



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; From Seedlings to Scale Grant Program and Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice

AGENCY: Institute of Education Sciences, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2025 for the Education Research Grant Programs.

DATES:

Application Packages Available: June 20, 2024.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 15, 2024.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Erin Higgins. Telephone: 202-987-1531. Email: erin.higgins@ed.gov.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: In awarding research grants, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) intends to provide national leadership in expanding knowledge and understanding of (1) education outcomes for all learners from early childhood education through postsecondary and adult education, and (2) employment and wage outcomes when relevant (such as for those engaged in career and technical, postsecondary, or adult education). The IES research grant programs are designed to provide interested individuals and the general public with reliable and valid information about education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities for all learners. These interested individuals include parents, educators, learners, researchers, and policymakers. In carrying out its grant programs, IES provides support for programs of research in areas of demonstrated national need.

Assistance Listing Numbers: 84.305I and 84.305N.

OMB Control Number: 4040-0001.

Competitions in This Notice:

The IES National Center for Education Research (NCER) is announcing two competitions: From Seedlings to Scale and Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice. We published a request for information in the *Federal Register* on October 12, 2023 (88 FR 70652) describing the purpose and goals for the From Seedlings to Scale program.

From Seedlings to Scale (ALN 84.305I). Through this program, IES will invest in innovative products, policies, and processes within an identified focus area through three phases of increasing funding and time duration to support ideas as they grow from seedlings to scalable solutions. In this notice, IES is inviting applications to Phase One. During this initial phase, teams will clarify their understanding of the problem, refine their solution—which could be a product, policy, or process—through engagement with relevant stakeholders, and build out a detailed plan for further research and development (R&D). Phase One teams will apply for Phase Two funding and will need to provide a compelling rationale generated from the Phase One work that the idea is worth further investment and a detailed R&D plan for how they will develop their idea into a scalable solution and generate evidence of impact. Teams that move onto Phase Two will develop their concept into a fully functioning initial version of the solution. IES may, at its discretion, support additional work in Phase

Three. This third phase would focus on evaluating the impact of the solution across multiple settings and contexts and laying the foundation to scale the solution to users. Additional information about the phased nature of this competition is provided in the request for applications (RFA). Projects will incorporate high-quality research, solution development, and attention to sustainability and scaling throughout all phases. For the FY 2025 competition, NCER will consider only applications that address the following topic:

- o Phase One projects for the Seamless Personalized Education Experiences Delivered at Scale (SPEED at Scale) focus area. The SPEED at Scale focus area aims to develop innovative solutions that allow teachers to seamlessly provide personalized instruction for PreK-12 grade students.

Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice (ALN 84.305N). For the FY 2025 competition, NCER will only consider applications that address the following topic:

- o Accelerate, Transform, Scale (ATS) Initiative Hub.

The ATS Initiative supports education R&D to create scalable solutions to improve education outcomes for all learners and eliminate persistent achievement and attainment gaps. The ATS Initiative Hub will support the establishment of new ATS Initiative

programs and provide high-level support to IES in coordinating existing programs that fall under this new initiative.

Multiple Submissions: You may submit applications to more than one of the FY 2025 research grant programs offered through the Department, including those offered through IES as well as those offered through other offices and programs within the Department. You may submit multiple applications to each IES grant program announced here as long as they address different key issues, programs, or policies. However, you may submit a given application only once for the IES FY 2025 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. In addition, if you submit the same or similar application to IES and to another funding entity within or external to the Department 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.

Exemption from Proposed Rulemaking: Under section 191 of the Education Sciences Reform Act, 20 U.S.C. 9581, IES is not subject to section 437(d) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232(d), and is therefore not required to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on matters relating to grants.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 9501 *et seq.*

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 77, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. In addition, the regulations in 34 CFR part 75 are 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(a)-(c), 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, 75.230, 75.250(a), and 75.708. (b) The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted

and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Note: The open licensing requirement in 2 CFR 3474.20 does not apply to these competitions.

Note: The Department will implement the provisions in the OMB final rule *OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance*, which amends 2 CFR parts 25, 170, 175, 176, 180, 182, 183, 184, and 200, on October 1, 2024. Grant applicants that anticipate a performance period start date on or after October 1, 2024 should follow the provisions in the [OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance](#) (89 FR 30046) when preparing an application. For more information about these updated regulations please visit: www.cfo.gov/resources/uniform-guidance/.

II. Award Information

Types of Awards: Discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

Fiscal Information: Although Congress has not yet enacted an appropriation for FY 2025, IES is inviting applications for these competitions now so that applicants can have adequate time to prepare their applications. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. IES may announce additional competitions later in 2024.

Estimated Range of Awards:

From Seedlings to Scale (SPEED at Scale Phase One):

\$300,000 to \$500,000 for the entire project period of 1 year.

ATS Initiative Hub: \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 annually across an entire project period of 5 years.

The size of the awards will depend on the scope of the projects proposed.

Estimated Number of Awards: The number of awards made under each competition will depend on the quality of the applications received for that competition and the availability of funds.

IES may waive any of the following limits on awards in the special case that the peer review process results in a tie between two or more grant applications, making it impossible to adhere to the limits without funding only some of the equally ranked applications. In that case, IES may make a larger number of awards to include all applications of the same rank.

For the From Seedlings to Scale grant program (ALN 84.305I), we intend to fund up to 12 Phase One SPEED at Scale teams. However, should funding be available, we may consider making additional awards to high-quality applications that remain unfunded after 12 awards are made.

For the Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Policy and Practice (ALN 84.305N), we intend to fund one ATS Initiative Hub team.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period:

From Seedlings to Scale (Phase One): Up to 1 year.

ATS Initiative Hub: Up to 5 years.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Eligible applicants are organizations that have the demonstrated ability and capacity to conduct rigorous research and development. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, institutions of higher education and non-profit, for-profit, public, or private entities.

2. a. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* The competitions in this notice do not require cost sharing or matching.

b. *Indirect Cost Rate Information:* These programs use an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

3. *Subgrantees:* Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) a grantee under these competitions may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its application--to the following types of entities: nonprofit

and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions of higher education. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Application Submission Instructions:* Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs>, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. *Other Information:* Information regarding program and application requirements for the competitions can be found in the currently available IES Application Submission Guide and in the NCER Request for Applications (RFA), which will be available on or before June 20, 2024, on the IES website at: <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/>. The application packages for these competitions will also be available on or before June 20, 2024.

3. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application are contained in the RFA for the specific competition. The

forms that must be submitted are in the application package for the specific competition.

4. *Submission Dates and Times:* The deadline date for transmittal of applications for each competition is August 15, 2024.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

5. *Intergovernmental Review:* These competitions are not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

6. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* For all of its grant competitions, IES uses selection criteria based on a peer review process that has been approved by the National Board for Education Sciences. The Peer Review Procedures for Grant Applications can be found on the IES website at https://ies.ed.gov/director/sro/peer_review/application_review.asp.

For the 84.305I competition, peer reviewers will evaluate the breakthrough potential, R&D strategy, and team capacity.

For the 84.305N competition, peer reviewers will evaluate the ATS Initiative hub activities, personnel, and resources.

For all IES competitions, applications must include budgets no higher than the relevant maximum award as set out in the relevant RFA. IES will not make an award exceeding the maximum award amount as set out in the relevant RFA.

2. *Review and Selection Process:* We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, IES may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, compliance with the IES policy regarding public access to research, and compliance with grant conditions. IES may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, IES requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. *Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:*

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under these competitions, the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, IES may impose specific conditions and, under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. *Integrity and Performance System:* If you are selected under these competitions to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

5. *In General:* In accordance with the OMB's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with:

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115-232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We also may notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Grant Administration:* Applicants should budget for an annual meeting of up to three days for project directors to be held in Washington, DC.

4. *Reporting:* (a) If you apply for a grant under a competition announced in this notice, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by IES. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by IES under 34 CFR 75.118. IES may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

5. *Performance Measures:* To evaluate the overall success of its education research grant programs, IES annually assesses the percentage of projects that result in peer-reviewed publications and the number of IES-supported interventions with evidence of efficacy in improving learner education outcomes. School readiness outcomes include pre-reading, reading, pre-writing, early mathematics, early science, and social-emotional skills that prepare young children for school. Student academic

outcomes include learning and achievement in academic content areas, such as reading, writing, math, and science, as well as outcomes that reflect students' successful progression through the education system, such as course and grade completion; high school graduation; and postsecondary enrollment, progress, and completion. Social and behavioral competencies include social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are important to academic and post-academic success. Employment and earnings outcomes include hours of employment, job stability, and wages and benefits, and may be measured in addition to student academic outcomes.

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, IES considers, 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; whether a grantee is in compliance with the IES policy regarding public access to research; and if IES has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, IES also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with 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 the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the relevant program contact person listed in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, as well as in the relevant RFA and application package, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the RFA in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other Department documents published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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