

February 12, 2025

# \$900 Million in Institute of Education Sciences Contracts Axed

The National Center for Education Statistics has been hit hard while researchers say grant review



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Monday,

Photo illustration by Justin Morrison/Inside Higher Ed | Chip Somodevilla and Alex Wong/Getty Images

The Trump administration canceled nearly \$900 million in Institute of Education

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improve higher education and provides publicly accessible data on U.S. postsecondary institutions.

Researchers and higher education associations worked Tuesday to better understand the scale of the cuts, which still wasn't clear 24 hours after news first broke. A department official said 89 IES contracts were canceled, while other organizations put the total at



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A diminished IES, advocates warn, means less information for policymakers, researchers, families and taxpayers about how students in K-12 and college are faring.

The NCES, one of four centers in IES, has been one of the hardest hit by the



the American Statistical Association said the 2021 contractor to full-time equivalent staff ratio at NCES was nine to one and called the center "severely understaffed."

Beyond the immediate cuts handed down Monday, review panels that decide whether to award IES grants have been halted, higher education researchers told *Inside Higher Ed*.

The school then will lose the information on its restricted education data set in 2025.



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process "significantly delays research," and setting up a physical space called a "cold lab" to review this data has taken six months to a year in the past. "I have to start all over again."

"We'd been working on [the review] like crazy over the last three months—I haven't of course been compensated yet," she said.

## Editor's Picks



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canceled or what studies, work or services those agreements were meant to provide. The department didn't respond to *Inside Higher Ed's* request for a list of the canceled contracts, nor did the department provide an interview Tuesday.

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The institute had an \$807 million budget for fiscal year 2024, a sliver of the Education Department's \$79.1 billion budget.

In an emailed response to written questions, a department spokesperson pointed to a post on X by the Elon Musk–led Department of Government Efficiency saying the Education Department terminated \$881 million in contracts Monday.

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Study was canceled. The report is required by Congress and conducted every four years. Levine described it as the “backbone” for two other longitudinal studies.

NCES's most important role for higher education is collecting data from colleges and

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which includes demographics, financial aid and more, feeds into the College Scorecard and College Navigator. A department official said IPEDS wasn't affected by the cuts.

# Past NCES Officials Weigh In

Mark Schneider, a nonresident senior fellow at the conservative American Enterprise

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Thomas Weko, a research professor at George Washington University who was the associate commissioner for postsecondary, adult and career education at NCES from 2007 to 2012, said contractors have been fundamental to the NCES's work. While he noted NCES has had critics, he worried about the future of the center and IES more

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“IES was an important funder of higher education research, an important standard-setter for higher education research in the United States, and it was viewed globally as a center of excellence and leadership,” Weko said. “There will be less education research in the future than there is today.”

Several higher education associations also raised alarm about the cuts in statements

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