

Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate (DHS/S&T)
Center for Borders, Trade and Immigration Research (CBTIR)
Center Lead FOA: DHS-14-ST-061-COE-002A
Center Partner FOA: DHS-14-ST-061-COE-002B

The following questions have been received by the DHS Grants Officer. Answers are based on published information in the above referenced Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) and are intended to ensure all interested applicants have the same information. The identity of the institution asking the question will not be provided. Questions have been edited to provide clarity.

Question #1: Would a pending PhD be an obstacle in pursuing this proposal as PI or CO-PI, or would other credentials be sufficient?

Answer: There are no PhD requirements to apply. Please refer to the FOAs, Section III. Eligibility Information.

Question #2: Page 19 of the revised final FOA indicates “Principal Investigators (PI) that are already Partners under a Center Lead application may not submit an application under this Partner FOA”. My project under a current COE ends March 2015 (project award date). Am I eligible to apply for this competitive opportunity?

Answer: Yes, this competition is open to academic institutions and PIs that are currently partnered with existing COEs. Please note the modified Text on page 19 of the Partner FOA: “Principal Investigators that are already Partners under a Center Lead application may not submit the same application under this Partner FOA.”

Question #3: Please let us know If our technology platform could be of relevance to the requirements of the program or not.

Answer: Please refer to the “Research and Education Themes, Topics, and Questions” as identified in the FOA. DHS will not provide feedback on the relevancy of your project prior to submission.

Question #4: Do we submit a budget for all 5 years (max of \$20 million) or do we only submit a budget for year 1 at a max of \$4 million, even though some of the proposed projects will extend beyond Year 1?

Answer: Applicants should submit a budget for all 5 years, including the following for each project (from Center Lead FOA Section IV. How to Apply, D. 3. b. Page 31) “A year-by-year description of the project from inception to transition including key milestones for each year” and “Total costs per year”.

Question #5: There are 2 separate PIs with 2 distinct projects applying from our institution: one to be a partner under the Center Lead FOA applicant and one as a separate applicant to the

CBTIR Center Partner FOA. Is it possible for both to receive funding, or is there a limit of only one application from our institution being chosen for an award?

Answer: You may submit both projects. Please see Section III. Eligibility Information of the Partner FOA: "Applicants may submit more than 1 proposal. Principal Investigators that are already Partners under a Center Lead application may not submit the same application under this Partner FOA."

Question #6: The "GG_LobbyingForm-V1.1" is not included in the application package and "The Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)", listed as optional, is included in the mandatory section. Will this affect submitting the package through Grants.gov? Since the GG_LobbyingForm-V1.1 is not included in the application, how should it be attached?

Answer: The "GG_LobbyingForm-V1.1" listed in the FOAs in "Section IV. How to Apply. C. Certification Regarding Lobbying (GG_Lobbying Form-V1.1)" is **not** mandatory and only applicants selected to receive funding will be required to submit this form. The FOAs have been updated to reflect this. The "The Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)" listed in the FOAs in "Section IV. How to Apply. E. Optional Forms" has been moved to the Optional section of the application package for the Center Lead and Center Partner FOAs.

Question #7: Should the Facilities & Administrative Cost letters for all the sub-awards be included with the application?

Answer: It can be submitted as an attachment.

Question #8: Does "Indirect costs on sub-awards are limited to the first \$25,000 of direct costs" mean we should only charge indirect costs against the first \$25K of any sub-awards we issue?

Answer: Yes. As the FOA states: "Indirect costs on sub-awards are limited to the first \$25,000 of direct costs." Your institution's federally-approved Indirect Cost rate provides the details of allowable charges.

Question #9: The submission deadline is listed as 12:59:59 PM EDT on the first page, but 11:59:59 PM EDT in the checklist.

Answer: It is 11:59:59PM EDT. The Center Lead and Center Partner FOAs have been updated.

Question #10: I received the notification that the deadline date for this FOA has been changed from July 3, 2014 to October 1, 2014 Please advise on whether we will need to resubmit their Center Lead application or if the one already submitted will suffice.

Answer: Any application received by July 3, 2014 will be considered and reviewed along with all other applications received by October 1, 2014. Applicants who have already submitted have the opportunity to resubmit, however are not required to.

Question #11: What was the reason for the date extension? Will we need to resubmit? Since we submitted by the original deadline, can we submit a revised package?

Answer: The deadline was extended to ensure a sufficient number of applications to guaranty a competitive selection process. Any applicant who has already submitted may withdraw its current application and submit a new one. However, that is not required, see above.

Question #12: I am writing to understand the application deadline for this program. I see two different dates and wanted to be sure the competition was open for submission until 10/1/2014? There may have been an original closing date and now an extension.

Answer: The deadline for submission is 10/1/2014 11:59:59 EDT.

Question #13: Are there any pre-application workshops planned?

Answer: A webinar for interested applicants was held on 5 May 2014. It was recorded and is available on www.grants.gov, under the “Full Announcement” tab for DHS-14-ST-061-COE-002A Center of Excellence (COE) - Center for Borders, Trade and Immigration Research (CBTIR) Center Lead. The recording, presentation slides and associated Q&A are available.

Question #14: what will happen to an existing submission?

Answer: Any application received by July 3, 2014 will be considered and reviewed along with all other applications after October 1, 2014.

Question #15: If we are required to resubmit or voluntarily withdraw and resubmit the 07/03 proposal, will either version be considered a “resubmission” with hard links to the 07/03 proposal?

Answer: As noted above, no applicant is required to resubmit its application. Any applicant who has already submitted an application may withdraw its current application in its entirety and submit a new one or updated version. DHS will only review one application for the same topic by the same applicant.

Question #16: Our university has developed a system that we are working to develop prototypes and market. Is the DHS Funding Opportunity Number DHS-14-ST-061-COE-002B an appropriate funding opportunity from which we might seek funds to market and develop prototypes? If this is not an appropriate funding opportunity for our project we would like to know if you might be able to suggest some other DHS funding opportunity that would be more appropriate.

Answer: Please refer to the “Research and Education Themes, Topics, and Questions” as identified in the FOA. DHS will not provide feedback on the relevancy of your project prior to submission. Please refer to grants.gov for information on DHS funding opportunities.

Question #17: The Partner FOA lists both the maximum and minimum funding amount per proposal as \$500,000 on grants.gov. Should our proposal's budget be exactly \$500,000 – no more and no less?

Answer: DHS has updated the minimum funding amount on grants.gov to \$0.

Question #18: In reviewing the Grant Opportunity information for both the Lead and Partner it appeared that participation is limited to institutions of higher education. It was our understanding that the opportunity existed for industry partners (other than Institutions of Higher Education) to submit proposal at this time for projects to be included under the selected COE.

Kindly request your guidance on the following:

- **18(a):** What is the path for a commercial company to submit a proposal for a project for consideration under CBTIR?
- **18(b):** If there is a specific solicitation/grant document we should be responding to as an Industry Partner, can you please provide us the information to find that document?
- **18(c):** If there is not currently an open opportunity for industry partners to participate how and when will this occur?

Answer (a): A commercial company would need to partner with an eligible university to submit an application to respond to either the Center Lead or Center Partner FOAs. Please refer to the eligibility requirements in the FOA, “**Eligible Applicants:** Private institutions of higher education; and Public & state controlled institutions of higher education.”

Answer (b): There is no specific solicitation for industry.

Answer (c): Please see Answer (a)

Question #19: Can Partner applications encompass both research and workforce activities?

Answer: As stated in the FOA Section IV. How to Apply, D. 2, “Applicants must select either a research project or an education and workforce development project for their proposal. Applicants must clearly identify which they have chosen.” Please also see, “Appendix A – Center of Excellence Evaluation and Selection Process” for a description of the evaluation criteria for both a “research project” and an “education” project.