

Questions about the SMART Scholarship for Service FOA

Q1 - The RFP says:

"2. In close collaboration with the SMART Program, develop and maintain a SMART Information Management System that will track, update, and maintain all SMART Program data."

Is there already an existing government or incumbent contractor owned system that we would be expected to host, maintain, and develop new functionality for, or are we expected to provide a new IMS that we develop in-house in cooperation with the government?

There is a current system hosted and maintained by the incumbent, however the system is not owned by the government, only the data. It is expected that the applicant will propose an information management system that will allow for the applicant and the Government to administer the SMART Program.

Q2 Q2.1: If the answer to Q1 is that we assume an existing system, would the government expect to own any additional software components that we develop?

Q2.2: If the answer to Q1 is that we provide and migrate data to our own system, would the government expect to own the system, even if we use a preexisting system of our own design?

The data is GFE.

Q3 - If the answer to Q1 is an existing government / incumbent owned system, please provide details about that system's platform, including the type of database, web application languages, frameworks, and any other related technologies the recipient would be expected to maintain. N/A

Q4 – What functions, if any, are in existing application software that will be provided by the government? No application software will be provided.

Q5 – In what format will the existing data be provided to the new SMART contractors? To be determined, most likely in a character delimited file on an external hard drive.

Q6 - Please confirm that current and historic program data are GFE? Is the current website architecture and implementation GFE? Correct, current and historic program data is GFE. Website and architecture are not GFE.

Q7 - Please provide the FIELD NAMES associated with the FIELD TYPE and LIMIT provided in Appendix 1 "SMART Tables", as well a Table Names and an entity relationship table, or a list of foreign key relationships between tables This will be worked with the incumbent during the transition period.

Q8 – What are the requirements for the approval and acceptance of the software solutions we provide? This is simply an approval of the CAM. It is expected that since this is a cooperative agreement, the CAM and Government will be heavily involved with the requirements generation as well as deployment and implementation schedule via regular meetings (telecon, in person, etc.)

Q9 - Will we have access to the current database of DOD and academic reviewers? How are new DOD reviewers identified? You will have access to the DoD reviewers. The Government is relying in the Recipients contacts in academia to develop an evaluation board of academics.

Q10 – Please describe the roles and requirements for the six FTEs required to work onsite at DOD facilities (p.6 of the FOA) **The FOA has been corrected to reflect the correct number of FTEs, five (5). These positions work daily with the Services and other DoD facilities to help administer the program regarding fundamental elements 1, 2, and 3.**

Q11 – Please provide any expectations for the qualifications and skillsets of key personnel to be named in the proposal **Key personnel are personnel imperative to the successful completion of the cooperative agreement. It is up to the applicant to decide who those people are and at what level those people should be.**

Q12 - How is it possible for DOD employees to be scholarship recipients? (ref p.7 of Opportunity Day briefing) **Retention students are DoD employees at time of award. If awarded, they go back to school full time. Once they complete their degree, they return to their sponsoring facility to complete their service commitment.**

Q13 - Please define RAP on p18 of the FOA **Resource Allocation Process, the process in which the DoD allocates funding.**

Q14 - Instructions indicate past performance questionnaires are excluded, but no PPQs were provided. Does the government have a specific PPQ format for use with this solicitation? **The PPQ template will be added to the FBO and grants.gov posting.**

Q15 - To ensure seamless transfer of program operation upon agreement award, we believe the transition plan required in FOA Part II, Program Transition (p 16), is critical to understanding the implementation of our approach. May we attach our initial Transition Plan with our response to Field 12, Other Attachments of RESEARCH & RELATED Other Project Information? **It would be expected that the transition plan would be submitted at the time of application to be evaluated.**

Q16 - Please describe the DTIC-developed SMART Program System database for administering the program, and its relationship to SIMS. Does this system track and give access to internal sponsor-required program management information (e.g, monthly reports, financial statistics, compliance statistics, etc.?) **The DTIC developed database has now been absorbed into SIMS. It mainly comprised of scholar information.**

Q17 – Are there any additional guidelines/expectations for the cost volume? Should our cost volume be based upon the 5 year budget profile presented? **Cost volume should be based on the proposed one (1) year base period, with four (4), one (1) year option periods**

Q18 - Is increased diversity among participants a program goal? **The SMART program always takes diversity and serving under-served, or under-represented groups into account.**

Q19 - How are DOD facility sponsors and mentors identified? How do students identify mentors?

Facilities use their own succession planning to predict future manpower requirements. The facility then identifies mentors, usually the scholar's potential supervisor, for the scholars. The students do not identify their own mentor.

Q20 - Does the government plan to issue a separate CA for the transition period between Award and NTP/Kickoff? **No**

Q21 - Can you share statistics about the status of debt-collection – total value outstanding? Numbers currently in default? Rates of default? How common is academic performance a reason for default? **No**

Q22 - Can you share the current list of colleges and universities where scholarship recipients are enrolled? And the number of recipients at each institution? **Smartscholarship.org has most of that information. There are many colleges and universities that have had or currently have students that are awarded the SMART scholarship. Any accredited university or college satisfies the enrollment requirement of the SMART scholarship.**

Q23 - The third of the “4 Fundamental Elements” mentions, “Develop and implement an annual marketing and outreach plan ... that supports colleges and universities on behalf of the SMART program.” Exactly what’s meant by “supports”? **This element describes the need for marketing and outreach to colleges and universities on behalf of the SMART program. The support that is needed is that after the recipient and Government cooperatively develop a marketing and outreach plan, the recipient will be performing tasks within the mutually developed plan.**

Q24 - What is the role of the DoD vs awardee for the review of the applications? Is there an established rubric for evaluating applications? Can you share the rubric? **The recipient will not be evaluating the applications. The recipient will help the Government review the applications submitted for completeness and correctness. There is an established rubric however it is not for public release.**

Q25 – Can you provide any benchmarks that you use to measure contractor or project performance? **With this being a cooperative agreement, the Government’s intent is to address performance issues before they even occur. The purpose of a cooperative agreement is substantial government involvement and a close relationship with the Recipient. While there is not more benchmarks or measures aside from the deliverables, it is anticipated that the relationship between the Government and Recipient would allow for addressing any performance concerns from either party.**