

Frequently Asked Questions

Funding Opportunity Announcement # DHS-23-CISA-127-CWDT-0001 Week of May 22, 2023

Question #1: What is the Cybersecurity Workforce Development and Training for Underserved Communities (CWDT) cooperative agreement?

Answer: The CWDT cooperative agreement will provide financial assistance to non-traditional technical training providers (NTTPs) to conduct cybersecurity training and support services to a target audience of underserved individuals that are at least 17 years old and assist trainees in securing internships, apprenticeships, and employment to meet the dynamic needs of the cybersecurity workplace. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section A.9. Program Overview, Allowable Activities, Objectives, and Priorities.*

Question #2: Who are the eligible applicants?

Answer: Eligible applicants include the following:

Nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, with an effective ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granting tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, without an effective ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granting tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section C.1 Eligible Applicants.*

Question #3: What is the application submission deadline?

Answer: The application submission deadline is 07/06/2023 17:00 (GMT - 05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).

Question #4: Is the funding level for two awards \$1.5 M for 3 years or \$1.5M per year for 3 years?

Answer: The funding level is for two projected federal awards for \$1.5 million with a period of performance of 36 months and a single budget period of 36 months. There will be no additional funding provided for these two projected federal awards. The funding level is not \$1.5 million per year for three years. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section B. Federal Award Information.*

Question #5: What are the start and the end dates for the projected period of performance?

Answer: The projected period of performance is 09/29/2023 – 09/30/2026. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section B. Federal Award Information.*

Question #6: Will there be any thoughts of entertaining changing this restrictive eligibility requirements to open the grant to more competitors?

Answer: CISA is not changing the eligibility requirements in the CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity at this time.

Question #7: Will a nonprofit be allowed to team with another nonprofit or for-profit entity to meet the eligibility requirements?

Answer: No. An applicant must independently meet the “Eligible Applicants” and “Applicant Eligibility Criteria” set forth in Section C – Eligibility Information of the FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Implementation of the cooperative agreement may involve other entities as outlined in “Other Eligibility Criteria/Restrictions” set forth in the aforementioned Section C.

Question #8: Can a state, local, tribal, or territorial entity partner with a nonprofit to meet the eligibility requirements?

Answer: No. An applicant must independently meet the “Eligible Applicants” and “Applicant Eligibility Criteria” set forth in Section C – Eligibility Information of the FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Implementation of the cooperative agreement may involve other entities as outlined in “Other Eligibility Criteria/Restrictions” set forth in the aforementioned Section C.

Question #9: Were Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP) removed from the allowable activities in the CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity?

Answer: Yes. The original CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity identified Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP) as an allowable activity under a cooperative agreement. The Department of Labor implementing regulations for the IRAP were previously set forth at 29 C.F.R. pt. 29, subpart B. Following the issuance of the original Notice of Funding Opportunity, the U.S. Department of Labor informed DHS that it had rescinded the IRAP regulations at 29 C.F.R. pt. 29, subpart B. See [Federal Register :: Apprenticeship Programs, Labor Standards for Registration](#). DHS, therefore, amended the original CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity by removing the IRAP as an allowable activity. The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) remains an allowable activity. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section A.9.d Allowable Activities.*

Question #10: Can a recipient of a federal award, when carrying out the scope of work under the cooperative agreement, partner with a for-profit organization that already has a successful cyber security apprenticeship program?

Answer: Yes. DHS requires a recipient to forge robust partnerships to carry out the scope of work under the cooperative agreement. At a minimum, a recipient is required to partner/forge partnerships with at least three employers or industry/trade associations that align with the needs of employers with entry-level skilled cybersecurity needs. An industry/trade association, also known as an industry trade group, business association, sector association, or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry. In addition to the minimum partnership requirements, DHS strongly encourage recipients to collaborate with other entities that can support and advance the work of bolstering the cybersecurity workforce. These include state, local, tribal, and territorial entities. Other organizations include those functioning as workforce and industry intermediaries (including entities such as workforce development entities, labor-management organizations, community-based organizations, and industry associations, which help broker local, regional, and national workforce solutions); foundations and philanthropic organizations; federal agencies; providers of supportive and specialized services; and disability service providers. *See CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section C.3 Required Partners.*

Question #11: Is a recipient of federal award that is a nonprofit organization but not an educational entity permitted to partner with educational organizations when carrying out the scope of work under a cooperative agreement?

Answer: Yes. Please see the answer to Question #10.

Question#12: When a recipient of a federal award is considering possible partnerships with employers, stakeholder groups, trade associations and others when carrying out the scope of work under a federal award, may it partner with government agencies?

Answer: Yes. Please see the response to Question #10.

Question #13: Does an applicant have to be actively providing training and apprenticeship services to the meet the eligibility requirements?

Answer: An applicant must, at minimum, have a past performance in developing and implementing a cybersecurity training program. It is not required to have a fully established apprenticeship and/or placement program when applying for a CWDT cooperative agreement. *See CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section C.2.b. Past Performance.*

Question #14: Is it an eligibility requirement that an applicant must have a sole purpose in workforce development?

Answer: No. *See CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section C – Eligibility Information.*

Question #15: Is there an exception to the eligibility criteria where a for-profit organization can apply?

Answer: No. For-profit organizations are not eligible applicants. Please see the answer to Question #2.

Question #16: Is there an exception to the eligibility criteria where a government agency can apply?

Answer: No. State, local, tribal, or territorial entities are not eligible applicants. Eligible applicants include the following:

Nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, with an effective ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granting tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, without an effective ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granting tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. *See FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section C.1 Eligible Applicants.*

Implementation of the cooperative agreement may involve other entities as outlined in “Other Eligibility Criteria/Restrictions” set forth in Section C – Eligibility Information of the FY 2023 CWDT Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Question #17: What are the regions that CISA is hoping to serve through this opportunity?

Answer: At least one. One of the Program Priorities is that an applicant reaches participants and employers in one or more CISA regions. It is the responsibility of an eligible applicant to propose, through the Program Narrative and other documents (as applicable), a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed program. Additionally, an applicant will be evaluated based upon the depth of the applicant’s experience in involving underserved communities and stakeholders to coordinate activities that lead to a successful training-apprenticeship-employment pathway, in cybersecurity in one or more [CISA Regions](#). *See Section A.9. Program Overview, Allowable Activities, Objectives, and Priorities.*

Question #18: If an applicant has been awarded other federal contracts, does this fall under the definition of “federal awards” for the purposes of being subjected to an audit?

Answer: No. The regulations at 2 C.F.R. pt. 200 sets forth the standards for the audits of non-Federal entities expending “federal awards”. As detailed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.501, a non-Federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more during the non-Federal entity’s fiscal year in “federal awards” must have a single or program-specific audit for that year in accordance with 2 C.F.R. pt. 200. The regulation explains that an auditee may simultaneously be a recipient, subrecipient, and contractor and that “federal awards” expended as a recipient or subrecipient are subject to audit under 2 C.F.R. pt. 200 and but that payments received for goods and services provided as a contractor are not. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.501(f).

Question #19: Is this opportunity limited to US-based organizations?

Answer: Yes. An applicant must be incorporated in one of the 50 states or in the District of Columbia.

Question #20: If awarded, what is the budget period?

Answer: The budget period will be 09/29/2023 to 09/30/2026.

Question #21: If awarded, what is the project period?

Answer: The period of performance for the federal awards are projected to be 09/29/2023 to 09/29/2026.