • Training content, format, and activities • Plan for tracking participants' progress and determining the success of the training program
	Career Development Plan	• A training plan, including the process for mentoring and educational opportunities	n/a
	Personnel	• Expertise of the PI, mentor(s), and (if applicable) other personnel	• All key personnel on the project team, including the PI, any Co-PIs, and other

		• Date you were granted your PhD and (if applicable) the date you completed your postdoctoral program • Names of your dissertation or graduate school advisor and (if applicable) your postdoctoral supervisor	trainers
	Resources	• Resources to support you in conducting the proposed project	• Institutional resources of both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions

Part VI: Program Codes

Applications to the Research Training Programs in Special Education (CFDA 84.324B) are submitted to a single program. You must enter the appropriate program code in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form (see the IES Application Submission Guide for more information about this form; https://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/submissionguide.pdf). For example, an application to the Early Career Development and Mentoring program should have the code "NCSER-Early Career" entered in the field for Item 4b.

Program	Code
Early Career Development and Mentoring	NCSER-Early Career
Methods Training for Special Education Research	NCSER-Methods