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NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

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Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.324S

# Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking in Special Education

Request for Applications

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Letter of Intent</b>              | September 3, 2026                           | <a href="https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit">https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit</a> |
| <b>Application Package Available</b> | August 6, 2026                              | <a href="https://www.grants.gov">https://www.grants.gov</a>                                 |
| <b>Application Deadline</b>          | 11:59:59 Eastern Time on<br>October 1, 2026 | <a href="https://www.grants.gov">https://www.grants.gov</a>                                 |
| <b>Possible Start Dates</b>          | July 1, 2027 – September 1, 2027            |                                                                                             |

See the companion IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) for guidance on preparing and submitting applications through Grants.gov.

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# Part I: Overview and General Requirements

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## A. Overview

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides scientific evidence to improve education practice and policy and shares that evidence in ways that can be used by educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. IES was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA – P.L. 107-279), in part to improve academic achievement and attainment, and access to educational opportunities for all learners (ESRA, § 111.b.1.B), with a particular focus on low-performing learners (ESRA, § 115.a.1) and those lacking access to high-quality educational opportunities (ESRA, § 115.a.2.A and 115.a.2.B).

**In carrying out its mission, IES must ensure that our work and the work we fund is objective, secular, neutral, and nonideological; free of partisan political influence; and free of racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias (ESRA, § 111.b.2).**

Within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) supports research to:

- Expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities in order to improve the developmental, education, and transition outcomes of such individuals
- Improve services provided under, and support the implementation of, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)

In this Request for Applications (RFA), NCSEER invites applications for projects that will contribute to its Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking in Special Education (Using Data for Policymaking in Special Education) grants program (ALN 84.324S). Through this grant program, NCSEER supports state agencies' use of their statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDSs) to provide evidence for their own program and policy decisions, and those of their local education agencies pertaining to learners with or at risk for disabilities. (A separate program, IES's Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant program, provides grants, resources, and services to support states as they design, develop, implement, and expand their SLDSs. For more information about that program, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/>).

State agencies may apply for Using Data for Policymaking in Special Education grants on their own or in collaboration with other organizations.

IES expects all IES-funded research to implement the Standards for Excellence in Education Research, or SEER (<https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/standards-excellence-education-research-seer>). The 2027 Standards (SEER 27) are organized into 4 domains.

- Domain 1. Objectivity and Scientific Integrity
- Domain 2. Relevance
- Domain 3. Open Science
- Domain 4. Intervention Research

Each application for IES funding is required to describe how their project is aligned with applicable SEER Standards. Appendix F outlines which Standards are applicable to each type of project.

## B. General Requirements

Applications must meet the requirements set out in this section in order to be sent forward for scientific peer review.

## **1. Eligible Applicants and Project Team**

### **(a) Eligible Applicants**

Institutions that have the ability and capacity to conduct rigorous research are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, state agencies responsible for education programs and policies, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities. Eligible state agencies include the state educational agency (SEA) responsible for the state's K-12 sector as well as state agencies responsible for other specific education sectors such as early intervention, prekindergarten, career and technical education, and postsecondary education. A state postsecondary education system may also serve as the state agency.

### **(b) Project Team**

The state agency responsible for the education issue, program, or policy to be examined **must** be included in the application. The state agency may be the applicant, in which case the principal investigator (PI) **must** be from the state agency. If the state agency is not the applicant, then a co-principal investigator (co-PI) from the state agency **must** be included. In [Appendix D](#), you **must** include a letter from the state agency named on the application describing its responsibility for the education issue, program, or policy to be studied (in addition to letters describing your access to the SLDS data, authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, and the expected date the data will be available for use).

The PI 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. Other personnel sharing the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the research project intellectually and logistically should be designated as co-PIs.

## **2. Eligible Populations**

Proposed research **must** focus on learners with or at risk for disabilities, any age from infancy through postsecondary education, and/or families, educators, or other professionals who support the development and education of these learners.

For research focused on learners with or at risk for disabilities in early childhood and K-12 settings, 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.

For research focused on students with disabilities in postsecondary settings, disability is described in the *qualified students with a disability* provision in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/frequently-asked-questions-section-504-free-appropriate-public-education-fape>) and the *qualified individual with a disability* provision in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35>).

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. If your research is (1) primarily focused on learners without disabilities prekindergarten through postsecondary or (2) primarily focused on adult education (including learners with or without disabilities) you **must** apply to the separate grant program run by the National Center for Education Research (NCER: <https://ies.ed.gov/about/national-center-education-research->

nces; <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grants/2027/using-longitudinal-data-support-state-education-policy-making-84-305s>). Such applications will be deemed nonresponsive to this competition and will not be forwarded for peer review.

### **3. Required Data**

Proposed research **must** use the state's longitudinal data system (SLDS).

The application **must** include letters of agreement in [Appendix D](#) describing your access to the SLDS data, authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, and the expected date the data will be available for use.

State agencies are strongly encouraged to collaborate with relevant partners to link SLDS data to other available datasets to better support the research. These other data may have been collected by the state agency (or local education agencies) but not yet incorporated into the SLDS, by other state agencies (e.g., health, social services), or by other sources. Through this linking, additional information can be obtained to better understand and explain learner outcomes.

In addition to analyses of existing data, applicants may propose to collect and analyze primary data, if appropriate for the research questions. If applicable, IES encourages using a mixed methods approach that combines complementary quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data collection and analyses are not required. If they are included, IES expects that most of the time and budget for the research will be spent on the analysis of existing data.

### **4. Required Learner and Educator Outcomes**

The applicant **must** propose to measure one or more education outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities. Education outcomes support success in school and afterwards and may include developmental, school readiness, literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics), social/emotional/behavioral, functional, secondary/transition, or postsecondary outcomes.

Outcomes may be at the individual student level or aggregated at the school, district, or state level, as appropriate for the proposed research questions.

If you are examining the role of educators in improving learners' education outcomes, you **must** propose to measure educator knowledge, skills, beliefs, behaviors, and/or practices, in addition to the required measures of learners' education outcomes.

### **5. Award Limits**

Applications **must** conform to the following limits on award duration and cost. The maximum duration of the award is 3 years, and the maximum award is \$1.2 million. The requested award should be commensurate with the proposed work. If necessary, IES will adjust the award size or workload as appropriate.

In your application, provide a detailed budget justification that explains how the requested costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable (see 2 CFR 200, Subpart E; <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>) and reflect the proposed scope of work.

## **C. Getting Started**

### **1. Technical Assistance for Applicants**

IES strongly encourages you to submit a letter of intent on the IES Peer Review website (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit>). IES will offer virtual office hours (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/help>) for general guidance on grant writing and submitting your application and choosing the appropriate competition and project type.

The program officer for this competition is Dr. Katherine (Katie) Taylor ([Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov](mailto:Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov)).

## **2. RFA Organization and the IES Application Submission Guide**

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

1. *This RFA*, which provides information on how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. [Part I](#) provides an overview of the Using Data for Policymaking in Special Education grants program and sets out the general requirements. [Part II](#) provides detail on the specific requirements and recommendations for the project narrative. [Part III](#) provides information on formatting, the appendices, and other narrative content for the application. [Part IV](#) provides information on competition regulations and the review process. [Part V](#) provides a checklist that you can use to ensure you have included all required application elements to advance to scientific peer review. [Part VI](#) provides the program code that you must enter in Item 4b of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance form.
2. *The IES Application Submission Guide* (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>), which provides important information about how to find, complete, and submit an application package in Grants.gov 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 documents.

## **3. Ensuring Your Application is Forwarded for Peer Review**

**Only compliant and responsive applications received before the date and time deadline will be peer reviewed for scientific merit and practical significance.** The PI and the AOR should work together to ensure that the application meets these criteria. The [Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist](#) in Part V will help you make sure you have the minimum necessary components.

### *(a) On-time submission*

- Received and validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 1, 2026.

### *(b) Compliance*

- Includes the required project narrative (see [Part II](#)).
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see [Part III.B](#)).
- Adheres to all page limit maximums for the project 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.C](#)).
  - [Appendix B: Response to Reviewers](#) (Resubmissions only)
  - [Appendix D: Letters of Agreement](#)
  - [Appendix E: Data Sharing and Management Plan](#)
  - [Appendix F: Alignment with SEER Standards](#)

### *(c) Responsiveness*

- Meets the general requirements (see [Part I.B](#)).
- Meets the project narrative requirements (see [Part II.A](#)).

# Part II: Project Narrative Requirements and Recommendations

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## A. Project Narrative Requirements

The project narrative **must** include four sections – Significance, Research Plan, Data, and Decision Making and Dissemination. The four sections **must** include the content described below to be considered responsive to the requirements of this RFA. Applications lacking this specific content will not be forwarded for peer review.

The project narrative **must** adhere to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)) and be **no more than 15 pages**. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 15<sup>th</sup> page of the narrative.

See the [Recommendations for a Strong Application](#) for recommendations to improve the quality of your application. The recommendations are included to support (1) applicants in writing proposals and (2) reviewers in evaluating proposals that align with IES's expectations of high-quality research that has scientific merit and practical significance. IES asks reviewers to use these recommendations, in conjunction with their professional judgment and expertise, to determine application quality.

### 1. Significance

The purpose of this section is to describe the key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies to be examined along with how this research fits with the current priorities of the state agency. This section also includes the research questions to be addressed and explains how addressing them will help guide the state agency's decision making. In addition, the section describes the substantive expertise of the personnel regarding the key issues to be studied.

You **must** describe

- The key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies that the state agency wants to examine to support its decision making pertaining to learners with or at risk for disabilities
- The learners with or at risk for disabilities you will focus on
- Your research questions about the issues, problems, programs, and/or policies concerning the learners noted above
- Your project team's experience and expertise with the issues, problems, programs being examined

### 2. Research Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe your research design and analysis plan, demonstrate how these will address the research questions, and describe the analytical expertise of the personnel.

You **must** describe

- The research design and methods you will use to address your research questions
- The data analysis plan
- Your project team's expertise in the design, methods, and analysis proposed

### 3. Data

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that you have access to the SLDS (and any other) data necessary for the project and describe the data expertise of the personnel.

You **must** describe

- The SLDS data you will use
- How and when the required data will be made available for the study



- Your project team’s access to, knowledge of, and expertise working with the data to be used

#### **4. Decision Making and Dissemination**

The purpose of this section is to discuss how the project’s findings will be used by the state agency in making decisions about ways to improve outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities, how the findings will be disseminated to multiple audiences, and the dissemination expertise of the personnel.

You **must** describe

- How you will present the project’s findings to the state agency leadership
- How you will disseminate the findings to multiple audiences
- Your project team’s dissemination expertise

## **B. Recommendations for a Strong Application**

IES provides these recommendations to improve the quality of your application. The recommendations are included to support (1) applicants in writing proposals and (2) reviewers in evaluating proposals that align with IES’s expectations of high-quality research that has scientific merit and practical significance. IES asks reviewers to use these recommendations, in conjunction with their professional judgment and expertise, to determine application quality.

### **1. Significance**

Describe the key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies that the state agency wants to examine and how they are related to improving outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities. If you are examining a policy or program, discuss its key components and how it is implemented.

Describe the learners with or at risk for disabilities (and educators) you will focus on and how they are affected by the issues, problems, programs, and/or policies you plan to study.

Present the state agency’s research questions regarding key issues, programs, and/or policies the agency is interested in exploring. Note who provided input into these questions. Characterize the nature of the evidence to be generated to address each research question as descriptive, correlational, predictive, and/or causal. When describing the key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies that the state agency wants to examine, discuss whether the SLDS provides enough high-quality data to answer the key research questions and whether you plan to augment the research with additional data (primary or secondary).

Explain how the evidence will inform agency’s program and policy decisions pertaining to learners with or at risk for disabilities. Provide evidence that the issue is a priority for the state education agency partner and describe any current work on the issue being done by the agency.

Discuss the key personnel from the state agency and any collaborating organizations who have expertise in studying or working with the data regarding the study population(s), and the key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies being examined. Describe key personnel’s responsibilities on the project, the percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) they will devote to the project, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work. State agencies should include at least two individuals on the project, one with expertise working with the state data, and a second person with decision making authority related to the key issues, programs and/or policies being examined.

### **2. Research Plan**

Describe your setting and sample and how these are appropriate for addressing the research questions.

Describe the research design and methods and how they will allow you to address your research questions.

Describe how you will define and measure the learner (and educator) outcomes used in the project.

Describe your data analysis plan, including the following:

- How you will address exclusion from any dataset and missing data.
- For quantitative data, the statistical models to be used, including how they address the multilevel nature of education data and how well they control for selection bias, if necessary.
- For qualitative data, information on the analytical and interpretative processes.
- For mixed methods studies, how qualitative and quantitative data will be integrated.

Include a timeline of study activities in [Appendix C](#).

Describe the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the research on track and ensure the quality of the work.

Discuss the key personnel who will carry out the research plan, their expertise and experience for this type of work, their specific responsibilities, the percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) they will devote to the project, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work. If personnel from a collaborating organization will take the lead on the research, describe how state agency personnel will take part in the research and increase their capacity for future research.

Projects that will evaluate a program or policy should describe plans to maintain the objectivity of the research, including but not limited to describing safeguards that will be in place to separate the developer or implementor from tasks such as random assignment and impact analysis.

### **3. Data**

Describe the SLDS data to be used in the project, including the following:

- The years of data to be included.
- The key variables that will be examined and whether they are available in the data or will be derived from the data.
- The process for creating variables (if applicable) and the expected amount of work involved.
- The process for linking datasets (if the SLDS data are in separate datasets).

Describe any non-SLDS data (primary or secondary) to be used in the project, including the following:

- How the data will be obtained.
- The key variables that will be examined and the measures used to assess them (a list of variables may be placed in [Appendix C](#)).
- The process for creating variables (if applicable) and the expected amount of work involved.
- Whether/how the data will be linked and merged with the SLDS data.

Note whether the SLDS uses a common set of data elements with common data standards to allow interoperability and comparability of data, such as the Common Education Data Standards (<http://ceds.ed.gov/>).

Identify and discuss data issues that might affect your research, such as a lack of access to different datasets, difficult-to-track data or people, missing data, inadequate measures of a key variable, or cross-district differences in the meaning of a variable. Explain how you propose to address such issues so that the quality and timeliness of your work is not adversely affected.

Discuss whether this will be a new or extended use of the SLDS data by the state agency. Note whether and how the project will build the capacity of the state agency to use the SLDS data.

Discuss both key and any other personnel from the office responsible for the SLDS who will provide the SLDS data, link it to other data (if necessary), address missing or incorrect data found during data

cleaning, and provide advice on its use. Describe their expertise and experience for this type of work, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) they will devote to the project, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for completing their work.

Discuss any other personnel (in addition to those from the office responsible for the SLDS) who will be responsible for cleaning SLDS data and linking it to SLDS and/or other data. Describe their expertise and experience for this type of work, and their proposed time commitment to the project.

Include letters of agreement in the required [Appendix D](#) describing your access to the SLDS data, authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, and the expected date the data will be available for use.

Include the required [Appendix E: Data Sharing and Management Plan](#) in which you will describe how you will comply with the IES policy for data sharing (<https://ies.ed.gov/about/public-access-research>) and who will be responsible for data sharing.

#### ***4. Decision Making and Dissemination***

Identify the decisions the state agency needs to make regarding key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies being studied. Describe how the findings for each research question can inform these decisions.

Describe key decision makers, including (but not limited to) state agency staff, and their role and context. Discuss how they will receive and consider the project's findings in their decision making. Describe how they will consider the rigor of the findings (how much confidence to place in them for decision making), given the type of research design used.

If a research institution is taking part in the project, describe the involvement of state agency personnel in the research activities and how consultation and collaboration between the research institution and state agency will ensure that the research will provide findings of use to the agency's decision making.

Discuss how you can integrate the findings into research-informed tools used by state agency staff. Describe any potential data-informed applications that will be developed if the research results in substantively important findings. For example, the project could support the development of tools to predict which students might benefit from a program, to track whether participating students are benefiting from a program, or to provide data directly to learners to use in their own decision making.

Describe a dissemination plan that discusses the different ways in which you intend to reach multiple audiences through the publications, presentations, and products you expect to produce. These may include:

- Discussion of findings with regional and local education agencies and schools
- Discussion of findings with state leaders
- Presentations and workshops at meetings of professional associations of teachers and leaders
- Presentations and publications to share information with interested students, parents, organizations, and the public
- Publications in practitioner journals
- Publications in researcher journals
- Activities with relevant IES-funded research and development (R&D) centers, research networks, or regional educational laboratories (RELs)
- The development and deployment of tools based on the research

Discuss the key personnel from the state agency and any collaborating organizations who have expertise in dissemination. Describe the work each person will do regarding informing decision making and dissemination with the findings, their expertise and experience for this type of work, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) they will devote to the project, and the adequacy of their time commitment to the project for dissemination.

# Part III: Preparing Your Application

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## A. Overview

The application contents—individual forms and their PDF attachments—represent the body of an application to IES. Read the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) for additional information about how to find, complete, and submit an application package through Grants.gov (<https://grants.gov>).

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the development of grant applications is allowable. Applicants submitting a grant application must certify on the standard application form to the “true, complete, and accurate” nature of all of the contents of their grant application, regardless of whether it is generated by AI (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-16571>).

## 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. 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. Font and Type Size***

Use a font that is 12-point.

Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

### ***5. Citations***

Use the parenthetical author-date style for citations (for example, the American Psychological Association, 2009) rather than numeric citations that correspond to the reference list.

### ***6. Accessibility***

Meet or exceed standards for accessibility (including alternative texts for charts, figures, and graphs) in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For assistance with 508 compliance, please visit <https://www.section508.gov/create/>.

## C. Required and Optional Appendices

The required [project narrative](#) (Significance, Research Plan, Data, Decision Making and Dissemination) 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 project 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/application-submission-guide>) for more information about preparing and submitting your application using the required application package for this competition through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

The project narrative and appendices are critical parts of the IES application because they include the substantive content that peer reviewers will evaluate for practical significance and scientific merit.

### ***1. Appendix A: Engagement and Dissemination Plan (Not Applicable/Do Not Submit)***

Appendix A is not applicable to this RFA. Information related to planned engagement and dissemination should be discussed in the project narrative under the section titled “*Decision Making and Dissemination*”. Any content included will be removed prior to review.

### ***2. Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (Required for Resubmissions)***

If your application is a resubmission, you **must** include Appendix B. If your application is one that you consider to be new but that is similar to a previous application, you should include Appendix B. 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. Note that an application that was previously submitted to another IES grant competition is still considered a resubmission.

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 A 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 is the only information that may be included in Appendix B; all other material will be removed prior to review of the application.

### ***3. Appendix C: Supplemental Materials (Optional)***

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

In Appendix C, you may include figures, charts, or tables with supplementary information for your proposed study. For example, you may include data tables on the population or sample, a timeline for your research project, the variables in the SLDS that you will be using in your research, an organizational chart of who is responsible for the key issue, program or policy you are researching, or a diagram of the management structure of your project.

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: Letters of Agreement (Required)***

You **must** include Appendix D. Appendix D **must** meet the general formatting guidelines. There is **no maximum page length** for Appendix D.

In Appendix D, you **must** include a letter from the state agency named on the application, describing its responsibility for the education issue, program, or policy to be studied; its access to the SLDS data; its authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study; and the expected date the data will be available for use.

- If the state agency named on the application does not have access to the SLDS data, the state agencies or organizations that can provide access to the SLDS data **must** provide a letter of agreement stating they will provide the data for use in the proposed study and should also include the expected date the data will be available for use.
- If the state agency named on the application does not have the authority to use the SLDS data for the proposed study, the state agencies or organizations that can authorize the use of the SLDS data **must** provide a letter of agreement stating they will authorize its use for the proposed study.

You may also include letters of agreement from any organization who will participate in or provide data for the proposed research, from any organization carrying out the data analysis or other research activities, take part in the dissemination of the findings, and from persons who will serve as consultants. Such letters of agreement should make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the time commitment and timing of participation, required space and personnel, resources that the organization is prepared to contribute to the research project, and the ways that the organization personnel will be expected to coordinate with the project team (e.g., quarterly meetings with administrative staff) if the application is funded.

Ensure that the letters reproduce well so that reviewers can easily read them. Do not reduce the size of the letters. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) for guidance regarding the size of file attachments.

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: Data Sharing and Management Plan (Required)***

You **must** include your Data Sharing and Management Plan (DSMP) in Appendix E. Appendix E **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than five pages**. If Appendix E exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the fifth page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

See the IES Public Access Guidance (<https://ies.ed.gov/about/public-access-research>) for additional tools and materials to assist with developing a Data Sharing and Management Plan (DSMP) and adherence with existing policies.

The costs associated with implementation of the DSMP may be covered by the grant and should be included in the budget and explained in the budget narrative.

IES program officers will be responsible for reviewing the completeness of the proposed DSMP. The scientific peer reviewers do not evaluate the DSMP in their review of applications. If your application is being considered for funding based on the scores received during the scientific review process but your DSMP is determined incomplete or insufficient, you will be required to provide additional detail regarding your DSMP.

When you, the PI, and authorized organization representative (AOR) sign the cover page of the grant application, they will be assuring compliance with the IES Policy Regarding Public Access to Research



(<https://ies.ed.gov/about/public-access-research>) as well as other policies and regulations governing research awards. This entails immediately uploading full text of accepted or published manuscripts to ERIC that are based on IES-funded data, as well as the sharing of data no later than either immediately upon publication or five years after the end date of the grant, whichever occurs first.

Once the DSMP is approved by IES, you and your institution are required to carry it out and to report progress and problems and requests to amend through the regular reporting channels. Compliance with IES data sharing requirements is expected even if the final dataset may not be completed and prepared for data sharing until after the grant has been completed. In cases of noncompliance, subsequent awards to individuals or institutions may be affected. By addressing the items identified below, your DSMP describes how you will meet the requirements of the IES policy for data sharing and adopt best practices for adherence to open science principles.

The DSMP should include the following:

- **Sharing Platforms**
  - The pre-registration repository where you will pre-register your study, and the timeline for preregistering (within the first year of the project).
  - The data repository where you plan to share your data, and an indication of the selected repository's adherence with the National Science and Technology Council document entitled "Desirable Characteristics of Data Repositories for Federally Funded Research" (<https://repository.si.edu/handle/10088/113528>). IES discourages sharing on a personal/institutional website or by request.
  - If there are data that cannot be shared, the repository or location where you will share information about how you obtained or accessed the data source(s), along with codes and analytic approach utilized.
- **Data Description**
  - The type of data to be shared.
  - Any data that will not be shared, and grounds for exclusions which may include privacy protections, proprietary data, and/or indigenous data sovereignty. See section 7.2 of the ED Public Access Plan (<https://ies.ed.gov/about/public-access-research>) for additional information regarding potential restrictions on data sharing.
  - Procedures for managing and for maintaining the confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information.
  - How the data set will be formatted and configured and your approach to curating, cleaning, and preparing data for sharing, taking into consideration guidance from IES's Sharing Study Data: A Guide for Education Researchers (<https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/resource-library/resource/tooltoolkit/sharing-study-data-guide-education-researchers>).
  - Your dataset documentation including code books and any decisions made about the data that would be important for replicating the results.
  - Your intentions to share statistical/analysis code to support reproducibility, including format and location.
- **Administrative Plan**
  - Management plan designating roles and responsibilities of project or institutional staff in the management and retention of research data, including a discussion of any changes that will occur should you and/or others with key responsibilities for data sharing and management leave the project or their institution.
  - Expected schedule for data sharing (no later than immediately upon publication or 5 years after the award end date, whichever is sooner), how long the data will remain accessible (available for at least 10 years), and acknowledgement that the timeframe of

data accessibility will be reviewed at the annual progress reviews and revised as necessary.

- Anticipated costs associated with implementing the DSMP (including resource and labor costs) that are reflected in the application's budget and budget justification.
- Whether re-use of data will require a data use agreement and, if so, what conditions users must meet to access the data.
- Approaches to disseminating the availability and location of data to support discoverability for reuse purposes.

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

## 6. Appendix F: Alignment with SEER Standards

In Appendix F, you **must** include a table describing the alignment of your application with the current SEER Standards (<https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/standards-excellence-education-research-seer>). Appendix F **must** meet the general formatting guidelines and be **no more than three pages** including the required table. If Appendix F exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the third page of the appendix before it is forwarded for scientific peer review.

Fill in the table below with a high-level summary of how your proposed project aligns with each SEER domain/standard and refer back to the location in the narrative where additional details about project alignment are included.

| <i><b>SEER Domain/<br/>Standard</b></i> | <i><b>High-level summary of how your proposed<br/>project meets these standards</b></i> | <i><b>Pages in<br/>Narrative and/or<br/>Appendix</b></i> |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Domain 1</b>                         | <b>Objectivity and Scientific Integrity</b>                                             |                                                          |
| Theory and Hypotheses                   |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Research Design                         |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Communication of Uncertainty            |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Integrity                               |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Conflicts of Interest                   |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| <b>Domain 2</b>                         | <b>Relevance</b>                                                                        |                                                          |
| Relevant and Student-Outcomes Focused   |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Engagement                              |                                                                                         |                                                          |
| Generalizability                        |                                                                                         |                                                          |



|                                       |                                                                                                                 |  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Design for Scale                      | <i>Note: Only complete this row if you are conducting a development study or impact evaluation.</i>             |  |
| <b>Domain 3</b>                       | <b>Open Science</b>                                                                                             |  |
| Pre-registration                      |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Open Data                             |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Open Methods                          |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Open Access                           |                                                                                                                 |  |
| <b>Domain 4</b>                       | <b>Intervention Research</b><br><i>Note: Only complete Domain 4 if you are conducting an impact evaluation.</i> |  |
| Core Components                       |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Implementation and Treatment Contrast |                                                                                                                 |  |
| High Quality Measures                 |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Distal Outcomes                       |                                                                                                                 |  |
| Cost and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis  |                                                                                                                 |  |

This appendix will not be part of scientific peer review. IES program officers will be responsible for reviewing the information in this appendix.

This is the only material 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 [project narrative](#) 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, and biosketches for key personnel and consultants to include as file attachments in your application. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) 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/Structured Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/structured abstract as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. If your project is recommended for funding, IES will use this abstract as the basis for the online abstracts that we post when new awards are announced (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/research/special-education-research-grants>). We recommend that the project summary/structured abstract be two pages long and include the following information.

### *(a) Title*

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title of the project
- **Competition:** The grant competition (Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking in Special Education) to which you are applying

### *(b) Project Summary*

The purpose of the project summary is to provide a high-level overview that is accessible to a range of audiences, such as policymakers, practitioners, and the public. This section should use short, active sentences to briefly describe the significance of the project, project activities, and the intended outcomes.

- **Purpose:** A brief description of the purpose of the project, the state or district policy, program or practice that is the focus of the research, and its significance
- **Project Activities:** An overview of the sample, research design, and methods
- **Products:** A brief description of the expected products the project team will develop, including the information that will be learned and disseminated

### *(c) Structured Abstract*

The purpose of the structured abstract is to provide key details about the project activities. This section is most likely to be used by other researchers but should be written in a way that is accessible to anyone who wants more information about the project.

- **Setting:** A brief description of the location where the research will take place and other important characteristics of the locale, such as whether it is rural or urban.
- **Population/Sample:** A brief description of the sample including the learners with or at risk for disabilities to be focused on, the number of participants; the composition of the sample including age or grade level, disability type(s), race/ethnicity, key contexts (e.g., family income, home language); and the population the sample is intended to represent
- **Key Issues, Problems, Programs, and/or Policies:** The key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies you will be studying related to improving outcomes for learners with or at risk for disabilities.
- **Research Design and Methods:** A brief description of the type of analyses to be performed (e.g., descriptive, correlational, predictive, causal) and the design and methodology to be used. Describe design and methods year by year, in terms of steps or phases as applicable, and any examination of the impact and/or implementation of a policy or program.
- **Key Measures:** A brief description of key measures including the learner (and educator) outcomes to be used in the study.
- **Data Analytic Strategy:** A brief description of the data analytic strategies that the research team will use to answer research questions.
- **Related IES Projects:** A list of any other completed or on-going IES-funded projects that are related to this one, noting the title of the related IES project and providing a link to the online IES abstract, where related refers to a project that you are drawing upon or building on as part of your proposed project.

## ***2. Bibliography and References Cited***

You **must** submit the bibliography and references cited as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a 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 project narrative. As a reminder, you should use the author-date style for citations in the project narrative (see [Part III.B.5](#) for more information).

## ***3. Human Subjects Narrative***

You **must** submit an exempt or non-exempt human subjects narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. We do not recommend a page length for the human subjects narrative. See

*Information About the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by the Department of Education* (<https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/manage-your-grant/protection-of-human-subjects-research/protection-of-human-subjects-human-subjects-research-narrative>) for a brief overview of principles, regulations, and policies which affect research involving human subjects in research activities supported by the Department of Education.

The U.S. Department of Education does not require certification of IRB 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 for each person named as key personnel in your application. You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). Each biographical sketch (an abbreviated CV plus current and pending support information) **must be no more than five pages in length, and this five-page limit includes current and pending support information**. 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. After logging in to SciENcv, you will be able to select the IES Biosketch format after selecting the “Create a New Document” option. You can download your IES Biosketch as a Word document to allow you to change the formatting to meet the [general formatting guidelines](#). 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.

The biographical sketch for the principal investigator, each co-principal investigator, other key personnel, and consultants (if included) should show how personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their specified duties on the proposed project, for example by describing relevant publications, grants, and research experience, including experience working with the study population as applicable.

Provide a list of current and pending grants for the principal investigator, each mentor, 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.

While not required at the time of application, all key personnel must have a persistent identifier (PID), such as an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor Identification; <https://orcid.org/>) at the time of award. For all key personnel who have a PID at the time of application, include the PID in the biosketch and in the “Credential, e.g., agency login” field on the Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form in the application package. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) for more information about this form in the application package.

If any key personnel do not yet have a PID, IES encourages establishing one as soon as possible, given the requirement that all key personnel are required to have a PID in place before an award will be made.

## Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

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### A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

#### 1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award grants pursuant to this Request for Applications.

#### 2. Funding Available

All awards pursuant to this Request for Applications 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.

#### 3. Special Considerations for Budget Expenses

##### (a) Indirect Cost Rate

IES expects applicants to apply their institution's federally negotiated unrestricted indirect cost rate when developing a budget for the proposed research project. State agencies should apply their indirect cost rate negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education if they have one. If your institution does not have an indirect cost rate and you receive a grant from IES, the Indirect Cost Division (ICD) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (<https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/fo#indirect-cost-division>) can help with obtaining an indirect cost rate once the grant is awarded. Please note that the ICD is not available for assistance during the application preparation process.

Most institutions that do not have a current negotiated rate may use a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR §200.414 for more information, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFRd93f2a98b1f6455/section-200.414>). This de minimis rate may be used indefinitely and no documentation is required to justify its use.

Institutions, both primary grantees and subawardees, not located in the territorial United States may not 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/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFRd1f39f9b3d4e72/section-200.432>).

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 Uniform Guidance 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 or other disallowed expenditures.

## **4. Program Authority**

“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. Section 10634 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19234).

## **5. Applicable Regulations**

*Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance) codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 C.F.R. parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99. In addition 34 C.F.R. 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. Please note that under ESRA section 191, these regulations are applicable only to the extent this RFA does not establish more specific requirements. If the RFA sets a different requirement, that requirement will take precedence.

## **6. General Terms and Conditions**

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, you must ensure and may be required to demonstrate that federal funds will not be used under this project in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq. or 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. 7905), section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1011f), or other applicable federal law. To the extent that any entity receiving grant funds under this grant uses those grant funds for such unallowable activities, IES reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement actions, including the recovery of grant funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation. The Grant Award Notification document accompanying your award may contain further terms and conditions, as necessary, to ensure grantee compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and administrative priorities.

## **7. Continuation Awards**

In making a continuation award determination under 34 CFR 75.253, IES considers the following, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; or whether the grant continues to be in the best interest in the federal government.

In making a continuation award determination, IES also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions specified elsewhere in this notice and the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from IES (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23). In making any continuation award determination, IES may consider all relevant information.

## **B. Additional 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 the scientific peer review, an IES program officer will contact you to clarify (1) any issues of concern to IES or the peer reviewers, (2) your

plans for sharing final data, and (3) the adequacy of the proposed budget to support the proposed scope of work within federal guidelines (see Uniform Guidance Cost Principles <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>).

### *(b) Demonstrating Access to Data and Other Studies*

You will need to provide evidence that you have access to the appropriate SLDS and the data needed for the project prior to receiving funding. Include [Letters of Agreement in Appendix D](#) from those who have responsibility for or access to the data you intend to use. Even with such letters, **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.

If you are building onto an ongoing or a completed study and will require access to those participants and data, you must provide evidence that you will have such access. In such cases, IES recommends that the principal investigator, or other key personnel, of the previous study should be one of the members of the research team applying for the grant to conduct the new project.

### *(c) Compliance with Research Security Requirements*

All recipients of IES research and research training funds are required to be in compliance with the research security requirements described below prior to receiving IES funding.

#### **Research Security Assessment and Required Recipient Documentation**

IES reserves the right to perform risk assessments, using analytical tools, of proposals and awards submitted to IES to assess nondisclosures of required information from senior/key personnel, and establish other policies and procedures for identifying, communicating, and addressing security risks that may threaten the integrity of IES-supported research and development.

IES applicants and recipients are required to maintain supporting documentation, including copies of contracts, grants, or any other agreements specific to foreign appointments, employment with a foreign institution, participation in a foreign talent recruitment program and other information reported as current and pending (other) support for all senior/key personnel that must be available to IES upon request. Applicants and recipients are expected to review requested supporting documentation for compliance with IES award terms and conditions.

#### **Research Security Training**

IES requires research security training certifications from applicants and individuals identified as senior/key personnel by the applicant. Applicants may utilize any training that addresses cybersecurity, international collaboration, foreign interference, and rules for proper use of funds, disclosure, conflict of commitment, and conflict of interest. The NSF-funded SECURE Center developed a condensed online research security training (RST) module (<https://www.secure-center.org/training>) designed to meet the government-wide RST requirement in Section 10634 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19234). To that end, IES recognizes completion of the condensed module as compliant with the RST requirements.

*Research Security Training Requirement for Federal Award Personnel:* In accordance with Section 10634 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19234), each individual identified as a senior/key person must certify that they have completed the requisite research security training that meets the requirements specified above within 12 months prior to application submission.

- *Certification Regarding Research Security Training for Federal Research Award Personnel:* In accordance with Section 10634 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19234), the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must certify that all individuals identified as senior/key personnel have completed the requisite research security training that meets the requirements specified above.



- *Certification Regarding Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) (Applies to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) Only)*: The AOR is required to complete a certification that the institution has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and other senior/key personnel who will be supported by IES to conduct research and that such training addresses mentor training and mentorship, training to raise awareness of potential research security threats, and Federal export control, disclosure, and reporting requirements.

### **Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program Prohibition (MFTRP)**

IES requires MFTRP certifications from applicants and individuals identified as senior/key personnel.

#### *Pre-Award Certifications:*

- In accordance with Section 10632 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19232), the AOR must certify that all individuals identified as senior/key personnel have been made aware of and have complied with their responsibility under that section to certify that the individual is not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.
- In accordance with Section 10632 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19232), each individual identified as a senior/key person must certify that they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.

*Post-award Certification:* Individuals serving as a PI or co-PI on an active IES award made on or after October 1, 2027, must certify annually via their Annual Performance Report to their participation or non-participation in an MFTRP. Additional information regarding the annual certification process can be found at <https://www.nsf.gov/research-security>.

### **Certification Regarding IHEs Hosting or Supporting Confucius Institutes**

In accordance with Section 10339A of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19039), no IES funds may be awarded to an IHE that maintains a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute. The IES Director, after consultation with the National Academies, may issue a waiver for an IHE that maintains such a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute if such contract or agreement includes clear provisions that:

1. protect academic freedom at the institution;
2. prohibit the application of any foreign law on any campus of the institution;
3. grant full managerial authority of the Confucius Institute to the institution including full control over what is being taught, the activities carried out, the research awards that are made, and who is employed at the Confucius Institute; and
4. prohibit co-location with the institution's Chinese language, history, and cultural programs and require separate promotional materials.

*Waiver:* An IHE may submit a request for a waiver or a waiver renewal that includes a description of the Confucius Institute, including at a minimum how the contract or agreement provisions satisfy each of the four criteria above. Waiver requests must be sent to IES at [IESDirector@ed.gov](mailto:IESDirector@ed.gov).

- IES encourages consideration of the following reports by the National Academies in preparing waiver requests: *Confucius Institutes at U.S. Institutions of Higher Education: Waiver Criteria for the Department of Defense and Foreign-Funded Language and Culture Institutes at U.S. Institutions of Higher Education: Practices to Assess and Mitigate Risk*. An IHE not granted a waiver will be provided a written explanation of the reason(s) for the denial.

*Certification Regarding IHEs Hosting or Supporting Confucius Institutes:* In compliance with Section 10339A of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19039), the AOR must certify that, absent a waiver granted by the IES Director, the IHE does not maintain a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute.



#### *(d) 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. IES also determines the PI's compliance with the IES Policy Regarding Public Access to Research if they were the PI on previous IES grants awarded in 2012 or later (<https://ies.ed.gov/about/public-access-research>).

#### *(e) Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) for Key Personnel*

All key personnel are required to have a persistent identifier, such as ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor Identification; <https://orcid.org/>) in place before an award will be made.

#### *(f) Access to Final Research Data*

If your application is being considered for funding, IES program officers will review the completeness and acceptability of the Data Sharing and Management Plan (DSMP) prior to making the new award.

#### *(g) Alignment with SEER Standards*

If your application is being considered for funding, IES program officers will review the completeness and acceptability of the information in Appendix F: Alignment with SEER Standards prior to making the new award.

## **2. Post-Award**

### *(a) Compliance with IES Policy Regarding Public Access to Research*

#### **Public Access to Research**

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/about/public-access-research>) applies to peer-reviewed, original scholarly publications that have been supported (in whole or in part) with direct funding from IES. The public access requirement 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 must occur immediately following the publisher's official date of publication.

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 (<https://eric.ed.gov/?granteefaq>) page. During the submission process, authors will submit bibliographic information from the publication, including the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), title, authors' names and Persistent Digital Identifiers (PIDs such as ORCID), publication date, journal title and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), and associated IES award number(s).

#### **Public Access to Data**

IES program officers will review Data Sharing and Management Plans (DSMPs) annually to ensure grantees are on track for being in compliance with this public access requirement.

### *(b) Pre-Registration*

Grantees must register their studies on a suitable pre-registration platform within the first year of receiving a new award. There are several options for pre-registration including but not limited to the

Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies (REES; <https://sreereg.icpsr.umich.edu/sreereg/>), the Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/>), ClinicalTrials.gov (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/>), AEA Registry (<https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/>), AsPredicted (<https://aspredicted.org/>), and trial registries in the WHO Registry Network (<https://www.who.int/ictrp/network/en/>).

### *(c) Specific Conditions on Grants*

IES may impose specific conditions on a grant pertinent to the proper implementation of key aspects of the proposed research design, lack of timely access to the SLDS, 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, is not compliant with a statutory or regulatory requirement or a requirement of this RFA, or is otherwise not responsible.

### *(d) Attendance at the Annual IES Principal Investigators Meeting*

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. If the state agency is a co-applicant, the co-PI from the state agency should also attend. The project's budget should include this meeting. PIs who are not able to attend the meeting may designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

## **C. Overview of Submission and Scientific Peer Review Process**

### **1. Submitting Your Letter of Intent**

Letters of intent are submitted online at the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO; <https://iesreview.ed.gov/>) system. Select the letter of intent form for this competition. 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. IES staff use the information in letters of intent to identify the expertise needed for the peer review panels and to secure a sufficient number of reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Elements of the letter of intent

- Descriptive title
- Grant competition (Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking in Special Education, ALN 84.324S)
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address of the principal investigator and any co-principal investigators
- Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators and contractors
- Duration of the proposed project (no more than 3 years)
- Estimated total budget request (no more than \$1.2 million)

### **2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions**

#### *(a) Resubmissions*

If you intend to revise and resubmit an application that was submitted to a previous IES competition 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, <https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) that the FY 2027 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: Response to Reviewers](#). Revised and resubmitted applications will be reviewed according to this FY 2027 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 your FY 2027 application is a new application. In Appendix B, you should provide a rationale explaining why your FY 2027 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.

### *(b) Multiple Submissions*

You may submit applications to more than one of the FY 2027 research grant programs offered through the U.S. Department of Education (ED), including those offered through IES as well as those offered through other offices and programs within ED. You may submit multiple applications to this grant program as long as they address different key issues, programs, or policies. However, you may submit a given application only once for the IES FY 2027 grant competitions, meaning you may not submit the same application or similar applications to multiple grant programs within IES, to multiple topics within a grant competition, or multiple times within the same topic. If you submit multiple similar applications, IES will determine whether and which applications will be accepted for review and/or will be eligible for funding.

If you submit the same or similar application to IES and to another funding entity within or external to the Department of Education and receive funding for the non-IES application prior to IES scientific peer review of applications, you **must** withdraw the same or similar application submitted to IES, or IES may otherwise determine you are ineligible to receive an award. If reviews are happening concurrently, IES staff will consult with the other potential funder to determine the degree of overlap and which entity will provide funding if both applications are being considered for funding.

## **3. Application Processing**

**Applications must be submitted electronically and received no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 1, 2026**, using the Grants.gov Workspace (<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview.html>). You must follow the application procedures and submission requirements described in the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) and on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>).

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 PRIMO system (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/>). PRIMO allows applicants to track the progress of their application via the Applicant Notification System (ANS).

Approximately one to two 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 four to six 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/application-submission-guide>) 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/what-we-do/peer-review#peer-review-of-ies-research-grant-applications>) 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/what-we-do/peer-review#lists-of-peer-reviewers>).

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**

The purpose of IES-supported research is to help solve education problems by generating reliable information about education programs, practices, policies, and assessments that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education for all learners. IES expects reviewers to assess the scientific rigor and practical significance of the research proposed in order to judge the likelihood that it will make a meaningful contribution to the larger IES mission. Information about each of these criteria is described in [Part II.A](#).

### ***(a) Significance***

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Significance section? Will the proposed project make a meaningful contribution to the state agency's decision making on the key issue, program, or policy being examined? Does the project team have the appropriate expertise and experience with the issues, programs, and/or policies and adequate time commitment to ensure that the project addresses a question of importance to the state agency?

### ***(b) Research Plan***

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Research Plan section? Will the proposed research address the research questions and provide useful information for the state agency's decision making on the key issue, program, or policy being examined? Does the project team have the appropriate expertise and experience with the research design, methods, and analyses and the adequate time commitment to complete their project responsibilities?

### ***(c) Data***

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Data section? Does the applicant have access to the data necessary to complete the research? Does the project team have the appropriate expertise and experience with the data and the adequate time commitment to complete their project responsibilities?

### ***(d) Decision Making and Dissemination***

Does the applicant address the recommendations described in the Decision Making and Dissemination section? Has the applicant identified which persons and organizational structures within the state agency should receive the findings from the project because they are involved in decision making on the program

or policy studied? Has the applicant identified the appropriate audiences for dissemination? Does the project team have the appropriate expertise and experience with dissemination and decision making, and adequate time commitment to complete their project responsibilities?

## ***6. Award Decisions***

The following factors will be considered in making award decisions for responsive and compliant applications:

- Alignment with SEER Standards
- Contribution to the overall program of research described in this Request for Applications
- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review
- Compliance with research security requirements
- Performance and use of funds under a previous federal award
- Ability to carry out the proposed research within the maximum award and duration requirements
- Compliance with the IES Public Access Policy on previous IES awards
- Persistent identifiers (PIDs) for all key personnel
- Availability of funds

## Part V: Compliance and Responsiveness Checklist

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

See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) 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 (<https://www.grants.gov/>).

| Compliance                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | Have you included a project narrative?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all page maximums?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | Have you included the following required appendices? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Appendix B: Response to Reviewers</a> (Resubmissions only)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Appendix D: Letters of Agreement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Appendix E: Data Sharing and Management Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Appendix F: Alignment with SEER Standards</a></li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Responsiveness                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | Have you met all the general requirements for an application described under <a href="#">Part I.B</a> (Eligible Applicants and Project Team, Eligible Populations, Required Data, Required Learner and Educator Outcomes, Award Limits)?                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | Does your project narrative include the four required sections? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Required Project Narrative Elements |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                     | <u>Significance</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <u>Research Plan</u>                                                                                                                                                       | <u>Data</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <u>Decision Making and Dissemination</u>                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key issues, problems, programs, and/or policies</li> <li>• The learners with or at risk for disabilities you will focus on</li> <li>• The research questions</li> <li>• The project team's expertise in the above</li> </ul>                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research design and methods</li> <li>• The data analysis plan</li> <li>• The project team's expertise in the above</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLDS data</li> <li>• How and when the required data will be made available for the study</li> <li>• The project team's access to and expertise with the data</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting the project's findings to the state agency leadership</li> <li>• Disseminating the findings to multiple audiences</li> <li>• The project team's dissemination expertise</li> </ul> |



## Part VI: Program Code

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You must enter the program code in Item 4b of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance form (see the IES Application Submission Guide, <https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>, for more information about this form). You should enter the code “**NCSER-Using Data in Special Education**” to identify that you are submitting your application to the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking in Special Education grants program.