

SEPSEA Early Career Researcher Award

The Southeast Postsecondary Education Alliance (SEPSEA) sponsors an annual competition for early career research funding. The purpose of the Early Career Researcher Award program is to assist early career researchers with research costs associated with inclusive postsecondary education programs. The research may be in any area related to inclusive postsecondary education research.

The award is \$1,000, payable directly to the researcher.

Applicants for the award must:

1. be a researcher in a field associated with inclusive postsecondary education programs, including special education, social work, rehabilitation counseling, or psychology.
2. if tenure-track faculty, they must have not yet successfully received tenure at the time of the application deadline.
3. if not tenure-track faculty, they must be within five years of earning their doctoral degree at the time of the application deadline.

Application process:

Applicants must submit the following materials no later than June 30 for funding for the following academic year:

Cover letter. One page maximum, describing your research interests and experience.

Research study title and brief summary. Two-page maximum, including project background and rationale, an explanation of research design (methods, procedure, analysis plan, etc.) and other important aspects of the project.

Budget. Detail the need and justify all expenses related to the study. The award must be used to support expenses directly related to research (e.g., computer time, travel, data analysis, and costs associated with data collection). The awards may not be used for indirect costs, tuition, or consultant fees.

Abbreviated curriculum vitae. Two-page maximum

Funding decisions will be based on the quality of the submitted information and made by a committee appointed by the SEPSEA chair.

Preference will be given to research studies that focus on inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) students or programs and address one of the following topic areas of need/interest, as determined by the SEPSEA membership in a 2025 Research Needs Assessment:

→ Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Mental health and wellness
- Longitudinal studies; (life after IPSE graduation)
- Federal funding and policy trends impacting IPSE students, including the future of Pell Grants, Workforce Pell, WIOA, and Perkins VI, and their implications for student funding and economic outcomes
- Outcome-based assessment, including evaluation of whether IPSE graduates achieve earnings comparable to or exceeding those of high school graduates in alignment with new federal requirements

No later than one year from receipt of the award, each award recipient must submit a one-page final report letter specifying the status of the research, including how the funds were used.