Department of Energy/Natiobal Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA)
NOFO DE-FOA-NA0003284
FAQs - General Questions

1. **The guidelines require that biographical sketches be generated in ScienCV. Synergistic activities need to be included in the bio. However, ScienCV will no longer allow investigators to include synergistic activities in the bio because NSF changed their guidelines on May 20, 2024, and require synergistic activities to be attached separately. Where should we include the synergistic activities? The guidelines state that the Project Narrative and all appendices be combined into one PDF. However, the guidelines also ask that Appendix 3 (COI) be uploaded as an Excel document. Should appendix 3 be converted to PDF so that it can be included with the Project Narrative, or should it be attached separately as an Excel document?**

   Attach the synergistic activities as a separate one-page document in Appendix 1 following the guidelines at PAPPG Chapter II.D.2.h(iv), while ensuring the combined Biographical Sketch and synergistic activities for each person does not exceed three pages. Because of the contradiction in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we will accept Appendix 3 as either a PDF or Excel document. However, we prefer combining all the other appendices into one PDF and attaching Appendix 3 separately as an Excel document.

2. **Is access to the National Lab HPC clusters part of the program?**

   The selected PSAAP IV projects will have access to a subset of National Laboratories HPC systems. Some foreign nationals will not be allowed to access to these systems depending on their country of origin.

3. **Do references count against the page lengths? It is fine if they do, but it was unclear in the FOA.**

   References should be provided for the technical and scientific approaches as well as objectives and will not count against the page limit. However, these must only be citations. Footnotes, explanation, or any other commentary are not permitted.

4. **Can subawards be made to nonprofit or profit commercial entities?**

   Eligibility for awards under this NOFO is restricted to U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Applications may have co-PIs from the prime applicant or sub-applicant IHEs. Each identified PIs and Co-PI for proposed agreements are required to be a U.S. Person and must be an active member of the teaching/research faculty of an IHE. Adjunct professors, visiting professors, and post-doctoral fellows are ineligible to be PIs or Co-PIs. See Section III A, B, and C of the NOFO for additional detail to eligibility.

5. **Can you elaborate on the scope of Focused Investigatory Centers (FICs) with regard to expectations and topics?**

   The PSAAP Team cannot elaborate on the SCOPE for FICs with regard to expectations and topics. The topics are listed in the NOFO, and we are not able to further elaborate on the needs of each of the National Laboratories and the ASC program.

6. **In making a list of ideas for interacting with the NNSA national labs, is it encouraged to include work/research details and personnel information?**

   Ideas for NNSA Laboratory interactions may identify either general topics or specific Laboratory groups, projects, or personnel that you would like us to help you work with for technical exchanges, if your application is awarded. If your application depends on a Laboratory's products and collaborative research to meet your goals, we will follow up with Laboratory personnel to verify their intent to work with you and your team. Please be aware that you cannot count on future Laboratory contributions. It is also expected that you list collaborators (existing or anticipated) that you know and expect will work with you on what you propose, along with people associated with other relevant projects with which you have a funding relationship. The Laboratory personnel you identify will be understood to have a conflict of interest with respect to the review process for all application responses. Please be aware that no PSAAP funds can go to any FFRDC, including the NNSA Laboratories as discussed in Section III Part A (2b).

7. **In planning our institutional response to the notice of funding opportunity, DE-FOA-NA0003284 - DOE Predictive Science Academic Alliance Program IV, the University wondered whether DOE plans to limit the number of full proposals encouraged for the Predictive Simulation Centers to the one allowed per institution, or will that decision be made by the appropriate administrators at the university level to achieve the one application allowed for a full proposal in the event that two or more full proposals are encouraged?**

   The NOFO, Section I Part G (2a), NNSA will only accept one application for a PSC per institution of higher education (IHE). However, NNSA allows eligible IHEs to submit one or more FIC applications. If more than one pre-application is submitted and "encouraged" for the PSC, then your entity would need to decide on one full application to be submitted for a PSC. If more than one pre-application is submitted and "encouraged" for the FIC, then your entity may submit full applications for each FIC.

8. **In the attached presentation, it mentions that NNSA will provide up to $100k per year to incentivize DEI efforts. Are those funds part of the $3.5M limit each year or are those supplemental funds that are requested at a later time?**

   Presentations and discussions from the PSAAP IV Pre-Proposal Meeting reflected thinking and intentions in August 2023. While the material from that meeting is made available to provide background and context, the Notice of Funding Opportunity is the definitive description of this opportunity for PSAAP IV. As such, supplemental funds for DEIA or other activities may not be requested in either the pre-application or full application responses.

9. **The requirement for the institution to grant a PhD has to apply to the specific department? What if we have a collaborator in computer science whose department does not give a PhD but the institution grants PhDs in other areas? Is that allowed? Even if technically allowed, is it discouraged? We consider this a good connection for a student recruiting pipeline (a connection we already have) at the master level but of course we do not want to violate the spirit of the call.**

   Referring to Section III Part A (1a) of the NOFO, to be eligible as a prime applicant, each institution must be considered one of higher education (IHE) that offers programs for graduate students to earn professional doctorate degrees. It is understood that not every department at an institution of higher education (IHE) grants doctoral degrees; members of such departments are eligible to be Co-PIs as long as they meet the requirements described in Section III Part B of the NOFO. Ensure that other departments involved in your application at your IHE are able to grant professional doctorate degrees, and explain in your application how engaging terminal Master's degree students in non-PhD granting departments are useful as a recruiting pipeline (e.g. to subsequently pursue a PhD, or as potential Laboratory staff candidates).

10. **Clarification requested if a blackout is currently in place that would prohibit proposing institutions from communicating with NNSA Laboratory staff about potential areas of collaboration?**

    The PSAAP IV NOFO made public as of May 22, 2024, communication is not authorized between any potential applicants, applicants, and NNSA HQ/National Laboratory personnel regarding PSAAP IV applications or potential areas of collaboration. This will continue until award selections are officially announced by DOE/NNSA. Please see the NOFO cover page for more details.

11. **This is a question about the unfunded collaboration of FFRDC personnel. In Eligibility 2b (Pg.l 13), an applicant is allowed to have unfunded collaboration of FFRDC personnel to include personnel from DoE/NNSA labs. However, in Sec. VIIB we are not allowed to have communication with NNSA lab personnel. Please clarify if unfunded collaborations with DoE lab members, specifically Sandia National Lab at Albuquerque?**

    The PSAAP IV NOFO posted as of May 22, 2024, communication is not authorized between any potential applicants and NNSA HQ/National Laboratory personnel regarding PSAAP IV applications or potential areas of collaboration. This will last until award selections are officially announced by DOE/NNSA. It is allowable to

have unfunded collaborations with DOE/NNSA Lab members. Be clear on what the Lab's role(s) would be and describe a comprehensive plan for interacting with NNSA National Laboratories.

12. **In the document, interacting with the NNSA National Laboratories, the team's vision would be listed on which LAB would be involved and what those collaborations are expected. But since we cannot reach out to anyone, at the proposal stage, this would be a one-sided plan from the team. Is this correct?**

    Correct, and you're welcome to state generic potential topics of collaboration without identifying specific researchers. NNSA will work with those that are selected for awards to establish such collaborations. As described in Section II Part A of the PSAAP IV NOFO, DOE/NNSA will be substantially involved with each awarded Center (FFRDC). A Statement of Substantial Involvement will be negotiated with each PSAAP IV cooperative agreement award recipient prior to the award.

13. **Question on the pre-application document: structure of the center (Pg. 18). The preapplication states, "To demonstrate collaboration experience and targeted areas for research, include a list of participating department heads and key research personnel." Clarification requested department heads? Is the preapplication implying the PI of the large collaborative efforts that we are part of? Or do you just mean the department chairs of our respective departments? Similarly, clarification of key research personnel requested. Specifically, what is the difference between key personnel listed in supported participants and the structure of the center document?**

    Department heads refers to those officially in the head of department or department chairperson positions. You may list those involved in those positions to demonstrate any collaboration experiences and targeted areas of research. Key research personnel refer to professors, researchers, scientists, postdocs and other eligible faculty members from the applicant and any sub-applicant(s) part of the application. The list of supported participants (except for students) from any of the participating IHEs and laboratories should be part of how you describe the nature of the contribution by those involved in the application. There isn't much difference in personnel between that and the personnel listed in the structure of the Center. However, the two-page outline of the multi-department structure includes an organizational chart, demonstration of previous collaborations and more details on how you all will collaborate as a Center.

14. **In assisting a faculty member with a preproposal application, and in reviewing the NOFO, it states that there is a 10-week Graduate Student Internship requirement (Pg. 6) to be completed at one of the three NNSA Laboratories. Can you please confirm if the student would physically reside at one of those laboratories for the 10 weeks? We are trying to make sure the budget reflects the appropriate appointment.**

    Section F of the NOFO states, "for all collaboration activities that have associated travel, applicants should use their entity's travel and per diem policy when requesting the funding. If an entity does not have a travel per diem policy, they may use GSA's guidelines for per diem rates. The budget justification must reflect each cost requested." For the 10-Week Graduate Student Internship, the budget must reflect costs related to travel, lodging, and per diem for a student that does not reside near a lab.

15. **Our team is a multi-institutional team, do we need to indicate it as a collaborative application or one prime application in the pre-application? In the latter case, other institutions would be subawardees to the prime institute.**

    Whether the pre-application or full application, there is only one response needed. The response is to be submitted by the prime applicant while the sub applicant(s) is to be clearly stated in that response.