

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding

Funding Opportunity Announcement # DHS-21-CISA-127-CWDT001 Week of August 16, 2021

Question #1: Can the non-profit organization partner with a for-profit organization that already has a successful cyber security apprenticeship program?

Answer: Yes. This NOFO specifies required partners and optional partners. We encourage applicants to forge robust partnerships to implement the cooperative agreement and to sustain activities beyond the performance period. To ensure that projects have strong and sustained employer engagement, applicants are required to partner with at least two 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. The employer partner(s) will play an important role in supporting grant success with respect to employer engagement and career pathways. Additionally, we strongly encourage applicants to collaborate with other partners 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 Section C.3 Required Partners and Section C.4 Optional Partners.*

Question #2: Is a non-profit (501(c)(3) that is not an educational entity permitted to partner with educational organizations?

Answer: Yes, this NOFO specifies required partners and optional partners. Please see the response to Question #1.

Question #3: When considering possible partnerships with employers, stakeholder groups, trade associations and others, are government agencies allowable employer partners?

Answer: Yes, this NOFO specifies required partners and optional partners. Please see the response to Question #1.

Question #4: Does the non-profit have to be actively providing training and apprenticeship services?

Answer: Eligible applicants are non-profits that, at minimum, have a past performance in delivering cybersecurity training. It is not a requirement to have a fully established apprenticeship program prior to the time of applying to this cooperative agreement. Past performance in delivering cybersecurity training is required. *See Section C.2.b. Past Performance.*

Question #5: Is it a requirement that the non-profit applying for this cooperative agreement must have a sole purpose is workforce development?

Answer: No, eligible applicants are non-profits that at minimum have a past performance in delivering cybersecurity training. It is not a requirement to have a fully established apprenticeship program prior to the time of applying to this cooperative agreement. Past performance in delivering cybersecurity training is required. Additionally, applicants must propose a pilot design which includes proposed outreach, training, apprenticeship, and may also include supportive services designed to assist participants to successfully be hired into entry-level cybersecurity jobs. *See Section C.2.b. Past Performance and Section C.13.f. Proposed Pilot Design.*

Question #6: Is there an exception to the eligibility criteria where a for-profit organization can apply?

Answer: No, eligible applicants must be non-profits with or without 501(c)(3) status. However, they can be included by the applicant as an optional partner. *See Section C.1. Eligible Applicants and Section C.4 Optional Partners.*

Question #7: What are the regions that CISA is hoping to serve through this opportunity?

Answer: 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, Objectives, and Priorities and Section C.13.f. Proposed Pilot Design.*

Question #8: 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: DHS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria, and results from this evaluation may assist funding decisions. If an award is made, DHS may apply special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk of the award. In evaluating risks, DHS may consider, among other criteria, the Applicant's record in managing previous DHS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including conformance to the terms and conditions of previous federal awards. *See Section H.b. Risk Assessment Evaluation*

Question #9: Is this opportunity limited to US-based organizations?

Answer: Yes, this is limited to the United States. This is not an international competition.

Question #10: If awarded, will the total funds be awarded upfront at the beginning of the grant

year or obligated under another timeframe?

Answer: A determination on this has not been made. The program staff will work with the any recipient to ensure the needs of the government and the recipient are met.