

NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.324T

Transformative Research in Special Education

Request for Applications

Letter of Intent	October 29, 2026	https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit
Application Package Available	October 16, 2026	https://www.grants.gov
Application Deadline	11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 11, 2026	https://www.grants.gov
Possible Start Date	July 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

A. Introduction

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 (NCSE) supports research to:

1. Expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities to improve the developmental, education, and transition outcomes of such individuals
2. 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), NCSE invites applications for the Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program (ALN 84.324T) as part of the Accelerate, Transform, and Scale (ATS) Initiative. IES models programs in the ATS Initiative on the federal government's Advanced Research Projects Agencies (ARPAs) and the National Institutes of Health Common Fund, to generate exceptionally innovative solutions to high-priority issues in education.

Through the Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program, NCSE seeks to support research and development of transformative solutions to seemingly intractable problems and challenges in special education. Transformative projects enact bold and innovative thinking, involve interdisciplinary collaboration, are inherently risky, and use high-quality research approaches to create high-reward, scalable solutions with the potential to lead to dramatic improvements for students with or at risk for disabilities.

The fiscal year (FY) 2027 Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program seeks applications to research and develop transformative solutions to dramatically improve preservice teacher education systems so they can better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

Preservice teacher education is a key time for teacher development and an important lever for ensuring the next generation of educators have the knowledge and skills necessary for improving outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. However, substantial challenges facing teacher education systems limit their ability to prepare teachers to meet the needs of students with or at risk for disabilities. For example, leaks in the early stages of the teacher pipeline, including declining enrollment and completion rates in teacher preparation programs and teachers with special education certification choosing not to pursue special education teaching positions, have led to reductions in the supply of well-qualified special education teachers, despite increased demand. The proliferation of alternative teacher preparation programs has contributed to increased variability in program content and the preparedness of teachers coming out of these programs. Additionally, even though a significant portion of students with disabilities are educated in the general education classroom, preservice general education teachers receive very little training for teaching students with disabilities.

The challenges facing teacher education systems are not new. Although policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have worked to mitigate these challenges, they have become more complex over time. Given

the rapidly changing educational landscape and multiple pathways for teacher certification, the time is ripe for focused attention and investment to create transformational change at the systems level.

IES expects all IES-funded research to implement the Standards for Excellence in Education Research (<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 grant activities align with applicable standards in SEER 27 (see [Appendix F](#)).

B. The Transformative Program

The Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program has two phases of potential funding. This RFA is for Phase 1 (see [Part II.A.4](#) for award limits for each phase).

- *Phase 1:* The goal is to create a transformative solution to dramatically improve teacher education systems so they can better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. The project team will propose a set of project-specific deliverables and metrics that IES will use to evaluate whether the project is on track and achieves its Phase 1 objectives. Objectives for Phase 1 might include developing the transformative solution for dramatically improving teacher education systems; determining the necessary evidence for key players to adopt the transformative solution; and/or gathering evidence for the transformative solution at the systems, educator, and/or student levels. Although IES does not expect Phase 1 projects to measure education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities, applications should make clear the theory of change for the transformative solution to substantially improve these outcomes.
- *Phase 2:* If the project successfully achieves the Phase 1 objectives, the project team may be eligible to apply for an additional 2-year period of funding, pending availability of funds. Although Phase 2 activities will be project-specific, the goal is to propose a logical extension of Phase 1 activities that connects to education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. By the end of Phase 2, the project team should have evidence from high-quality research of the potential for the transformative solution to dramatically improve teacher education systems and educator outcomes and to have a substantial positive impact on students' education outcomes. IES will share application requirements for Phase 2 directly with Phase 1 awardees in a separate, future set of instructions.

C. Getting Started

1. Technical Assistance for Applicants

IES will offer virtual office hours (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/help>) for general guidance on grant writing, submitting your application, and choosing the appropriate grant program. The ATS-Hub also

provides resources for applicants to this competition (https://ats-hub.org/resources/?tx_category=applicant-support).

The program officer for this grant competition is Dr. Courtney Pollack (courtney.pollack@ed.gov).

2. Letter of Intent

IES strongly encourages applicants to submit a letter of intent on the IES Peer Review website (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit>). 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 scientific peer review panels and to secure enough reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications. See [Part IV.C.1](#) for more information on what to include in your letter of intent.

3. 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](#) provides information on how to prepare an application that is compliant and responsive to the requirements. [Part I](#) provides an overview of this grant program. [Part II](#) provides detail on the requirements and recommendations for the program. [Part III](#) provides information about general formatting, appendices, and other narrative content for the application. [Part IV](#) provides information on competition regulations, the review process, and review criteria. [Part V](#) provides a checklist to ensure you have included all required application elements for the application to advance to scientific peer review. [Part VI](#) provides the program code that you will 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) (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) provides important information about submission procedures and IES-specific guidance and recommendations to help you ensure the application is complete and received without errors on time through Grants.gov.

IES strongly recommends that both the principal investigator (PI) and the authorized organization representative (AOR) read both documents.

4. Eligible Applicants

Institutions that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, institutions of higher education and non-profit, for-profit, public, or private organizations and entities.

5. Project Team

IES encourages applicants to consider the potential benefit of interdisciplinary teams and teams that bring together varied expertise and perspectives. IES recommends that applicants include in the project team individuals with specific familiarity with teacher education systems and the educator and student populations of interest.

Applications should include as key personnel all team members who will make substantial contributions to the work. Describe key personnel in the personnel section of the project narrative and include their biographical sketches as file attachments in the application. Key personnel will be listed on the grant award notification (GAN) when IES makes a new award.

The PI is the primary point of contact with IES. 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. The PI is designated by the institution submitting the application. Other personnel having authority and responsibility for the research and use of grant funds should be co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs). There may be only one PI for the grant award, regardless of whether more than one person will share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the proposed

research. Anyone can serve as a co-PI on a grant, including members of the project team who are at different institutions or those serving as consultants.

While not required at the time of application, all key personnel must have a persistent identifier (PID), such as ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID; <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 biographical sketch 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. All key personnel must have a PID as a condition of award.

6. Ensuring Your Application Receives Scientific Peer Review

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

(a) On-time Submission

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

(b) Compliance

- Includes the required project narrative (see [Part II](#))
- Adheres to all formatting requirements (see [Part III](#))
- 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 scientific peer review.
- Includes all required appendices (see [Part III.C](#))
 - [Appendix A: Engagement and Dissemination Plan](#)
 - [Appendix E: Data Sharing and Management Plan \(DSMP\)](#)
 - [Appendix F: Alignment with SEER 27](#)

(c) Responsiveness

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

Part II: Program Requirements and Recommendations

A. General Requirements

Applications **must meet these general requirements** to receive scientific peer review.

1. *Focus of the Transformative Solution*

The transformative solution **must** focus on dramatically improving teacher education systems so they can better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

2. *Education Outcomes*

(a) Teacher Outcomes

Phase 1 research **must** examine outcomes for preK-12 special education teachers and/or general education teachers (as teacher candidates and/or after they become in-service teachers) who have a responsibility for educating students with or at risk for disabilities. Outcomes may include, but are not limited to, knowledge and skills; certification/licensure; workforce entry; instructional practices; job satisfaction; well-being; and retention/attrition.

Research must focus on preservice teachers; however, in-service special education or general education teachers may be part of the sample if appropriate for the research and development objectives.

(b) Outcomes for Students With or At Risk for a Disability

IES does not require Phase 1 projects to measure education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. However, Phase 2 projects must measure these student outcomes. Applications for Phase 1 **must** include an explicit theory of change that hypothesizes how transforming teacher education systems would improve teacher outcomes and, in turn, education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

Education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities 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.

3. *Education Setting*

Research **must** be relevant to education in the United States and **must** address factors under the control of U.S. education systems.

4. *Award Limits*

The table below provides the maximum award amount and duration for the Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program. Applicants for this program **must not** exceed the limits on award duration and cost per year for Phase 1 and should request the actual duration and amount of funding necessary for the proposed scope of work, rather than the maximum IES allows. Maximum award amount and duration for Phase 2 are for reference only. IES will share application requirements for Phase 2 in a separate, future set of instructions, pending availability of funds.

	Maximum Grant Duration	Maximum Grant Award Per Year	Maximum Total Grant Award
Phase 1	3 years	\$1,250,000	\$3,750,000
Phase 2	2 years	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000

In the application, provide a detailed budget justification for Phase 1 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. See the IES Application Submission Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/application-submission-guide>) for information about completing the SF 424 Research and Related Budget form that is part of the application package available through Grants.gov and for information about what to include in the budget justification.

5. Co-Design Partners

The application **must** describe a plan for establishing co-design partners, who are representatives from key groups that will be affected by the transformative solution (e.g., pre-service teacher candidates, in-service teachers, deans of schools of education, teacher educators, principals, parents, students with disabilities, and related services providers). Co-design is a collaborative research and development process in which the project team works with these partners to develop the transformative solution. Involvement of representatives from key groups ensures their perspectives are central to the transformative solution, which will strengthen its relevance, usability, feasibility, and potential scalability.

Applicants do not need to have co-design partners in place by the application submission date, though they may. At the time of application, applicants should identify the relevant key groups and discuss plans for the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the set of co-design partners in the research and development approach section of the project narrative (see [Part II.C.2](#)). Applicants should plan for co-design partners to participate in both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Grantees may establish co-design partners as part of Year 1 activities. Continuation funding in Years 2 and 3 is contingent on the grantee having co-design partners in place before the end of Year 1. At the time of the first-year annual report, the grantee will provide their program officer with a letter from each co-design partner that outlines their roles and responsibilities.

6. Cost Sharing

The application **must** describe a plan to identify a cost sharing partner and implement a cost sharing arrangement. Cost sharing contributions may come from state, local, or private sources; cost sharing partners may be the grant recipient, subrecipient, or third parties. Applicants do not need to have the cost sharing commitment in place by the application submission date, though they may. Applicants should discuss their plans to identify a cost sharing partner and implement a cost sharing arrangement in the resources section of the project narrative (see [Part II.B.5](#)).

During Year 1, the grantee must secure cost sharing in an amount equal to **at least 5 percent** of the total federal funds provided under the grant, as cash or in-kind contributions. For example, if the grant recipient requests \$3,750,000 from IES, an additional \$187,500 must be generated in cash or in-kind contributions to support the grant. Continuation funding in Years 2 and 3 is contingent on the grantee having a cost sharing agreement in place before the end of Year 1.

At the time of the first-year annual report, the grantee will provide their program officer with (1) a letter from the cost sharing partner that outlines the cost sharing agreement with the contribution amount in cash or in-kind support and (2) a revised budget and budget justification that includes the plan for spending the cost sharing amount in Years 2 and 3 of the grant. Cost sharing contributions may be used for any allowable grant expenses. Unrecovered indirect costs may not be used to meet match

requirements. See 2 CFR 200.306 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/section-200.306>) for more information about cost sharing.

B. Project Narrative Requirements

The project narrative **must** include five sections: Transformative Potential, Research and Development Approach, Deliverables and Metrics Plan, Personnel, and Resources. The five sections of the project narrative **must** include the content below to be responsive to the requirements of this RFA. Applications lacking this specific content will not receive peer review.

The project narrative **must** adhere to the formatting guidelines (see [Part III.B](#)) and be no more than 18 pages. If the narrative exceeds this page limit, IES will remove any pages after the 18th page of the narrative.

An application that meets the project narrative requirements alone doesn't necessarily constitute a strong application; see Recommendations for Strong Applications ([Part II.C](#)) for recommendations to improve the quality of the application.

1. Transformative Potential

In this section, provide an overview of the specific problem, the transformative solution to address that problem, and the populations of teachers and students who are the focus of the transformative solution.

The application **must describe** the:

- Specific problem with teacher education systems that the transformative solution will address
- Teachers and students who are the focus of the transformative solution and the teacher and student outcomes you hypothesize the transformative solution will improve
- Potential of the transformative solution to dramatically improve teacher education systems in ways that will better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and will substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities

2. Research and Development Approach

In this section, describe the Phase 1 objectives and the research and development process that will produce a transformative solution for dramatically improving teacher education systems.

The application **must describe** the:

- Phase 1 objectives
- Research and development approach
- Plan for establishing co-design partners (see [Part II.A.5](#)) before the end of Year 1

3. Deliverables and Metrics Plan

In this section, describe the deliverables and metrics that will provide evidence that the project has met the Phase 1 objectives and has the potential to dramatically improve teacher education systems and

educator outcomes, and in turn, substantially improve education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

The application **must describe** the:

- Phase 1 project deliverables (that is, the outputs or outcomes)
- Metrics (that is, quantifiable measures) that will show the project has met the Phase 1 objectives

4. Personnel

In this section, describe the team's experience and expertise to research and develop the transformative solution for dramatically improving teacher education systems, showing that team members will commit enough time to the project.

The application **must describe** the:

- Project team

5. Resources

In this section, describe the team's organizational capacity and access to resources to execute a project of this size and complexity, and any settings, collaborators, or datasets that will support the research and development.

The application **must describe** the:

- Available resources to conduct the project
- Plan to identify a cost sharing partner and implement a cost sharing arrangement (see [Part II.A.6](#))

C. Recommendations for Strong Applications

IES provides these recommendations to improve the quality of the application. The recommendations support (1) applicants in writing applications and (2) reviewers in evaluating applications that align with IES's expectations of high-quality research that has transformative potential and scientific merit. IES asks reviewers to use these recommendations, in conjunction with their professional judgment and expertise, to determine application quality.

1. Transformative Potential

Describe the specific problem related to teacher education systems you will address and the importance of this problem to key groups in pre-service teacher education (e.g., pre-service teacher candidates, in-service teachers, deans of schools of education, teacher educators, principals, parents, students with disabilities, and related services providers). You may provide clear evidence of the significance of the problem to key groups in pre-service teacher education by including letters from members of one or more of those key groups in [Appendix D](#).

Provide an overview of the transformative solution that you will research and develop to address the problem. Describe how the solution would truly transform teacher education systems and educator outcomes, and in turn, substantially improve education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

Identify the population of teachers and students who are the focus of the transformative solution and why the solution meets a critical need for those populations.

Describe the theory of change that specifies how the transformative solution would improve teacher outcomes and, in turn, education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. If there is limited relevant literature to support the theory of change due to the high level of innovation, describe in detail the underlying logic or rationale that supports how the transformative solution would improve teacher and student outcomes.

2. Research and Development Approach

Specify the Phase 1 objectives, the research and development approach, key measures including their reliability and validity, and the data analytic approach. Given the high level of innovation, conventionally detailed research plans and pilot data are not required. In lieu of pilot data, clarify the logic of the research and development approach and how it is achievable in the context of the application's goals and timeline.

Describe the co-design process, including the plan for establishing co-design partners by the end of Year 1 to ensure the perspectives of individuals from key groups (e.g., pre-service teacher candidates, in-service teachers, deans of schools of education, teacher educators, principals, parents, students with disabilities, and related services providers) are central to the transformative solution.

- Specify the key groups relevant to the transformative solution.
- Describe how you will identify co-design partners.
- Describe how co-design partners will contribute to the research, development and/or implementation of the transformative solution.

Discuss the approach to assess adaptability for different contexts and the potential for scaling.

Because implementation challenges are inherent to innovative research, IES expects teams to continually assess progress and adjust plans to achieve Phase 1 objectives. Describe plans to continually reassess the approach, possible alternative paths at critical junctures in the Phase 1 timeline, and general strategies to maximize the likelihood of success.

Describe strategies to protect the objectivity of the research and development activities, including after you implement the cost sharing arrangement.

Provide a clear timeline as a table or figure in either the project narrative or as supplemental material in [Appendix C](#). Discuss the timeline only in the project narrative.

3. Deliverables and Metrics Plan

For each Phase 1 objective, describe the deliverables and metrics that will provide evidence the project is meeting its goals each year. A comprehensive plan includes metrics for the potential to make a dramatic impact on preservice teacher education and educator outcomes and a timeline to produce the metrics and deliverables. Example metrics are whether the transformative solution works as intended, is feasible and relevant for key groups, generates interest and enthusiasm among members of key groups, and/or shows promise to improve educator outcomes and/or education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

Describe the result of Phase 1 that would signal the transformative solution has the potential to improve student outcomes. If awarded Phase 2 funding, by the end of Phase 2, the project team should have evidence from high-quality research of the potential for the transformative solution to have a substantial positive impact on students' education outcomes.

Include a high-level overview of what you would propose for Phase 2, if you were to receive additional funding. Include sufficient detail to show the plan to gather student education outcome data would be feasible.

4. Personnel

Strong applications will include a project team with expertise relevant to each aspect of the project. IES encourages applicants to consider the potential benefit of interdisciplinary teams and teams that bring together varied expertise and perspectives. IES recommends that applicants include in the project team individuals with specific familiarity with teacher education systems and the educator and student populations of interest.

Describe how the qualifications, experience, and expertise of the project team will contribute to the success of the research and development for a truly transformative solution that produces the desired outcomes for its intended population(s).

Identify the management structure of the team and procedures to keep the project on track, ensure the quality of its work, and maintain objectivity including:

- Roles and responsibilities of personnel
- Proportion of time personnel will devote to the project, expressed as percent effort over a 12-month calendar year
- Methods to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, including strategies to overcome discipline-specific barriers that can impede this collaboration

5. Resources

Strong applications will demonstrate there is sufficient research infrastructure and institutional capacity to carry out the research and development of the transformative solution. Do not rely on an institution's overall reputation. Instead, describe the specific research infrastructure and capacity at both the primary applicant institution and any subaward institutions:

- Describe the institution's capacity to manage a grant of this size and access to resources available at the primary institution and any subaward institutions.
- Describe access to the settings in which the research and development of the transformative solution will take place and/or access to necessary datasets. In [Appendix D](#), you may include letters of agreement documenting participation and cooperation from settings that will take part in the research and development; and/or access to data, data licenses, or existing memoranda of understanding. Strong letters convey that organizations understand and agree to their specific roles and project activities. Letters of agreement are optional.
- Describe access to specific communications offices and/or organizations that will facilitate the dissemination plan (see [Appendix A](#)).
- Describe the plan for acquiring any resources that are not currently accessible, will require significant expenditures, and are necessary for the successful completion of the project, such as equipment, test materials, curricula, or training materials.

Part III: Preparing Your Application

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>) to learn how to prepare a complete application that is submitted on time 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 application and that all applicants have similar expectations for length and space, IES specifies the following formatting conventions. 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. Font size for tables, figures, charts, and diagrams may be 10-point.

5. Citations

Use parenthetical author-date style for citations rather than numeric citations that correspond to the reference list.

C. Required and Optional Appendices

The required project narrative in [Part II.B](#) 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 will be reviewed for transformative potential and scientific merit.

1. Appendix A: Engagement and Dissemination Plan (Required)

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

The Engagement and Dissemination Plan is intended to demonstrate that the research you propose will attend to and reach the intended audience. The Engagement and Dissemination Plan should:

- Identify the specific groups relevant to the transformative solution.
- Describe how the proposed research reflects engagement with relevant key groups throughout the research process, including in the development of the application.
- Describe how you will, in practical and accessible ways, disseminate findings to relevant key groups.
- Describe the engagement and dissemination history of key personnel in ways that demonstrate the team's ability and capacity to carry out the plan of engaging with different audiences and disseminating research findings transparently and accessibly.

The Engagement and Dissemination Plan is the only information that may be in Appendix A; IES will remove all other materials prior to review of the application.

2. Appendix B: Response to Reviewers (Not Applicable/Do Not Submit)

Appendix B is not applicable to this RFA because there are no resubmissions for this program for FY2027. IES will remove any content 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 forwarding for scientific peer review.

In Appendix C, you may include figures, charts, or tables with supplementary information. For example, you may include a timeline that identifies the timing of key deliverables and the collection of metrics that demonstrate the project is meeting its objectives, a diagram of the management structure of the team, or examples of measures to collect data like individual test items, tests, surveys, and observation and interview protocols. You may also include examples of curriculum materials, computer screen shots, or assessment items. Font size for tables, figures, charts, and diagrams may be 10-point.

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

4. Appendix D: Letters of Agreement (Optional)

Appendix D must meet the general formatting guidelines. There is **no recommended page length** for Appendix D. In Appendix D, you may provide letters of agreement from teacher preparation programs, districts, and/or other settings or data sources that will participate in or provide data for the research and/or individuals who will serve as consultants. You may also use this appendix to provide copies of

letters that provide clear evidence of the importance of the identified problem to key groups in pre-service teacher education.

Letters of agreement should include enough information to convey that the author of the letter understands the nature of the time commitment, timing of participation, required space and personnel, resources the organization would contribute to the research project, the ways that organization personnel would coordinate with the project team (e.g., quarterly meetings with administrative staff, weekly research team observations in classrooms), and data provision (if applicable) in time to meet the project timeline.

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 on the size of file attachments.

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

5. Appendix E: Data Sharing and Management Plan (Required)

All applications **must** include a 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 forwarding 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 considered for funding based on the scores received during the scientific review process but the DSMP is determined incomplete or insufficient, you will be required to provide additional detail regarding the DSMP.

When you, the PI, and authorized organization representative (AOR) sign the cover page of the grant application, you 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 in Appendix E; IES will remove all other material prior to review of the application.

6. Appendix F: Alignment with SEER 27 (Required)

In Appendix F, you **must** include a table describing the alignment of your application with the standards in SEER 27 (<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 domain/standard in SEER 27 and refer to the location in the narrative where additional details about project alignment are included. If a particular domain/standard is not relevant for your project, mark not applicable.

<i>SEER 27 Domain/ Standard</i>	<i>High-level summary of how the proposed project meets these standards</i>	<i>Pages in Narrative and/or Appendix</i>
Domain 1	Objectivity and Scientific Integrity	
Theory and Hypotheses		
Research Design		
Communication of Uncertainty		
Integrity		
Conflicts of Interest		
Domain 2	Relevance	
Relevant and Student-Outcomes Focused		
Engagement		
Generalizability		
Design for Scale	<i>Applicable only to development and impact evaluations.</i>	
Domain 3	Open Science	
Pre-registration		
Open Data		
Open Methods		
Open Access		

Domain 4	Intervention Research <i>Only complete the Domain 4 elements if you are conducting a development study or an impact evaluation.</i>	
Core Components		
Implementation and Treatment Contrast	<i>Applicable only to impact evaluations.</i>	
High Quality Measures		
Distal Outcomes		
Cost and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis	<i>Cost analysis is applicable to development and impact evaluations. Cost-effectiveness analysis is applicable only to impact evaluations.</i>	

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 in Appendix F; IES will remove all other material prior to review of the application.

D. Other Narrative Content

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

1. Project Summary / Abstract

You **must** submit the project summary/abstract as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. If your project is recommended for funding, IES will use this abstract as the basis for the online abstract that is posted on the IES website. IES recommends that the project summary/abstract be two pages long and follow the format used for IES online abstracts. See the online search engine of funded research grants (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/>) for examples of the content to include in the project summary/abstract.

(a) Title

- **Title:** Distinct, descriptive title of the project

(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 transformative potential of the project, project activities, and intended outcomes.

- **Purpose:** A brief description of the transformative solution, the problem with pre-service teacher education systems it addresses, why it's transformative, and the expected outcomes.
- **Project Activities:** An overview of the research and development approach.
- **Products:** A brief description of the expected products and/or processes the project team will develop.

(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 (at the state level) where the project activities 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 teachers and students the transformative solution will focus on.
- **Transformative Solution for Dramatically Improving Teacher Education Systems:** A brief description of the transformative solution that is the focus of the application.
- **Research Design and Methods:** A brief description of the major features of the research and development activities, including a brief description of the project timeline.
- **Control Condition:** If applicable, a brief description of the control or comparison condition, including the participants and what they will experience. State that there is no control or comparison condition, if relevant.
- **Key Measures:** A brief description of key measures, including what constructs the measures assess, whether the measures exist or will be researcher-developed, and how the measures represent meaningful education outcomes.
- **Data Analytic Strategy:** A brief description of the data analytic strategies the team will use to answer the research questions.
- **Related IES Projects:** A list of the IES-issued award number and/or corresponding online abstract link (URLs) to completed or ongoing IES-funded projects that are directly related to the proposed project.

2. Bibliography and References Cited

You **must** submit the bibliography and references cited as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. There is no recommended page length for the bibliography and references cited. Citations should be complete, 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, use the author-date style for citations in the project narrative (see [Part III.B.5](#)).

3. Human Subjects Narrative

You **must** submit an exempt or non-exempt human subjects narrative as a separate PDF attachment in the application package. IES does 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 Institutional Review Board approval at the time you submit an application. However, if an application involving non-exempt human subjects research is recommended for funding, the designated U.S. Department of Education official will request that you obtain and send certification within 30 days of the formal request.

4. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel

You **must** submit a biographical sketch (an abbreviated CV) and current and pending support information for each person named as key personnel in the application. You may also submit biographical sketches for consultants (optional). Biographical sketches must be **no more than five pages**. There is **no recommended page length** for current and pending support.

Create one PDF file for each person's biographical sketch and current and pending support. Attach each person's PDF to the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form in the application package. IES strongly encourages applicants to use SciENcv (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>) where you will find IES Biographical Sketch and IES Current and Pending (Other) Support formats. After logging in to SciENcv, you will be able to select the IES formats after selecting the "Create a New Document" option. You may also develop your own formats. If you use SciENcv, the research security certification will be part of the IES format. If you use your own format, you will need to add this information.

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, training experience, and research experience, including experience working with the study population as applicable.

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

While not required at the time of application, all key personnel must have a persistent identifier (PID), such as 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 biographical sketch 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 you or any key member of your project team does not yet have a PID, IES encourages you to establish one as soon as possible, given the requirement that all key personnel are required to have a PID in place before IES will make an award.

Part IV: Competition Regulations and Review Criteria

A. Funding Mechanisms and Restrictions

1. Mechanism of Support

IES intends to award cooperative agreements 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

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq.

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. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

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 Award Requirements

1. Pre-Award

(a) Clarification and Budget Questions

IES uses the scientific peer review process as the first step in making funding decisions. If your application is recommended for funding based on the outcome of 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) the 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 Education Settings

If the research you propose to conduct requires access to data and/or education settings (such as teacher preparation programs, districts, secondary datasets; or studies currently under way) you will need to provide evidence that you have access to these resources prior to receiving funding. Whenever possible, include letters of agreements in [Appendix D](#) from those who have responsibility for or access to the data or settings you wish to incorporate when you submit the application. Even in circumstances where you have included such letters with your application, **IES will require additional supporting evidence prior to the release of funds**. If you cannot provide such documentation, IES may not award the grant or may withhold funds.

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

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

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

(c) Compliance with Research Security Requirements

All recipients of IES research and research training funds are required to comply 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.

- 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/funding/researchaccess.asp>).

(e) Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) for Key Personnel

All key personnel are required to have a persistent identifier (PID), 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 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 27

If your application is considered for funding, IES program officers will review the completeness and acceptability of the information in Appendix F: Alignment with SEER 27 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 PI 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 upon acceptance for 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 page (<https://eric.ed.gov/?granteefaq>). During the submission process, authors will submit bibliographic information from the publication, including the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), title, authors' names and persistent 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 DSMPs annually to ensure grantees are on track to comply 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/ictcp/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 or to reaching data access goals, 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 PI 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. The grant's budget should include this meeting. Should the PI not be able to attend the meeting, they may designate another person who is key personnel on the research team to attend.

(e) Participation in ATS Hub Activities

The IES-funded ATS Hub (<https://ats-hub.org/>) supports the ATS initiative, including recipients of this grant program. IES expects the PI to participate in ATS Hub events to foster community building and knowledge exchange, including monthly community calls, workshops, and annual demo days. The PI may designate another person who is key personnel to attend ATS Hub events when the PI is unable to attend.

(f) Co-Design Partners

IES requires co-design partners for this program, to be established by the end of Year 1 (see [Part II.A.5](#)).

(g) Cost Sharing

IES requires cost sharing for this program, to be established by the end of Year 1 (see [Part II.A.6](#)).

C. Overview of Application and Scientific Review Process

1. Submitting Your Letter of Intent

Letters of intent are submitted online at the IES Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO) system (<https://iesreview.ed.gov/LOI/LOISubmit>). Select the letter of intent form for the grant program under which you plan to submit your application. The online submission form contains fields for each of the content areas listed below. Use these fields to provide the following 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 scientific peer review panels and to secure enough reviewers to handle the anticipated number of applications.

Elements of the letter of intent:

- Descriptive title for the proposed project
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address of the PI
- Name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators
- Duration of the proposed project (attend to the duration maximum)
- Estimated total budget request (attend to the budget maximum)

2. Resubmissions and Multiple Submissions

(a) Resubmissions

There are no resubmissions for this program in FY2027.

(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 propose to research and develop different transformative solutions. 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 December 11, 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 Peer Review Information Management Online (PRIMO) system (<https://iesreview.ed.gov>). PRIMO allows applicants to track the progress of their application via the Applicant Notification System (ANS).

Approximately 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 transformative potential and scientific 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 three 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 and an overall scientific merit score, for each application they review. Next, IES will calculate an average criterion score for Transformative Potential and an average overall scientific merit score for each application based on the initial scores from each reviewer. IES will prepare a preliminary rank order of applications based on the average Transformative Potential criterion scores and from that rank ordering will identify the most competitive applications. For applications with the most competitive Transformative Potential scores, IES will prepare a preliminary rank order of applications based on overall scientific merit. The preliminary rank order will be prepared 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 have the strongest transformative potential and to have the highest scientific merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank ordering process described above. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any application that they believe merits full panel review but that would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

5. Review Criteria for Transformative Potential and Scientific Merit

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 education access for all students. The purpose of the NCSEF-funded Transformative program is to solve longstanding challenges in special education. IES expects reviewers to assess the transformative potential and scientific merit of the proposed research to judge the likelihood that it will make a meaningful contribution to the larger IES mission. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is in [Part II](#).

(a) Transformative Potential

To what extent does the application address the Transformative Potential recommendations ([Part II.C.1](#))?

To what extent does the application address a specific problem that is significant to key groups in preservice teacher education? To what extent does the transformative solution have the potential to dramatically improve preservice teacher education and educator outcomes and, in turn, substantially improve education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities?

(b) Research and Development Approach

To what extent does the application address the Research and Development Approach recommendations ([Part II.C.2](#))?

To what extent is the research and development approach clear and appropriate to accomplish the Phase 1 objectives? To what extent does the application provide a compelling logic for the approach and justify its feasibility in the absence of pilot data? To what extent does the plan for identifying co-design partners include the relevant key groups and clearly specify how partners will contribute to the research, development, and/or implementation of the transformative solution? To what extent does the application describe strategies to protect the objectivity of the research and development activities?

(c) Deliverables and Metrics Plan

To what extent does the application address the Deliverables and Metrics Plan recommendations ([Part II.C.3](#))?

To what extent will the deliverables and metrics provide evidence that the project has met its Phase 1 objectives? Are the metrics high quality and will they address the potential for the transformative solution to make a dramatic impact on preservice teacher education and educator outcomes?

(d) Personnel

To what extent does the application address the Personnel recommendations ([Part II.C.4](#))?

To what extent does the project team possess the relevant expertise for each aspect of the research and development? Are the project team's roles and responsibilities sufficient to complete the research and development activities?

(e) Resources

To what extent does the application address the Resources recommendations ([Part II.C.5](#))?

Are the research infrastructure and institutional capacity sufficient to support the research and development activities?

(f) Engagement and Dissemination

To what extent does the application address the recommendations for [Appendix A](#)?

To what extent do the research and development activities reflect engagement with relevant key groups? Is the plan to disseminate findings practical and accessible for relevant key groups? Do key personnel have a history of engaging with different audiences and disseminating research findings transparently and accessibly?

6. Award Decisions

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

- Alignment with SEER 27
- Transformative potential as determined by scientific peer review
- Scientific merit as determined by scientific peer review
- Contribution to the overall program of research described in this RFA
- 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 receive scientific peer review. Use this checklist to ensure you have included all required components for compliance and addressed all general and project narrative requirements for responsiveness. This checklist does not include project narrative recommendations, which are IES's expectations of high-quality projects and which reviewers use, in conjunction with their professional judgment and expertise, to evaluate applications. See [Part II.C](#) for project narrative recommendations.

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 you must complete and the PDF files that you must attach to the forms for a successful submission through Grants.gov.

Compliance	
Have you included a project narrative (Part II)?	
Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all formatting requirements (Part III.B)?	
Do the project narrative and other narrative content adhere to all page maximums? IES will remove any pages above the maximum before forwarding an application for scientific peer review.	
Have you included the required appendices: Appendix A , Appendix E , and Appendix F ?	
General Requirements for Responsiveness	
Does the transformative solution focus on dramatically improving teacher education systems so they can better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities (Part II.A.1)?	
Does the research examine teacher outcomes and include an explicit theory of change that hypothesizes how the transformative solution will improve education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities (Part II.A.2)?	
Is the research relevant to education in the U.S. and does it address issues under the control of U.S. education systems (Part II.A.3)?	
Does the application conform to the award limits (Part II.A.4)?	
Project Narrative Requirements for Responsiveness	
Does your project narrative include the five required sections? Did you describe the elements required for each section as listed below (Part II.B)?	
Transformative Potential	• Specific problem with teacher education systems that the transformative solution will address • Teachers and students who are the focus of the transformative solution and the teacher and student outcomes the transformative solution will improve • Potential of the transformative solution to dramatically improve teacher education systems in ways that will better attract, train, and retain preK-12 general and special education teachers who are prepared to provide high-quality instruction and will substantially improve outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities
Research and Development Approach	• Phase 1 objectives • Research and development approach • Plan for establishing co-design partners before the end of Year 1
Deliverables and Metrics Plan	• Phase 1 project deliverables • Metrics that will show the project has met the Phase 1 objectives
Personnel	• Project team
Resources	• Available resources to conduct the project • Plan to identify a cost sharing partner and implement a cost sharing arrangement

Part VI: Program Code

Applications to the Transformative Research in Special Education Grants program (ALN 84.324T) are submitted under a single 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).

All applicants should enter the code “**NCSER-Transformative**” in the field for Item 4b.