Program Announcement for the Defense Health Agency

Neurofibromatosis Research Program

Investigator-Initiated Research Award

Funding Opportunity Number: HT942526NFRPIIRA

Pre-Application Due: September 8, 2026

Application Due: September 22, 2026

This program announcement must be read in conjunction with the General Application Instructions, version CD26_01.

Content

Before You Begin

- **Active SAM.gov, eBRAP.org and Grants.gov registrations are required for application submission.** User registration for each of these websites can take several weeks or longer. Each applicant must ensure their registrations are active and up to date prior to application preparation.
- **Read this funding opportunity announcement in the order it is written before beginning to prepare application materials.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether the proposed research meets the intent of this funding opportunity and that all parties meet eligibility requirements.
- **To support application preparation, additional resources are available** including an application process FAQ, a Guide for Intragovernmental & Intramural Applicants and a CDMRP Video Series detailing the application process.

Who to Contact for Support

eBRAP Help Desk

301-682-5507
help@eBRAP.org

Questions regarding funding opportunity submission requirements, as well as technical assistance related to pre-application or intramural application submission.

Grants.gov Support Center

800-518-4726
International: 1-606-545-5035
support@grants.gov

Questions regarding Grants.gov registration and Workspace.

This document uses internal links; you can go back to where you were by pressing the Alt + left arrow keys (Windows) or command + left arrow keys (Macintosh) on your keyboard.

Click ⓘ to be taken to additional guidance and instructions within the General Application Instructions (GAI).

1. Basic Information About the Funding Opportunity

Summary: The fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Neurofibromatosis Research Program (NFRP) Investigator-Initiated Research Award (IIRA) supports high-impact research that addresses a critical need and has the potential to make important contributions to the field of neurofibromatosis disorders or advance patient care. Research projects may focus on any phase of research, excluding clinical trials. The rationale for a research idea may be derived from laboratory discovery, population-based studies, a clinician's firsthand knowledge of patients, or anecdotal data. ***Applications must include preliminary and/or published data that are relevant to NF and the proposed research project.***

Distinctive Features: This award mechanism offers two funding levels based on participation in two optional features:

- **Open Science Initiative:** Catalyzes research for neurofibromatosis through early access to data and data sharing within the neurofibromatosis community.
- **Optional Qualified Collaborator:** Encourages collaborative research between basic scientists and clinical researchers, and between academic and biotechnology scientists.

The funding levels are defined as follows:

- **Level 1:** Applications without an optional feature.
- **Level 2:** Applications including one of the optional features.

Funding Details: The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) expects to allot roughly $6.04M to fund approximately five IIRA – Level 1 applications and two IIRA – Level 2 applications with total cost caps of $0.84M for the IIRA – Level 1 and $0.92M for the IIRA – Level 2. The maximum period of performance is 3 years. It is anticipated that awards made from this FY26 funding opportunity will be funded with FY26 funds, which will expire for use on September 30, 2032. Awards supported with FY26 funds will be made no later than September 30, 2027.

Submission and Review Dates and Times

- **Pre-Application (Letter of Intent) Submission Deadline:** 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET), September 8, 2026
- **Application Submission Deadline:** 11:59 p.m. ET, September 22, 2026
- **End of Application Verification Period:** 5:00 p.m. ET, September 28, 2026
- **Peer Review:** December 2026
- **Programmatic Review:** March 2027

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HT942526NFRPIIRA

Assistance Listing Number: 12.420

2. Eligibility Information

2.1. Eligible Applicants

2.1.1. Organization

Extramural and intramural U.S. Department of War (DOW) organizations are eligible to apply, ***including foreign and domestic organizations, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and public or private entities***.

2.1.2. Principal Investigator

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be at or above the level of assistant professor (or equivalent) and must plan to commit at least a 10% level of effort for each budget year throughout the entirety of the award.

Independent investigators affiliated with an eligible organization are eligible to be named PI on the application, regardless of ethnicity, nationality or citizenship status.

Investigators do not have to be from academic institutions.

An investigator may be named on only one FY26 NFRP IIRA application as PI.

2.2. Cost Sharing

Cost sharing is not an eligibility requirement.

2.3. Other

Awards are made to eligible ***organizations***, not to individuals. Refer to the GAI for additional recipient qualification requirements.

3. Program Description

The Defense Health Agency Contracting Activity (DHACA) is soliciting applications to this funding opportunity using delegated authority provided by United States Code, Title 10, Section 4001 (10 USC 4001). The CDMRP is the program office managing this FY26 funding opportunity as part of the Neurofibromatosis Research Program (NFRP). The CDMRP is located within the Defense Health Agency Research and Development (DHA R&D), which is a part of the Department of Defense, DOD, herein referred to using the secondary title Department of War, DOW. Congress initiated the NFRP in 1996 to provide support for research of exceptional scientific merit that promotes the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of neurofibromatosis (NF), including neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2) and schwannomatosis. Appropriations for the NFRP from FY96 through FY24 totaled $452.85 million (M). The FY26 appropriation is $25M.

The vision of the NFRP is to decrease the clinical impact of neurofibromatosis and schwannomatosis. The mission of the NFRP is to promote research directed toward the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of neurofibromatosis and schwannomatosis to enhance the quality of life for persons with these disorders that impact Service Members, Veterans, and the American public.

3.1. Award History

The NFRP Investigator-Initiated Research Award (IIRA) mechanism was first offered in FY96. Since then, 754 Investigator-Initiated Research Award applications were received, and 197 were recommended for funding.

3.2. Intent of the Investigator-Initiated Research Award

The NFRP Investigator-Initiated Research Award is intended to support highly rigorous, high-impact research projects that have the potential to make an important contribution to NF research and/or patient care. Research projects may focus on any phase of research, excluding clinical trials. The rationale for a research idea may be derived from laboratory discovery, population-based studies, a clinician's firsthand knowledge of patients, or anecdotal data. ***Applications must include preliminary and/or published data that are relevant to NF and the proposed research project.***

3.2.1. Strategic Goals and Areas of Emphasis for the IIRA

The NFRP seeks to support innovative, high-impact research that will foster new directions for and address neglected issues in NF research; sponsor multidisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations that will bring new perspectives to the field; promote translational and clinical studies to move promising ideas from bench to bedside; and develop a balanced portfolio of meritorious research related to all aspects of NF1, NF2, and schwannomatosis.

Strategic Goals: The NFRP's current strategic goals are:

- Support basic and exploratory research.
- Facilitate rapid testing of potential therapeutics.
- Increase capacity and multi-disciplinary research through support and development of vital resources and the next generation of NF researchers to improve patient care.

- Encourage research in areas of critical interest to NF patients.

The NFRP encourages applicants to review the NFRP Strategic Plan for more information on its goals.

Areas of Emphasis: To meet the intent of the funding opportunity, all applications should specifically address the critical needs of the NF community in one or more of the areas of emphasis listed below. The NFRP also encourages all applicants to include materials and data from diverse populations in their research.

- NF2- and schwannomatosis-related areas (e.g., hearing, balance, schwannoma, ependymoma, meningioma, LZTR1, SMARCB1).
- Endpoint validation, biomarker discovery, and technological innovation for assessments.
- Application of data science.
- Non-tumor manifestations not limited to:
    - Pain
    - Cognitive manifestations and behavior
    - Sleep
- Heterogeneity of NF-related phenotypes.
- Genetics, genomics, epigenetics, systems biology, metabolomics, or similar approaches.
- Preclinical efficacy studies.
- Target identification and drug discovery.
- Nutritional, environmental, and other modifiers of NF.
- Health services research.

Note: Not all areas of emphasis are applicable to every award mechanism. If the proposed research project does not address at least one of the FY26 NFRP areas of emphasis, justification should be provided that it addresses an important problem related to NF research and/or patient care.

3.2.2. Key Elements for the IIRA

Optional NF Open Science Initiative (NF-OSI): The FY26 NFRP supports the NF-OSI, which is aimed at catalyzing research for NF through early access to data and data sharing within the NF community.

- The NF Data Portal is a central component of the NF-OSI and is intended as a platform through which to share and explore NF datasets, analysis tools, resources, and publications. It is a public repository of raw data of scientific experiments that allows the re-analysis and confirmation of results by a third party.
    - The portal is not the place to share finalized results (these are generally publishable figures and related information), but rather any data point or image derived from experiments.
    - NF studies that involve generation of extensive datasets including, but not limited to, gene expression, genomic variants, methylation profiles, drug screening, drug combination screening, cellular physiology, chromatin activity, proteomics, imaging,

kinomics, pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics, and clinical studies are to utilize the NF Data Portal.

  - The portal allows participants to use the repository as their private data storage and selectively release the data to the public after an embargo period. For more information and requirements of participation, please visit https://nf.synapse.org/.

- Participants in the NF-OSI will share data following the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) Data Principles for reproducible science found in "The FAIR. Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship." Refer to the Research Sharing Plan document in Attachment 7.
- Applications utilizing the NF-OSI option must demonstrate their commitment to meeting the intent of the initiative in their Research Sharing Plan, including a description of milestones with respect to making the data or research resource(s) available and how they will be accessible after the period of performance expires. See Attachment 7.
- Applications utilizing the NF-OSI option must describe how participation in the NF-OSI will advance and/or accelerate research in NF.
- Applications funded under the NF-OSI option will qualify for a higher funding as described in Section 3.4, Funding Details. **Optional Qualified Collaborator:** The FY26 NFRP encourages collaborative research between basic scientists and clinical researchers, and between academic and biotechnology scientists.
- ***Collaborations with investigators outside of the PI's institution and collaborations that bring new perspectives from other disciplines or that bring new investigators into the NF field are strongly encouraged.*** Although more than one collaborator may participate in the application, ***only one can be named for this option***.
- Collaborations that meet the criteria below will qualify for a higher level of funding as described in Section 3.4, Funding Details. It should be clear that the success of the proposed research project depends on the complementary skills and contributions of both the PI and the collaborator. Refer to application submission instructions in Attachment 9, Letters of Collaboration. The collaborator must be at or above the level of assistant professor (or equivalent).

While applications utilizing the NF-OSI or Qualified Collaborator options qualify to apply for Funding Level 2, the NFRP reserves the right to reduce the funding level to Funding Level 1 if applications submitted to Funding Level 2 do not meet the stated intents.

3.2.3. Other Important Considerations for the IIRA

In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, Section 732, the CDMRP does not support the conduct of painful research (U.S. Department of Agriculture pain category D or E) involving domestic cats or dogs, except for studies relating to military or service animals.

Clinical trials are not allowed within this funding opportunity.

All projects should adhere to a core set of standards for rigorous study design and reporting to maximize the reproducibility and translational potential of clinical and preclinical research, such as those described in the STROBE, CONSORT, SPIRIT and ARRIVE guidelines 2.0.

Applications from investigators within the DOW and applications involving multidisciplinary collaborations among academia, industry, the DOW, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other federal government agencies are highly encouraged. These relationships can

leverage knowledge, infrastructure and access to unique clinical populations that the collaborators bring to the research effort, ultimately advancing research that is of significance to Service Members, Veterans, their Families and the American public. If the proposed research relies on access to unique resources or databases, the application must describe the access at the time of submission and include a plan for maintaining access as needed throughout the proposed research.

3.3. Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards made under the program announcement will be grants (31 USC 6304).

3.4. Funding Details

Period of Performance: The maximum period of performance is **3** years.

Cost Cap: The application's total costs budgeted for the entire period of performance should not exceed **$840,000 for Funding Level 1 applications (without the NFI-OSI or Optional Qualified Collaborator)** or **$920,000 for Funding Level 2 applications (with the NF-OSI or Optional Qualified Collaborator)**. If indirect cost rates have been negotiated, indirect costs are to be budgeted in accordance with the organization's negotiated rate. Collaborating organizations should budget associated indirect costs in accordance with each organization's negotiated rate.

All direct and indirect costs of any subaward or contract must be included in the direct costs of the primary award.

The applicant may request the entire maximum funding amount for a project that may have a period of performance less than the maximum **3** years.

The appropriateness of the budget for the proposed research will be assessed during peer review.

Direct Cost Restrictions: For this award mechanism, direct costs:

May be requested for (not all-inclusive):

- Travel in support of multi-institutional collaborations.
- Costs for one investigator to travel to one scientific/technical meeting per year. The intent of travel to scientific/technical meetings should be to present project information or disseminate project results from the NFRP IIRA.
- For Optional NF Open Science Initiative applications, costs associated with data curation and/or research resource sharing via the NF Data Portal.

Must not be requested for:

- Clinical trial costs.

4. Application Contents and Format

4.1. Application Overview

Application submission is a two-step process requiring both a ***pre-application*** submitted via the Electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal (eBRAP) and a ***full application*** submitted through eBRAP or Grants.gov. Depending on the submission portal, certain aspects of the application will differ.

Intramural DOW organizations submitting a full application should follow instructions for submission through eBRAP.

Extramural organizations submitting a full application must follow instructions for submission through Grants.gov.

4.2. Pre-Application Components

Pre-application submissions must include the following components.

Letter of Intent (LOI) (one-page limit): Provide a brief description of the research to be conducted. Include the FY26 NFRP Area(s) of Emphasis under which the application will be submitted.

4.3. Full Application Components

Each application submission must include the completed full application package for this program announcement. See Appendix 1 for a checklist of the full application components.

(a) SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance Form *(Grants.gov submissions only)*:

IMPORTANT: *When completing the SF424 R&R, enter the* ***eBRAP log number*** *assigned during pre-application submission into* ***Block 4a – Federal Identifier****.*

(b) Attachments:

Each attachment of the full application components must be uploaded as an individual file in the format specified and in accordance with the formatting guidelines in the GAI.

- **Attachment 1: Project Narrative (10-page limit): Upload as "ProjectNarrative.pdf".**

  Describe the proposed project in detail using the outline below.

  - **Background:** Clearly articulate the scientific rationale for the proposed research project. Cite relevant literature. Describe previous experience most pertinent to the proposed research project. ***Applications must include preliminary and/or published data that are relevant to NF and the proposed research project.***
  - **Hypothesis or Objective:** State the hypothesis to be tested or the objective to be reached.
  - **Specific Aims:** Concisely explain the proposed research project's specific aims to be funded by this application. If the proposed research project is part of a larger study, present only tasks that this award would fund.

- **Research Strategy and Feasibility**
  - Describe how the experimental design, methods, and analyses, including appropriate randomization, blinding, and controls, are designed to achieve reproducible and rigorous results in sufficient detail for scientific peer review. Address potential problem areas and present alternative methods and approaches.
  - Describe how data will be collected, handled, and analyzed in a manner that is consistent with the study objectives. Include a complete power analysis to demonstrate that the sample size is appropriate to meet the objectives of the study.
  - If the proposed research will use human subjects or anatomical samples, include a plan for the recruitment of subjects or the acquisition of samples and document the experience of the PI(s) and/or key collaborators in recruiting human subjects for similar projects. Clearly describe the tissue or tumor type to be studied, where applicable (e.g., encapsulated versus diffuse plexiform neurofibroma). ***Clinical trials are not allowed under this funding opportunity.***
  - Consult appropriate guidelines to ensure relevant aspects of rigorous and reproducible research are adequately planned for and, ultimately, reported.
  - If the proposed research involves access to military and/or VA patient populations and/or DOW or VA resources or databases, describe the access at the time of submission and include a plan for maintaining access as needed throughout the proposed research. Also include a plan for obtaining any required data sharing, memorandum of understanding or other agreements required to access and publish data. Refer to the GAI, Appendix 4, for additional considerations.

- **Attachment 2: Supporting Documentation: Combine and upload as a single file named "Support.pdf".**

  There are no page limits for these components unless otherwise noted. Include only components described below; inclusion of items not requested or viewed as an extension of the Project Narrative will result in the removal of those items or may result in administrative withdrawal of the application.

  - **References Cited:** List the references cited in the Project Narrative using a standard reference format (include URLs, if available).
  - **List of Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols:** Provide a list of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols.
  - **Facilities, Existing Equipment and Other Resources:** Describe the facilities and equipment available for performance of the proposed project; include any additional facilities or equipment proposed for acquisition at no cost to the award. Indicate whether government-furnished facilities or equipment are proposed for use. If so, reference the original or present government award under which the facilities or equipment items are now accountable. There is not a standardized form for this information.
  - **Publications and/or Patents:** Include a list of relevant publication URLs and/or patent abstracts. If articles are not publicly available, then copies of up to five published manuscripts may be included in Attachment 2. Extra items will not be reviewed.

- **Letters of Support:** Provide individual letters signed by collaborating individuals and/or organizational officials demonstrating that the PI has the support and resources necessary for the proposed work. Letters from the PI's Department Chair, or appropriate organization official, should also confirm that the PI(s) meet eligibility criteria. If applicable, provide a letter of support signed by the lowest-ranking person with approval authority, confirming participation of intramural DOW collaborator(s) and/or access to military populations, databases or DOW resources. If applicable, provide a letter of support signed by the VA Facility Director(s), or an individual designated by the VA Facility Director(s), confirming access to VA patients, resources and/or VA research space.
- **Intellectual and Material Property Plan *(if applicable)*:** Provide a plan for resolving intellectual and material property issues among participating organizations.
- **Commercialization Strategy *(if applicable)*:** Describe the commercialization plan. The plan should include intellectual property, market size, financial analysis, strengths and weaknesses, barriers to the market, competitors, and management team. Discuss the significance of this development effort, when it can be anticipated, and the potential commercial use for the technology being developed.
- **Inclusion Enrollment Plan *(only required if clinical research is proposed)*:** Provide an anticipated enrollment table(s) for the inclusion of women and minorities appropriate to the objectives of the study with the proposed enrollment distributed on the basis of sex, race, and ethnicity. The Public Health Service (PHS) Inclusion Enrollment Report is a three-page fillable PDF form, which can be downloaded from eBRAP at https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/Program.htm.
- **Sex as a Biological Variable Strategy (two-page limit is recommended):** Describe the strategy for how sex will be considered as a biological variable. This strategy should include a brief discussion of what is currently known regarding sex differences in the applicable research area. Clearly articulate how sex as a biological variable will be factored into the data analysis plan and how data will be collected and disaggregated by sex. If needed, provide a strong rationale for proposing a single-sex study, based on justification from scientific literature, preliminary data or other relevant considerations. Refer to the CDMRP Directive on Sex as a Biological Variable in Research for additional information.
- **Use of DOW Resources *(if applicable)*:** Provide a letter of support signed by the lowest-ranking person with approval authority confirming access to active-duty military populations and/or DOW resources or databases.
- **Use of VA Resources *(if applicable)*:** Provide a letter of support signed by the VA Facility Director(s) or individual designated by the VA Facility Director(s), such as the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS/R&D) or Clinical Service Chief, confirming access to VA patients, resources, and/or VA research space. If the VA-affiliated non-profit corporation is not identified as the applicant organization for administering the funds, include a letter from the VA ACOS/R&D confirming this arrangement and identifying the institution that will administer the funds associated with the proposed research.

- **Attachment 3: Technical Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as "TechAbs.pdf".**

  Of particular importance, programmatic reviewers may not have access to the full application and therefore rely on the technical abstract for appropriate description of the

proposed research project's key aspects. Write the technical abstract using the outline below. Clarity and completeness within the space limits are highly important.

- **Background:** Present the scientific rationale behind the proposed research project.
- **Hypothesis/Objective(s):** State the hypothesis to be tested and/or objective(s) to be reached.
- **Specific Aims:** State the specific aims of the study.
- **Study Design:** Describe the study design, including appropriate controls. If tumors or derived cell lines will be studied, the name and definition of the materials should be included (e.g., name of the cell or pathological classification of the tissue).
- **Impact:** Briefly describe how the proposed research project will have an impact on NF research and/or patient care.

- **Attachment 4: Lay Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as "LayAbs.pdf".**

  The lay abstract should address the points outlined below ***in a manner that is readily understood by readers without a background in science or medicine.*** Avoid overuse of scientific jargon, acronyms and abbreviations. ***Do not duplicate the technical abstract.***

  - Summarize the objectives and rationale for the proposed research.
  - Describe the ultimate applicability of the research.
    - What population will the research help, and how will it help them?
    - What are the potential applications, benefits, and risks of the anticipated outcomes?
    - What is the projected time it may take to achieve a patient-related outcome?
    - What are the likely contributions of the proposed research project to advancing research, patient care, and/or quality of life?
    - How will the data and resources generated during the performance of the proposed research project be shared with the research community (scientific and advocacy organizations) and the public?

- **Attachment 5: Statement of Work (three-page limit): Upload as "SOW.pdf".** Refer to eBRAP for the Suggested SOW Format.

  For guidance on preparing the SOW, refer to the Example: Assembling a Generic Statement of Work. Include milestones for data or research resource(s) sharing.

- **Attachment 6: Impact Statement (one-page limit): Upload as "Impact.pdf".** Explain how the proposed research project addresses one or more of the FY26 NFRP Areas of Emphasis or, if the project does not address an area of emphasis, provide justification that the proposed research project addresses a critical problem in NF research and/or patient care. Detail the anticipated outcome(s) that will be directly attributed to the results of the proposed research (short-term gains). Explain the anticipated short- and long-term gains from the proposed research project, including how the new understanding may ultimately contribute to the goal of advancing NF research and/or patient care. Describe how the data and resources generated during the performance of the proposed research project will be shared with the research community (scientific and advocacy organizations) and the public. If applicable, describe how the anticipated

outcomes of the proposed study will make an impact in understanding health differences between sexes.

- **Attachment 7: Research Sharing Plan (two-page limit): Upload as "SharingPlan.pdf".** Describe the type of data or research resources (e.g., bio-specimen, analysis tool/software, training material) to be made publicly available as a result of the proposed work. Describe the mechanism (e.g., direct sharing, repository, mixed mode) by which data and resources generated during the period of performance will be shared with the research community and other affected communities, including clinical research participants. Include the name of the repository(ies) where scientific data and resources arising from the proposed study will be archived, if applicable. Identify and provide the rationale for any data or resources that will not be shared (e.g., for intellectual property, feasibility, cost, or other considerations). The plan should also protect participant privacy, confidential and proprietary data, and performer/third-party intellectual property. Provide a milestone plan for disseminating data/results, including when data and resources will be made available to other users. In cases where the study participant could potentially derive medical or other benefit from the information, explain whether the results of screening and/or study participation will be shared with the participant or their primary care provider, including results from any screening or diagnostic tests performed as part of the study. Describe how the data in the application follow the FAIR Data Principles for reproducible science found in "The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship."

  Resources developed through NFRP funding are available to the scientific community and can be accessed at https://cdmrp.health.mil/nfrp/resources/nfrpresources. Investigators are urged to leverage and contribute to these resources and include a sharing and distribution plan in the application within the Research Sharing Plan. Refer to the CDMRP Directive on Sharing Data and Research Resources for more information about the CDMRP's expectations for making data and research resources publicly available.

  NF-OSI Option: If appropriate applications must include description of milestones with respect to making the research or data resources available and how it will be accessible after the period of performance for the award expires.

  Do not submit a copy of the National Institutes of Health Data Management and Sharing Plan or duplicate the Data Management Plan which will be requested only after a recommendation for funding is made.

- **Attachment 8: Animal Research Plan (if applicable, three-page limit): Upload as "AnimalResPlan.pdf".** ***(Attachment 8 is required for applications proposing animal studies. Failure to provide this plan may negatively impact the review criteria.)***

  If the proposed study involves animals, a summary describing the animal research that will be conducted must be included in the application. Consult the ARRIVE guidelines 2.0 (Animal Research: Reporting *In Vivo* Experiments) to ensure relevant aspects of rigorous animal research are adequately planned for and, ultimately, reported. The Animal Research Plan may not be an exact replica of the protocol(s) submitted to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The Animal Research Plan should address the following points for each proposed animal study:

  - Briefly describe the research objective(s) of the animal study. Explain how and why the animal species, strain, and model(s) being used can address the scientific objectives and, where appropriate, the study's relevance to human biology.

- Explain why the proposed model(s) is superior to other available animal models for the proposed research strategy.
- Summarize the procedures to be conducted. Describe how the study will be controlled.
- Describe the randomization and blinding procedures for the study, and any other measures to be taken to minimize the effects of subjective bias during animal treatment and assessment of results. If randomization and/or blinding will not be utilized, provide justification.
- Provide a sample size estimate for each study arm and the method by which it was derived, including power analysis calculations.
- Describe how data will be handled, including rules for stopping data collection, criteria for inclusion and exclusion of data, how outliers will be defined and handled, statistical methods for data analysis, and identification of the primary endpoint(s).

- **Attachment 9: Letters of Collaboration (two-page limit) *(Qualified Collaborator Option only)*: Upload as "Collaboration.pdf".** Provide a signed letter from each collaborating individual or organization demonstrating that the PI has the support or resources necessary for the proposed work. If an investigator at an intramural organization is named as a collaborator on an application submitted through an extramural organization, the application must include a letter from the collaborator's Commander or Commanding Officer at the intramural organization that authorizes the collaborator's involvement. The following components should be addressed:
  - Describe how the optional Qualified Collaborator will significantly contribute to the proposed research project such that it could not be accomplished without their involvement. A proposed research project in which the collaborator merely supplies biological/chemical materials (such as DNA/RNA constructs, purified or tagged proteins, chemical(s), transgenic mice, tissue samples) or access to patients will not meet the intent of the Qualified Collaborator Option and will not qualify for the higher level of funding.
  - It should be clear that the success of the proposed research project depends on the complementary skills and contributions of both the PI and the collaborator.
  - A minimum of 10% level of effort for each budget year is required of the collaborator. The contributions of the collaborator should be reflected in the Research and Related Budget for intramural and extramural applicants. This level of effort may be distributed over the period of performance as best fits the project.
- **Attachment 10: Representations *(Grants.gov submissions only)*: Upload as "RequiredReps.pdf".** All extramural applicants must complete and submit the Required Representations document available on eBRAP.
- **Attachment 11: Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget Form *(if applicable)*: Upload as "IGBudget.pdf".** If an intramural DOW organization will be a collaborator in the performance of the project, complete a separate budget for that organization using the Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget form available on eBRAP.

(c) Additional Application Materials:

The following are additional forms for application submission. Follow the instructions specific to the submission portal, as found within the GAI.

Grants.gov	eBRAP.org

i. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

- **Biographical Sketch**
- **Current/Pending Support**

  Intragovernmental applicants must include their internally supported research and development programs.

ii. Research & Related Budget

iii. Project/Performance Site Location(s)

iv. Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) *(if applicable, Grants.gov submissions only)*

4.4. Other Application Elements

The government reserves the right to request a revised budget, budget justification and/or additional information for applications recommended for funding.

5. Submission Requirements

5.1. Location of Application Package

Download the application package components for HT942526NFRPIIRA from Grants.gov or eBRAP, depending on which submission portal will be used.

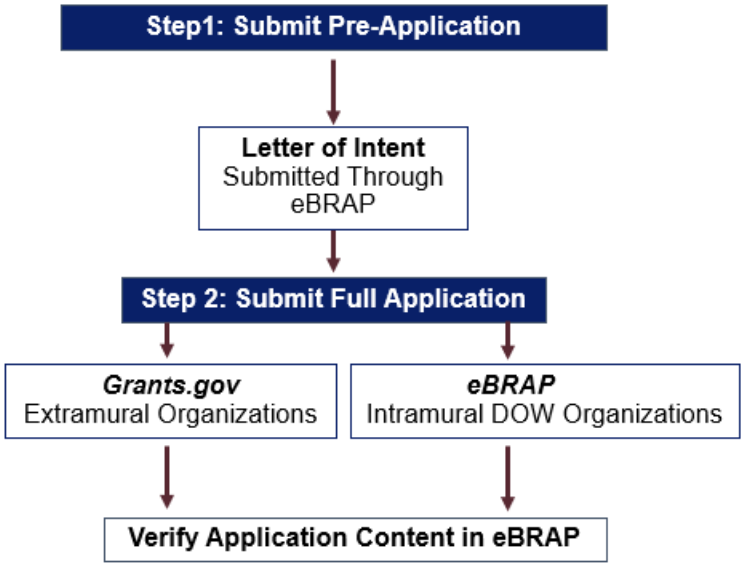
5.2. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

The applicant organization must be registered as an entity in the System for Award Management (SAM), SAM.gov, and receive confirmation of an "Active" status before submitting an application through Grants.gov. Organizations must include the unique entity identifier (UEI) generated by the SAM in applications to this funding opportunity and maintain an active registration in the SAM at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

5.3. Submission Instructions

The CDMRP uses two portal systems to accept pre- and full application submissions. The workflow below shows which portal system to use for pre- and full application submissions, respectively.

Application Submission Workflow



5.3.1. Pre-Application Submission

All pre-application components must be submitted by the PI through eBRAP.

During the pre-application process, eBRAP assigns each submission a unique log number. This unique log number is required during the full application submission process. The eBRAP log number, application title and all information for the PI, Business Official(s), performing organization, and contracting organization must be consistent throughout the entire

pre-application and full application submission process. Inconsistencies may delay application processing and limit or negate the ability to view, modify and verify the application in eBRAP. Contact the eBRAP Help Desk if any changes need to be made.

When starting the pre-application, PIs should select a Mechanism Option appropriate to their pre-application:

Application Includes:	Select Mechanism Option:
No options	Investigator-Initiated Research Award – Funding Level 1
Participation in the NF Open Science Initiative	Investigator-Initiated Research Award – Funding Level 2 – NF Open Science Initiative
Optional qualified collaborator	Investigator-Initiated Research Award – Funding Level 2 – Optional Qualified Collaborator

5.3.2. Full Application Submission

Grants.gov Submissions: Full applications from extramural organizations *must* be submitted through the Grants.gov Workspace.

eBRAP Submissions: Only intramural DOW organizations may submit full applications through eBRAP.

5.3.3. Applicant Verification of Full Application Submission in eBRAP

Independent of the submission portal, once the full application is submitted, it is transmitted to and processed in eBRAP; the transmission to eBRAP may take up to 48 hours. At this stage, the PI and organizational representatives will receive an email from eBRAP instructing them to log in to eBRAP to review, modify and verify the full application submission. ***The Project Narrative and Research & Related Budget Form cannot be changed after the application submission deadline.*** Other application components, including subaward budget(s) and subaward budget justification(s), may be changed until the application verification period ends. The full application cannot be modified once the application verification period ends.

5.4. Submission Dates and Times

The pre-application and full application submission process should be started early to avoid missing deadlines. Regardless of submission portal used, all pre- and full application components must be submitted by the deadlines stipulated in this program announcement. There are no grace periods for deadlines; failure to meet submission deadlines will result in application rejection. ***The DHACA cannot make allowances/exceptions for submission problems encountered by the applicant.***

Submission dates and times are specified in Section 1, Basic Information.

5.5. Intergovernmental Review

Not applicable for this funding opportunity.

6. Application Review Information

6.1. Application Compliance Review

Submitting applications that propose essentially the same research project to different funding opportunities within the same program and fiscal year is prohibited and will result in administrative withdrawal of the duplicative application(s).

While it is allowable to propose similar research projects to different programs within the CDMRP or to other organizations, duplication of funding or accepting funding from more than one source for the same research is prohibited. See the CDMRP's Directive on Research Duplication.

Including classified research data within the application and/or proposing research that may produce classified outcomes or outcomes deemed sensitive to national security concerns, may result in application withdrawal.

Members of the FY26 NFRP Programmatic Panel must not be involved in any pre-application or full application including, but not limited to, concept design, application development, budget preparation and the development of any supporting documentation, including personal letters of support/recommendation for the research and/or PI. Programmatic panel members ***may*** provide letters to confirm PI eligibility and access to laboratory space, equipment and other resources necessary for the project if that is part of their regular roles and responsibilities (e.g., as Department Chair). ***A list of the FY26 NFRP Programmatic Panel members can be found on the CDMRP website.***

Additional restrictions and associated administrative responses are outlined in Section 9.2, Administrative Actions.

6.2. Review Criteria

6.2.1. Pre-Application Screening Criteria

Pre-applications submitted to this funding opportunity are used for program planning purposes only (e.g., reviewer recruitment) and will not be screened.

6.2.2. Peer Review Criteria

To determine technical merit, all applications will be evaluated individually according to the following **scored criteria**, which are listed in **decreasing order of importance:**

- **Research Strategy and Feasibility**
  - The extent to which the scientific rationale supports the research project and its feasibility, as demonstrated by a review and analysis of the literature and relevant preliminary data (preliminary data do not need to come from the NF research field).
  - How well the hypotheses, experimental design, methods, and analyses are developed and support completion of the aims.
  - To what extent the power analysis demonstrates that the sample size is appropriate to meet the objectives of the study, and how well the statistical plan and analyses are developed and integrated into the project.
  - If applicable, whether the strategy for the inclusion of women and minorities, and the distribution of proposed enrollment, are appropriate for the proposed research.

- How well potential problems are identified and alternative approaches addressed.
- Whether the strategy for considering sex as a biological variable is appropriate to the objectives of the study, or whether the justification for a single-sex study is sufficiently strong.
- How well studies are designed to achieve reproducible and rigorous results, including the choice of model and the endpoints/outcomes to be measured.

- **Impact**
  - To what extent:
    - The anticipated results from the proposed research will contribute to the NFRP mission and will impact NF research and/or patient/survivor care.
    - The anticipated outcomes (short-term goals) will be used as the foundation for future research projects.
    - The anticipated long-term gains will contribute to the goal of advancing NF research and/or patient care.
    - The data and resources generated during the performance of the proposed research project will be shared with the research community (scientific and advocacy organizations) and the public.
  - How well the proposed research project addresses one or more of the FY26 NFRP Areas of Emphasis or a critical problem in NF research and/or patient care.
  - If applicable, to what extent the anticipated outcomes of the proposed study will make an impact the understanding of health differences between sexes.
  - For NF-OSI option: To what degree the application describes how participation in the NF-OSI will advance and/or accelerate research in NF.
- **Personnel**
  - To what degree the PI's experience, level of expertise, and record of accomplishment demonstrate their ability to successfully complete the proposed research project.
  - To what extent the levels of effort by the PI and other key personnel are appropriate to ensure success of the proposed research project.
  - Optional Qualified Collaborator (if applicable) ***(scored for applications submitted under the Qualified Collaborator Option)***:
    - Whether the collaborator meets the criteria for an optional Qualified Collaborator as verified by the Letters of Collaboration (Attachment 9), including the commitment to a 10% level of effort for each budget year.
    - To what extent the collaborator's experience, expertise, and involvement represent a significant contribution to the proposed research project such that it could not be accomplished without their involvement.
- **Research Sharing Plan**
  - How well-detailed the Research Resources Sharing Plan is, including but not limited to:
    - The description of the type of data or research resource(s) to be made publicly available.
    - The details of the plan to access data or research resources.

  - The appropriateness of plans to ensure the data or research resource(s) is/are accessible after the period of performance expires.
  - The appropriateness of the milestones with respect to making the data or research resource(s) available.
  - How well the data in the application follows the FAIR Data Principles for reproducible science found in the FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship.
- How the research project will advance and/or accelerate research in NF.
- For NF-OSI applications, how well commitment to research sharing through the NF Data Portal is described

In addition, the following criteria will also contribute to the overall evaluation of the application, but will not be individually scored and are therefore termed **unscored criteria**:

- **Budget**
  - Whether the budget is appropriate for the proposed research.
- **Environment**
  - To what extent the scientific environment and level of institutional support is appropriate for the proposed research project.
  - How well the research requirements are supported by the availability of and accessibility to facilities and resources.
  - If applicable, the degree to which the intellectual and material property plan is appropriate.
- **Application Presentation**
  - To what extent the writing, clarity and presentation of the application components influence the review.

6.2.3. Programmatic Review

To make funding recommendations and select the application(s) that, individually or collectively, will best achieve the program objectives, the following criteria are used by programmatic reviewers:

- Ratings and evaluations of peer reviewers
- Relevance to the priorities of the FY26 NFRP, as evidenced by the following:
  - Adherence to the intent of the funding opportunity
  - Program portfolio composition
  - Relative impact
  - Programmatic relevance to the FY26 NFRP Areas of Emphasis

6.3. Application Review and Selection Process

6.3.1. Pre-Application

There is no review and selection process for pre-applications submitted to this funding opportunity. ***The CDMRP will NOT provide an invitation to submit a full application after***

pre-application submission. Applicants are encouraged to develop pre-application and full application components concurrently and submit a full application AFTER successful submission of the pre-application.

6.3.2. Full Application

All applications are evaluated by scientists, clinicians and consumers in a two-tier review process. The first tier is **peer review**, the evaluation of applications against established criteria to determine technical merit, where each application is assessed for its own merit, independent of other applications. The second tier is **programmatic review**, a comparison-based process in which applications with high scientific and technical merit are further evaluated for programmatic relevance. Final recommendations for funding are subject to review and approval by a designated official. ***The highest-scoring applications from the first tier of review are not automatically recommended for funding. Funding recommendations depend on various factors as described in Section 6.2.3, Programmatic Review.*** Additional information about the two-tier process used by the CDMRP can be found on the CDMRP website.

Funding of applications received is contingent upon the availability of federal funds for this program, the number of applications received, the quality and merit of the applications as evaluated by peer and programmatic review, and the requirements of the government. Funds to be obligated on any award resulting from this funding opportunity will be available for use for a limited time period based on the fiscal year of the funds.

6.4. Risk, Integrity and Performance Information

Prior to making an assistance agreement award where the federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Part 200.1 (2 CFR 200.1), over the period of performance, the federal awarding agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is available in the SAM.

An applicant organization may review the SAM and submit comments on any information currently available about the organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered. The federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics and record of performance under federal awards when determining a recipient's qualification prior to award, according to the qualification standards of the Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations (DoDGARs), Section 22.415.

In accordance with National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 and all associated laws, all fundamental research funded by the DOW must be evaluated for affiliations with foreign entities. All applicant organizations must disclose foreign affiliations of all key personnel named on applications. Failure to disclose foreign affiliations of key personnel shall lead to withdrawal of recommendations to fund applications. Applicant organizations may be presented with an opportunity to mitigate identified risks, particularly those pertaining to influence from foreign entities specified in law. Implementation of mitigation discussions and utilization of the DOD Component Decision Matrix must decrease risk of foreign influence in accordance with the above-mentioned laws and guidance prior to award.

7. Federal Award Notices

For each compliant full application received, the organizational representative(s) and PI will receive email notification when the funding recommendations are posted to eBRAP, typically within 6 weeks after programmatic review. At this time, each PI will receive a peer review summary statement on the strengths and weaknesses of the application and an information paper describing the application receipt and review process for the NFRP award mechanisms. The information papers and a list of organizations and PIs recommended for funding are also posted on the program's page within the CDMRP website. After all awards are made, the CDMRP includes individual award information in a searchable database.

If an application is recommended for funding, after the email notification is posted to eBRAP, a government representative will contact the person authorized to negotiate on behalf of the recipient organization.

Only an appointed DHACA Grants Officer may obligate the government to the expenditure of funds to an extramural organization. No commitment on the part of the government should be inferred from discussions with any other individual. ***The award document signed by the Grants Officer is the official authorizing document (i.e., assistance agreement).***

Intragovernmental obligations of funding will be made according to the terms of a negotiated Inter-Agency Agreement and managed by a CDMRP Science Officer.

Funding obligated to ***intragovernmental and intramural DOW organizations*** will be sent through the Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request (MIPR), Funding Authorization Document (FAD) or Direct Charge Work Breakdown Structure processes. Transfer of funds is contingent upon appropriate safety and administrative approvals. Intragovernmental and intramural DOW investigators and collaborators must coordinate receipt and commitment of funds through their respective Resource Manager/Task Area Manager/Comptroller or equivalent Business Official.

An organization may, at its own risk and without the government's prior approval, incur obligations and expenditures to cover costs up to 90 days before the beginning date of the initial budget period of a new award.

8. Post-Award Requirements

8.1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Applicable requirements in the DoDGARs found in 32 CFR, Chapter I, Subchapter C, and 2 CFR, Chapter XI, apply to grants and cooperative agreements resulting from this program announcement.

The GAI contain information regarding administrative requirements and national policy requirements.

Refer to full text of the latest DoD R&D Terms and Conditions and the DHACA Terms and Conditions for further information.

If there are delinquencies in technical reporting requirements for any existing DHA or U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command awards at the applicant organization, DHACA will not issue any new awards to the applicant organization until all delinquent reports have been submitted.

Applications recommended for funding that involve animals, human data, human specimens, human subjects or human cadavers must be reviewed for compliance with federal animal and/or human subjects protection requirements and must be approved by the DHA R&D Office of Research and Regulatory Compliance (ORRC), prior to implementation. This administrative review requirement is in addition to the local IACUC, Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee (EC) review.

8.2. Reporting

Annual technical progress reports as well as a final technical progress report will be required. Annual and final technical progress reports must be prepared in accordance with the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR).

The Award Terms and Conditions will specify whether additional and/or more frequent reporting is required.

Award Expiration Transition Plan: An Award Expiration Transition Plan, using the template available on eBRAP, must be submitted with the final progress report.

PHS Inclusion Enrollment Reporting ***(required for research proposing clinical research)*:** Enrollment reporting on the basis of sex, race, and/or ethnicity will be required with each annual and final progress report. The PHS Inclusion Enrollment Report is available on eBRAP.

Awards resulting from this program announcement may entail additional reporting requirements related to recipient integrity and performance matters. Recipient organizations that have federal contract, grant and cooperative agreement awards with a cumulative total value greater than $10M are required to provide information to the SAM about certain civil, criminal and administrative proceedings that reached final disposition within the most recent 5-year period and that were connected with their performance of a federal award. These recipients are required to disclose, semiannually, information about criminal, civil and administrative proceedings as specified in the applicable Representations.

8.3. Additional Requirements

Unless otherwise restricted, changes in the PI or organization will be allowed on a case-by-case basis, provided the intent of the award mechanism is met.

An organizational transfer of an award will not be allowed in the last year of the original period of performance or any extension thereof.

9. Other Information

9.1. Program Announcement Version

Questions related to this program announcement should refer to the program name, the program announcement name and the program announcement version code CD26_01d.

9.2. Administrative Actions

After receipt of full applications, the following administrative actions may occur.

9.2.1. Rejection

The following will result in administrative rejection of the full application:

- The Project Narrative is missing.
- The Budget is missing.
- The pre-application was not submitted.
- Attachment 7 is missing in an application submitted under Funding Level 2 – NF Open Science Initiative.
- Attachment 9 is missing in an application submitted under Funding Level 2 – Optional Qualified Collaborator.

9.2.2. Modification

- Pages exceeding the specified limits will be removed prior to reviewing all documents.
- Documents not requested will be removed.

9.2.3. Withdrawal

The following may result in administrative withdrawal of the full application:

- A member of the FY26 NFRP Programmatic Panel is named as being involved in the development or execution of the research proposed or is found to have assisted in the pre-application or application processes.
- The application includes the name(s) of personnel from either of the CDMRP peer or programmatic review companies for which conflicts cannot be adequately mitigated. For FY26, the identities of the peer review contractor and the programmatic review contractor may be found on the CDMRP website.
- Personnel from the applicant or collaborating organizations are found to have contacted persons involved in the review or approval process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process.
- The application from an extramural organization, including non-DOW federal agencies, is received through eBRAP.
- The federal government recipient organization (including an intramural DOW organization): (a) cannot accept and execute the entirety of the requested budget in FY26 funds; and/or (b)

cannot coordinate the use of contractual, assistance or other appropriate agreements to provide funds to collaborators.

- The application fails to conform to this program announcement description.
- The application includes URLs, with the exception of links in the References Cited and Publication and/or Patent sections.
- The application includes research data that are classified and/or proposes research that may produce classified outcomes, or outcomes deemed sensitive to national security concerns.
- The same research project is submitted to different funding opportunities within the same program and fiscal year.
- A clinical trial is proposed
- The application fails to demonstrate access to the relevant study population or resources.
- The application does not address at least one of the FY26 NFRP Areas of Emphasis.
- The application does not include preliminary and/or published data that are relevant to NF and the proposed research project.
- An investigator may be named as a PI on a single application to this program announcement. If an investigator is named multiple times as a PI, only the first application received will be accepted; additional applications will be administratively withdrawn.

9.2.4. Withhold

Applications that appear to involve research misconduct will be administratively withheld from further consideration pending organizational investigation. The organization will be required to provide the findings of the investigation to the DHACA Grants Officer for a determination of the final disposition of the application.

Appendix 1. Full Application Submission Checklist

Full Application Components	Uploaded
SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance ***(Grants.gov submissions only)***	☐
Summary (Tab 1) and Application Contacts (Tab 2) ***(eBRAP submissions only)***	☐
Attachments	
Project Narrative – Attachment 1, upload as "ProjectNarrative.pdf"	☐
Supporting Documentation – Attachment 2, upload as "Support.pdf"	☐
Technical Abstract – Attachment 3, upload as "TechAbs.pdf"	☐
Lay Abstract – Attachment 4, upload as "LayAbs.pdf"	☐
Statement of Work – Attachment 5, upload as "SOW.pdf"	☐
Impact Statement – Attachment 6, upload as "Impact.pdf"	☐
Research Sharing Plan – Attachment 7, upload as "SharingPlan.pdf"	☐
Animal Research Plan – Attachment 8, upload as "AnimalResPlan.pdf" (if applicable; required for research projects involving animals)	☐
Letters of Collaboration – Attachment 9, upload as "Collaboration.pdf" (if applicable; required for applications submitted under the Qualified Collaborator Option)	☐
Representations *(Grants.gov submissions only)* – Attachment 10, upload as "RequiredReps.pdf"	☐
Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget Form *(if applicable)* – Attachment 11, upload as "IGBudget.pdf"	☐
Additional Application Materials	
Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	☐
Attach Biographical Sketch for Senior/Key Persons (Biosketch_LastName.pdf)	☐
Attach Current/Pending Support for Senior/Key Persons (Support_LastName.pdf)	☐
Research & Related Budget	☐
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	☐
Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) *(if applicable)*	☐

Appendix 2. Acronym List

ACOS/R&D	Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development
ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments
CDMRP	Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CONSORT	Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DHA R&D	Defense Health Agency Research and Development
DHACA	Defense Health Agency Contracting Activity
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoDGARs	Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations
DOW	U.S. Department of War
eBRAP	Electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal
EC	Ethics Committee
ET	Eastern Time
FAD	Funding Authorization Document
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable
FY	Fiscal Year
GAI	General Application Instructions
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IIRA	Investigator-Initiated Research Award
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LOI	Letter of Intent
M	Million
MIPR	Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request
NF	Neurofibromatosis
NF-OSI	Open Science Initiative
NF1	Neurofibromatosis 1
NF2	Neurofibromatosis 2
NFRP	Neurofibromatosis Research Program
ORRC	Office of Research and Regulatory Compliance
PDF	Portable Document Format
PHS	Public Health Service
PI	Principal Investigator
R&D	Research and Development

RPPR	Research Performance Progress Report
SAM	System for Award Management
SF424 R&R	Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance, Research & Related)
SOW	Statement of Work
SPIRIT	Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials
STROBE	STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USC	United States Code
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs