



Society for Prevention Research 32nd Annual Meeting

Pre-Conference Workshop V

Date: May 28, 2024

Time: 8:30am-5:00pm

Title: IES Funding Opportunities and Resources to Support Partnerships in Education Research and Prevention Science

Presenters

- Emily J. Doolittle, Ph.D. (Emily.Doolittle@ed.gov; 202-245-7833), Team Lead for Social Behavioral Research in the National Center for Education Research (NCER), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Doolittle joined IES in 2008. She is the NCER Team Lead for Social Behavioral Research and oversees a large and diverse research grant portfolio on the Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Context for Teaching and Learning <https://ies.ed.gov/ncer/projects/program.asp?ProgID=21>. She takes a lead role in writing NCER's requests for applications and works closely with a wide variety of researchers to provide technical assistance both individually and through webinars and workshops on IES grant writing and how to apply. Dr. Doolittle received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Chicago.
- Jacquelyn A. Buckley, Ph.D. (Jacquelyn.Buckley@ed.gov; (202) 804-7471), NCSER Team Lead for Disability Research in the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Buckley joined IES in 2006 and oversees the Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Competence research portfolio <https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/program.asp?ProgID=56>. She has led several IES grant writing workshops at local and national conferences and has conducted numerous webinars on specific grant programs as well as grant writing. She also provides ongoing technical assistance to new and returning applicants and takes a lead role in writing NCSER's main request for applications. Dr. Buckley received her Ph.D. in Educational (School) Psychology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Jill Carlivati McCarroll, Ph.D. (Jill.McCarroll@ed.gov; 202-304-2920) is the Study Director of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies (ECLS) program <https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/> at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education. Dr. McCarroll joined NCES in 2008. Since then, she has authored

several reports utilizing ECLS data and serves as the point of contact for data user inquiries about ECLS data. She also co-leads an internal NCES group that discusses challenges and proposed solutions with respect to study recruitment for federal studies. In addition to her work at NCES, she has been a member of various government interagency working groups pertaining to federal statistics and their use, for example serving as a subgroup chairperson for the Office of Management and Budget's 2017-18 Interagency Working Group for Research on Race and Ethnicity. Dr. McCarroll received her doctoral degree in Child Psychology at the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development.

- David A. Richards, Ph.D. (David.Richards@ed.gov, 202-245-6202) is an Education Statistician in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at IES. Dr. Richards joined IES in 2015. At NCES, he is the Study Director of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS; <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps/>), which monitors the progress of first-time beginning postsecondary students toward degree completion, three years and six years after their first enrollment. He also provides support for the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B). Prior to joining the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), David was a Senior Research Associate at the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute at UNCF. Dr. Richards earned his doctorate in Social Psychology at the University of Florida.

Workshop Purpose

This workshop will provide instruction and advice on writing a successful grant application to the IES research centers (the National Center for Education Research [NCER; <https://ies.ed.gov/ncer/research/>] and the National Center for Special Education Research [NCSE; <https://ies.ed.gov/ncser/research/>]). Each center offers a flagship program, NCER's Education Research Grants Program (ALN 84.305A) and NCSE's Special Education Research Grants Program (ALN 84.324A), which are designed to support rigorous research that helps solve significant education problems and that is relevant to the teaching and learning needs of the diverse population of the United States. IES research grants programs have a strong emphasis on the role of partnerships between researchers and educators/schools to help ensure that the research we support meets local needs to increase the likelihood that best practices are sustained and scaled.

The workshop will also describe the wide range of IES resources available to researchers (see <https://ies.ed.gov/resourcesforresearchers.asp>), with an emphasis on those available through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In particular, the workshop will focus on available NCES datasets (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp>) and NCES data tools (<https://nces.ed.gov/datatools/>) that will be of interest to the prevention science community. NCES's large data sets, such as those from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies (ECLS) program, high school longitudinal studies program, and postsecondary studies program, will be highlighted. These studies provide rich data on the diverse population of America's students, their development, and their schooling, for example including information on students' neighborhoods, homes, and schools.

IES is best known for an emphasis on rigorous, high-quality education research with strong internal validity. IES also has a strong emphasis on external validity to address the diverse needs of educators and students in the United States. Participants will learn about the IES Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER; <https://ies.ed.gov/seer/index.asp>) that promote rigorous education research that is transparent, actionable, and focused on consequential outcomes. The SEER standards call for (1) pre-registering studies; (2) making research findings, methods, and data open; (3) addressing inequities in learners' opportunities, access to resources, and outcomes; (4) identifying interventions' components; (5) documenting treatment implementation and contrast; (6) analyzing interventions' costs; (7) using high-quality outcome measures; (8) facilitating generalization of study findings; and (9) supporting scaling of promising interventions.

Applicants make a large investment in writing an application to IES research grant programs, and peer reviewers make a substantial time investment in reading them. Participants will learn about requirements and recommendations for IES grant applications, including those related to the use of innovative study designs and fostering collaboration with non-research partners. Participants will also learn about NCES data sets and tools that can be used to support their applications to IES and how these resources can be used to support their program of research more generally.

Applications that do not address all requirements are not accepted for review and are a poor investment of applicant time. Applications that do not follow IES' recommendations often receive poor reviews and again represent a poor investment of applicant time and reviewer time. Although the peer review process provides feedback on substantive issues, it is more efficient for applicants to learn how to better present their intended research and avoid common pitfalls before submitting their application. This short course seeks to help applicants write clearer, responsive applications that can be judged on their substantive merits by the peer reviewers.

Specific Learning Objectives

Participants will gain the following knowledge and skills:

- Understanding of how the IES grant programs support education research with strong internal and external validity
- Understanding of how partnerships can improve the quality and relevance of education research
- Understanding of the IES SEER standards
- Understanding of the wide range of IES resources available to researchers
- Knowledge of the focal areas supported under the Education and Special Education Research programs
- Knowledge of the IES project types, including the purpose of each type and strong and innovative research designs for each, including for example, designs to build and evaluate adaptive interventions.

- Understanding of critical information that should be provided in each section of the Research Narrative portion of an IES grant application (Significance, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources)
- Understanding of the IES requirement for dissemination to audiences that will benefit from the findings, including non-research audiences (practitioners, policymakers, parents, the general public)
- Understanding of the IES requirement to analyze intervention cost and cost effectiveness
- Understanding of common pitfalls in writing an IES application
- Grant writing skills including how to clearly communicate the significance of the research idea; develop/present a theory of change; develop and organize a research plan; build a strong team; and plan for dissemination

Target Audience

Participants should be in a position to apply to IES grant competitions. They can include experienced researchers who have never submitted to IES or who have submitted but not been funded, early career researchers, and finishing graduate students who are taking on a position in the prevention science field or education research field. Participants are expected to be familiar with the IES Requests for Applications (see <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>) and have the skills needed to conduct such research. Participants will benefit most from their time in the workshop if they bring a one-page summary of a research idea including research questions or specific aims that they think may be a good fit for the IES research grant programs.

Workshop Outline

- A. Introduction
 - a. Participants identify their research issue
- B. Overview of IES
 - a. Lecture on IES background, research grant programs, the peer review process, the IES SEER standards, IES resources for researchers, and IES's support for partnerships in education research
- C. General Grant Writing Tips and Common Pitfalls
- D. Focal Areas
 - a. Lecture on research topics supported under the Education Research and the Special Education Research programs
 - b. Examples of work being done under different topics
 - c. Participants identify which topic(s) their research issue falls under*
- E. Project Types

- a. Lecture on the four types, including the purpose of each and strong and innovative research designs that can be used
 - b. Examples of partnership and collaboration in the project types
 - c. Examples of prevention-related work being done under each type
 - d. Participants identify the type they would like to do research under*
- F. Break into small groups of people interested in doing similar work
- G. Overview of the Research Narrative portion of the application
- H. The Significance Section of the Research Narrative
- a. Lecture on what does and does not need to be included in this section
 - b. Go over examples of clear and unclear Significance sections
 - c. In small groups, participants share their one-page summaries and give each other feedback on clarity and alignment with the IES project type*
 - d. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions
- I. Research Method section of Research Narrative
- a. Lecture on what does and does not need to be included in this section, including plans for analyzing cost and cost effectiveness of education interventions
 - b. Lecture on the theory of change and its importance to the application
 - c. Individuals draft theories of change and share in small groups for feedback*
 - d. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions
- J. Personnel section of Research Narrative
- a. Lecture on what should be included in this section and how this information should link to the Research Plan
 - b. Lecture and discussion on strategies for structuring project teams (who should be designated principal investigator, co-principal investigator, and co-investigator) and describing expertise if principal investigator is an early career researcher vs. a more experienced researcher with prior federal grants
 - a. This section will also highlight strategies for including non-research partners in research applications
 - c. Return to class format for questions or comments
- K. Resources section of Research Narrative
- a. Lecture on what should be included in this section and how this information should link to the Research Plan
 - b. Discussion of how to highlight resources in the application to be informative to reviewers

- c. Return to class format for questions or comments
- L. Other important sections of the application
 - a. Dissemination history and plan
 - b. Letters of agreement (and the importance of demonstrating partnerships with schools)
 - c. Data sharing and management plan
- M. Resources for Researchers – description of resources available to interested researchers
 - a. Funding opportunities (virtual office hours, videos of submission and peer review process)
 - b. Methodological (implementation science, adaptive interventions, SMART designs, guidelines on replication and reproducibility, cluster-randomized trials, power analysis, effect sizes)
 - c. Methods Training (cluster-randomized trials, economic analysis, meta-analysis, implementation science, single-case design, adaptive interventions and SMART designs)
 - d. Available IES datasets
 - i. Restricted-use Data Licenses
 - ii. Restricted Data Available
 - e. Available NCES data tools
 - iii. Data Lab
 - iv. Distance Learning Dataset Training
 - v. Online Codebook
 - vi. NAEP Data Explorer and International Data Explorer
 - vii. State Education Agency data on public and private schools
 - viii. EDGE – Education Demographics and Geographic Estimates