

National Center for Education Research (NCER) FY 2021 RFA Survey
Accessible Online at: https://surveys.ies.ed.gov/?305A_FY2021

IES revised the FY 2021 Request for Applications (RFA) for the Education Research Grants Program (CFDA # 84.305A) and the Research Grants Focused on Systematic Replication (CFDA #84.305R). Both RFAs can be found at <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/21rfas.asp>. We would appreciate your voluntary feedback on this revision and whether further changes are necessary.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1880-0542. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please contact Phill Gagné directly at, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, PCP-4122, Washington, DC 20202. [Note: Please do not return the completed survey to this address.]

If you need assistance completing this survey, please contact IES/NCER by sending an email to NCER.Commissioner@ed.gov.

The password for this survey is **2021RFA**.

Please enter the password to access this survey:

[START →](#)

1. Is this the first time you have applied to IES for a research grant?

- Yes
- No

SKIP: If answer is No, skip the next two items and start again at Item 4

Purpose: to ask 1st time applicants how they heard about IES and what resources they use/need.

2. Please describe how you learned about the IES grant competitions.

Text Box - Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

3. Please identify (1) what resources were most useful in writing and submitting your application and (2) what additional resources IES could provide to assist first-time applicants.

Text Box - Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

4. How many IES grant applications have you previously submitted as the Principal Investigator (PI)? (Count previous submissions of the same application as separate applications.)
- 0
 - 1
 - 2-3
 - 4+

SKIP: If answer is “0”, then skip next item and go to Item 6

5. Have you previously been the PI on a grant funded by IES?
- Yes
 - No
6. Have you previously been a co-PI on a grant funded by IES?
- Yes
 - No

=====Preparing and Submitting Your Application=====

7. How would you describe the length of the RFA?
- Adequate
 - Too long
 - Too short
8. When writing your grant application, from which of the following did you seek assistance with understanding the RFA? (Select all that apply.)
- IES program officers
 - Other researchers
 - Grant writers
 - Your organization’s office of grants management, office of sponsored programs, or office with similar functions
 - Others
 - I did not seek assistance from others to understand the RFA
9. When submitting your grant application on Grants.gov from which of the following did you seek assistance on how to submit it? (Select all that apply.)
- The IES Grant Application Submission Guide
 - IES program officers
 - The Grants.gov help desk
 - Other researchers
 - Your organization’s office of grants management, office of sponsored programs, or office with similar functions
 - Others
 - I did not seek assistance from others to submit my application
10. Please comment on what additional Information would be helpful to include in the RFA or the IES Application Submission Guide.

11. RFA or the IES Submission Guide
Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

=====Topics=====

12. Did you apply to the Education Research Grants Program (CFDA # 84.305A)?

- Yes
- No

SKIP: If answer is No, skip to item 20 on 305R

Purpose: So that applicants to 305R do not need to answer questions specific to 305A

13. On which student population(s) does your application focus? (Select all that apply.)

- Prekindergarten students
- K-12 students
- Postsecondary students
- Adult education students

SKIP: If answer prekindergarten students or K-12 students, skip the next item and go to item 15.

Purposes: 1) to be able to crosstab population studied by topic and 2) to check if being able to submit research on postsec and adult ed students under multiple topics is linked to clarity of topic choice.

14. Applications for research on postsecondary and adult education students can be submitted to any one of the 11 Topics in the RFA. How clear to you was the Topic to which you should apply?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear

15. To which Topic(s) did you apply?

- Career and Technical Education
- Civics Education and Social Studies
- Cognition and Student Learning
- Early Learning Programs and Policies
- Effective Instruction
- English Learners
- Literacy
- Improving Education Systems
- Postsecondary and Adult Education
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education
- Social and Behavioral Context for Academic Learning

16. Rate the usefulness of the Topic descriptions for focusing your research idea.

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Marginally Useful
- Not Useful

17. Please note any concerns you had with the RFA's description of the Topic to which you applied and any revisions you think could improve it.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

18. The Topics included a section called “Needed Research”. What did you interpret as IES’s purpose for including the research issues described in the “Needed Research” section?

- IES was highlighting gaps in the evidence base
- IES was encouraging applicants to address one of these issues and applicants would not be more likely to receive a grant if they did so (in other words, field initiated issues were just as welcome)
- IES was encouraging applicants to address one of these issues, and applicants have a greater likelihood of receiving a grant if they did so
- IES was requiring applicants to address one of these issues

19. Your Project Narrative had a maximum length of 22 pages (reduced from last year’s 25-page maximum). How do you think this change affected the quality of your application?

- Improved the quality
- Reduced the quality
- Did not affect the quality

=====305R=====

20. Did you apply to the Research Grants Focused on Systematic Replication (CFDA #84.305R)?

- Yes
- No

SKIP: If answer is No, skip the next 3 items and go to item 24

Purpose: To ask 3 questions specific to 305R

21. How clear was the Systemic Replication Grants RFA in distinguishing between its two topics: (1) *Systemic Replications* and (2) *Systemic Replications Using Digital Platforms*?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear
- I don't have an opinion on this question

22. How clear was the Systemic Replication Grants RFA in distinguishing between its two project types: (1) *Efficacy* and (2) *Effectiveness* replications?

- Very clear

- Clear
- Not clear
- I don't have an opinion on this question

23. Please comment on how IES could improve the Systemic Replication Grants RFA.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

=====Issues Related to Project Types=====

24. How clear was the RFA language describing the **cost analysis** plan?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear
- My application did not require a cost analysis plan

SKIP: If answer is “My application did not require a cost analysis”, skip next 3 items and go to Item 28

25. How clear was the RFA language describing the **cost-effectiveness** analysis plan?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear
- My application did not require a cost effectiveness analysis plan

26. Did you use any of the IES-provided resources to develop your cost analysis and/or cost-effectiveness analysis plans, such as the Cost Analysis in Practice materials and Help Desk, or the materials available at the IES SEER Principles webpage?

- Yes
- No

27. Please comment on the usefulness of the IES-provided cost resources. Please identify what additional resources IES can provide and what changes to the RFA IES can make to assist you in developing cost analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis plans

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

28. IES requires a Data Management Plan for Exploration and Efficacy projects under 305A and Replication projects under 305R. How clear did you find the description of this requirement?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear

- My application did not require a data management plan

SKIP: If answer is “My application did not require a data management plan” skip next item and go to Item 30

29. Please comment on how the description of the Data Management Plan requirement could be improved and what resources IES could provide to help with this requirement.

Text Box - Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

30. IES now requires a Dissemination History in addition to the Dissemination Plan in Appendix A of the RFA. How clear was the description of the new Dissemination History section of Appendix A?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not clear
- I don't have an opinion on this issue

SKIP: If answer is “I don't have an opinion on this”, then skip next item and go to Item 32

31. Please comment on how the description of the Dissemination History in the RFA could be improved.

Text Box - Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

32. The maximum award size was increased for all project types. How do you think this change affected your application?

- Increased its quality
- Increased its scope
- Addressed new IES requirements and recommendations
- Kept up with inflation
- My application's budget did not require the larger maximum award

33. Under the Exploration project type, the maximum award for projects solely analyzing secondary data has been increased to equal the maximum award for projects collecting and analyzing primary data. Do you think this is a reasonable change?

- Yes
- No
- I don't have an opinion on this issue

34. Given stable levels of funding available to IES for supporting research grants, larger individual grants will lead to fewer grants awarded. Do you think this approach will better advance the fields of education research and practice?

- Yes
- No
- I don't have an opinion on this issue

35. Please provide any comments regarding award size.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

==Technical Assistance (Program Officer Contacts, Webinars, and Virtual Office Hours) ==

36. With how many program officers did you, individually or with your project team, discuss your application (in person, by phone or video call, or by email)?

- None
- One
- Two
- More than two

SKIP: If answer is “None”, skip the next question and start at Item 38.

37. What specific issues did you discuss with the IES program officer?

- Which competition to apply to
- Which topic to apply to
- Which project type to apply to
- Appropriateness of my research idea for an IES application
- Substantive discussion of my research idea
- Addressing a specific requirement or recommendation in the RFA
- Framing my application
- Reviewing a draft of part or all of my application
- The review process and peer review panels
- Budget issue
- Submitting an application
- Other

38. Please comment on your response to the previous item, noting what you hoped to learn from your discussion with an IES program officer and whether the program officer provided useful information. If you did not contact a program officer, please discuss why you did not do so.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

39. How useful were the IES Funding Opportunity webinars and slides?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Not Useful
- I did not view any of the IES Funding Opportunities webinars or slides

40. Please describe why you found the webinars useful or not useful. If you did not view any webinars, please describe why you decided not to.

Text Box – Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.

41. How useful were the Virtual Office Hours sessions offered by IES staff? (The Virtual Office Hours sessions were online meetings held in June 2020 on specific grant competitions and project types, open to anyone, and focused on answering participants' questions).

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Not Useful
- I did not attend any of the Virtual Office Hours sessions.

42. Please describe why you found the Virtual Office Hours sessions useful or not useful. If you did not attend any Virtual Office Hours sessions, please describe why you decided not to.

Text Box - Maximum 4,000 characters (about 500 words). Longer responses may be truncated.