U.S. Department of Homeland Security | Science and Technology Directorate

Webinar: Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Center of Excellence for Homeland Security in the Arctic

Science and Technology

Office of University Programs

May 9, 2023

Agenda

- Overview of the Office of University Programs (OUP)
- The DHS Centers of Excellence (COEs)
  - OUP's expectations of a COE
  - Establishing a new COE
  - Benefits of being a COE
  - Eligibility
  - Funding
- Tips to consider when applying as a Center Lead
- Q&A

Webinar Information

There is one funding opportunity for this COE:

- Center Lead - applicants submit a proposal for the Center Lead and partners for a consortium.

Questions about specific research themes, topics or questions will not be addressed during this webinar.

Please hold all questions until the end of the brief. Please submit all questions in the Chat Box.

- Questions will be answered at the end of the webinar.
- Questions/answers will be posted on grants.gov.

Acronyms:

NOFO = Notice of Funding Opportunity
HSE = Homeland Security Enterprise
DHS = Department of Homeland Security
OUP = Office of University Programs
COE = Center of Excellence

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Office of University Programs Overview

OUP is an office within the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), Office of Innovation and Collaboration (I&C).

- What does OUP do?
  - OUP streamlines access to the expertise of the nation's colleges and universities to address pressing homeland security needs.
- How does OUP do it?
  - OUP administers programs and partnerships through which DHS components can access academic expertise to answer research questions, deliver technical solutions, and build a highly specialized workforce.
  - OUP programs:
    - Centers of Excellence (COEs)
    - Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)
    - Workforce and Professional Development Initiatives
- Why does OUP do this? Homeland Security Act of 2002 states:

"The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, shall designate a university-based center or several university-based centers for homeland security. The purpose of the center or these centers shall be to establish a coordinated, university-based system to enhance the Nation's homeland security."

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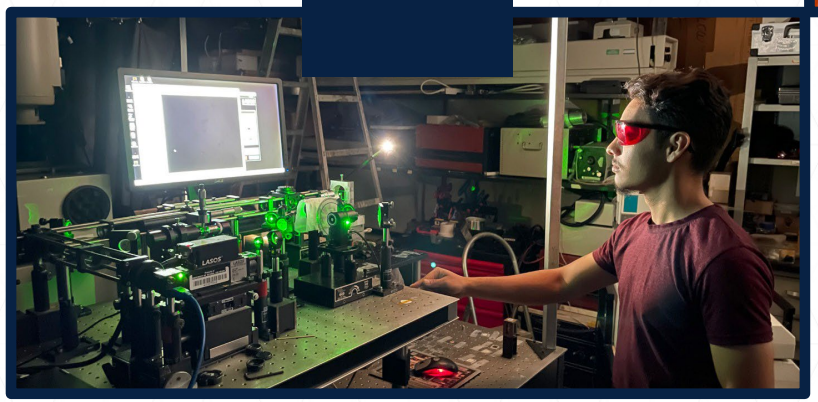
Bringing Innovation to Operations

The Office of University Programs (OUP) harnesses the intellectual power of America's universities to provide innovative research, development, and education to the Homeland Security Enterprise.



Centers of Excellence

Multidisciplinary academic consortia that engage leading experts to conduct groundbreaking research on threats facing the Homeland.



Minority Serving Institutions

Provide opportunities that foster and cultivate a diverse university-based research capability and talented workforce.

Workforce Development

Engage with the next generation of homeland security professionals and provide growth and development for the current workforce.



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DHS Centers of Excellence

The DHS Centers of Excellence (COEs) are **university-led** research networks that **anticipate** threats and challenges to the homeland and operations. The COEs leverage their unique access to **multidisciplinary** expertise to conduct **groundbreaking** research resulting in rigorous, **objective** knowledge and solutions for DHS. Each COE works under a **cooperative agreement** that provides annual management and research funding over the duration of the award.

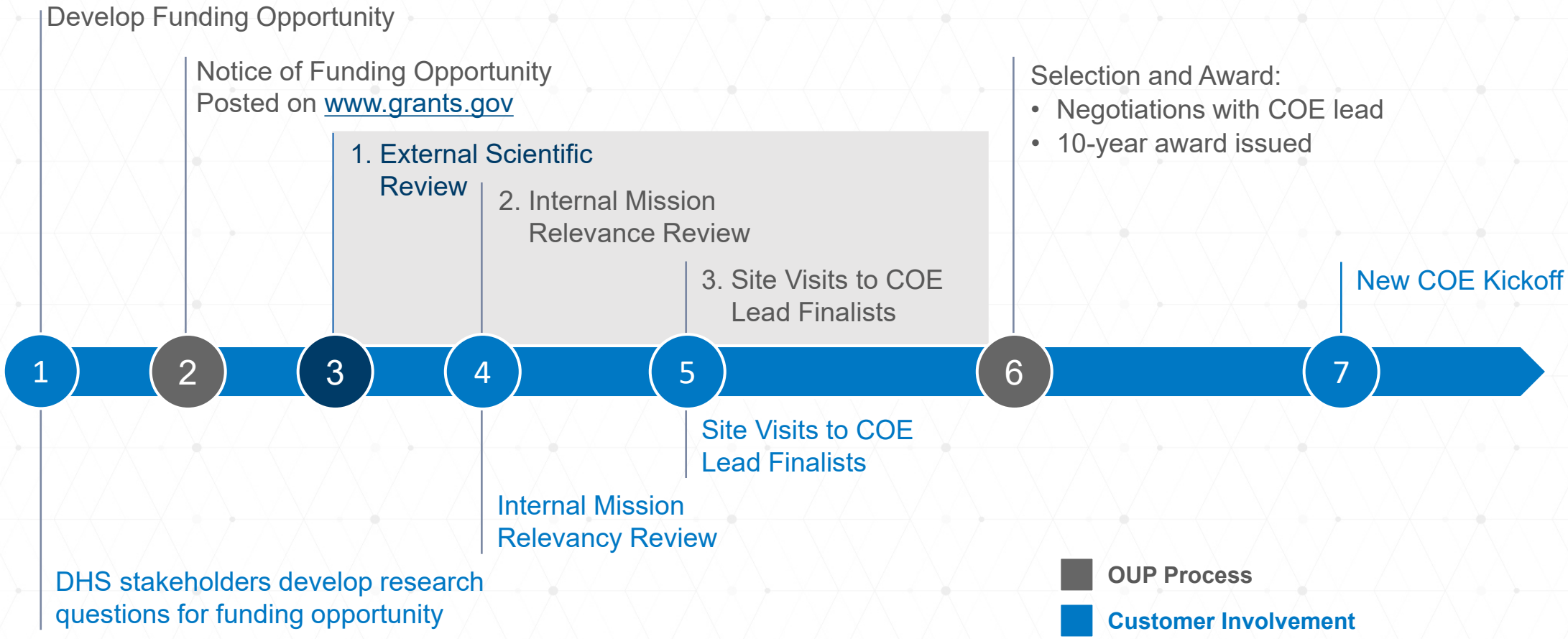


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Expectations for COEs

- COEs are funded through **cooperative agreements**, which enable and require substantial Federal agency involvement.
- Applicants for COEs should expect to:
  - Dedicate substantial time and resources to OUP and DHS
  - Develop sustained relationships with homeland security stakeholders
  - Adapt to evolving homeland security challenges and priorities
  - Identify and partner with leading researchers in relevant disciplines, including developing strong partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)
  - Collaborate with other COEs and be actively engaged in the COE Network
  - Plan in advance for the transition of research results to users and industry partners
  - Conduct impactful and cutting-edge research and education
  - Perform research management oversight

Establishing A New COE



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Evaluation and Selection Process

- Evaluation Process
  - External peer and merit scientific quality review
  - Internal DHS mission relevancy review
  - Site visits to Lead Institution finalists

- Selection
  - Selection of one university to serve as the lead for the new COE
  - Negotiations with COE Lead
  - 10-year award to COE

Post-Award Standup

- Initial Work Plan for Year 1
  - OUP establishes a Federal Board of Directors to provide guidance to the OUP Program Manager.
  - OUP-facilitated Workplan Development Workshop with all COE consortium members and Federal stakeholders
    - Workplans are detailed project plans and include transition plans, milestones, and other elements in accordance with the COE Terms and Conditions.
    - The workplans must be accepted by DHS S&T prior to the projects moving forward.
- After Year 1, research and/or education projects may be refined, developed or evaluated based on several inputs.
  - COE workshops with stakeholders and end users to inform COE initiatives
  - COE annual meetings to present project outcomes to DHS, HSE, and other stakeholders
  - Biennial Reviews to evaluate research, education, management and administration and reallocate resources based upon review results (OUP conducts these formal reviews)
  - Semi-annual and annual performance reports to monitor progress toward achieving program and project goals, objectives, and milestones

Benefits of Being a COE

Being a COE Lead is a unique opportunity to:

- Work on pressing homeland security challenges
- Conduct interdisciplinary basic and applied research and education that makes a difference (e.g., informs policy, improves operations, saves lives)
- Work closely with a combination of:
  - homeland security operational personnel including local, state, and other federal agencies
  - scientific subject matter experts
  - industry and nonprofit organizations
- Foster and enable high-level, inter-agency and public-private partnerships and collaboration

Eligibility

Please refer to Section C. Eligibility Information in the NOFO for full details. This is a partial list.

- Only one (1) application for Center Lead will be accepted from any single university. Center Partners are proposed in the application for Center Lead.
- The Center Lead designation is restricted to an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, in accordance with 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(A).
- The applicant can include team members who are non-U.S. citizens; however, the proposed Center Director must be a U.S. citizen eligible for a security clearance.
- Center lead applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with industry, other academic institutions, including MSIs, and public- and private-sector organizations across the HSE.
- Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on a grant or cooperative agreement and may not receive salaries or in other ways augment their agency's appropriations through awards made by this program.
- FFRDCs or laboratories funded by federal agencies may not apply.

Funding

- Anticipated funding for this award is up to $4.6 million/year for the 10-year period of performance.
- Funding is contingent upon annual congressional appropriations.
- COEs are funded annually through a continuation application process.
- DHS awards funding to the Center Lead to manage and administer its consortium of partners.
    - The Center Lead administers funding to all DHS-selected projects, including Partner projects that have been incorporated into the Center.

Tips for Applying

- Read the entire NOFO.
- Develop a diverse but integrated multi-institutional, multidisciplinary team.
- Structure projects to be measurable and managed using technical and programmatic milestones.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the DHS organizational structure and its operational missions.
- Familiarize yourself with past and current research of the COE Network at https://www.dhs.gov/st-centers-excellence
- Plan for transitioning research results or technologies.
- See Appendix E of the NOFO for a more detailed list of tips.

Important Upcoming Dates and Anticipated Evaluation Timeline

Competition Dates:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Posted: April 19, 2023
- Submit Proposals by the Closing Date: June 19, 2023

Three-phased Review (anticipated):

- Scientific Quality -- Summer 2023
- DHS Mission Relevancy -- Summer 2023
- Site Visits -- early Fall 2023

Award anticipated in October 2023

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