NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

National Institute of Standards and Technology Center for Neutron Research (NCNR) Comprehensive Cooperative Agreement Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** National Institute of Standards and Technology Center for Neutron Research (NCNR) Comprehensive Cooperative Agreement Program

- **Announcement Type:** Amendment

- **Funding Opportunity Number**: 2023-NIST-NCNR-01

- **Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):** 11.609: Measurement and Engineering Research and Standards

- **Reason(s) for Amendment:** This NOFO is being amended to remove the words "double-spaced" in sections IV.2.a.(6) and IV.2.c.(4). Pursuant to this amendment, applicants may submit single spaced project narratives.

- **Dates:** Full Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, May 15, 2023. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

  When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (*see* Section IV.3. and Section IV.7.a.(1).(b). of this NOFO) generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than three weeks; and (3) applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages from Grants.gov over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application. **Please note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.**

  NOTE: As of Monday, April 4, 2022, the Federal Government stopped using the DUNS number to identify entities. All entities doing business with the Federal

Government must use a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) generated in SAM.gov. Applicants must request and be assigned a UEI number prior to completing the grant application forms and submitting their application via Grants.gov. For more information, please see Planned UEI Updates | GRANTS.GOV. The Standard Forms (e.g., SF424, SF424 R&R, etc.) were also updated on April 4, 2022, to allow entities to enter the UEI number. Applicants must use the applicable UEI Forms for all submissions.

NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by August 2023. NIST expects the earliest start date for awards under this NOFO to be September 2023.

- **Application Submission Address:** Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov. Paper applications will not be accepted.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The NIST Center for Neutron Research is seeking competitive applications from eligible applicants for activities that will advance the research of NCNR users and NIST scientists by: (i) operating neutron instrumentation at the NCNR; (ii) developing new neutron instrumentation and measurement capabilities at the NCNR; (iii) conducting collaborative research with NIST scientists and visiting researchers at the NCNR; (iv) broadly disseminating the results from neutron research and the development of new neutron measurement technologies to the scientific community; (v) research on neutron delivery systems, such as cold sources, beams and guides, nuclear reactor core analysis, optimization, and methodologies to support novel neutron source concepts; and (vi) undertaking education and outreach activities that promote the use of neutrons by academic and industrial scientists and that contribute to the development of the next generation of neutron scientists.

- **Anticipated Funding Amounts:** In Fiscal Year 2023, NIST anticipates funding one (1) – three (3) awards for up to $12,000,000 per award with a project performance period of up to five (5) years.

- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility for the program listed in this NOFO is open to all non-Federal entities. Eligible applicants include accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations incorporated in the United States; state, local, territorial, and Indian tribal governments; foreign public entities; and foreign organizations. Please note that individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered “non-Federal entities” and are not eligible to apply under this NOFO. Although Federal entities are not eligible to

receive funding under this NOFO, they may participate as unfunded collaborators.

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.

- **Public Website, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** NIST NCNR has a public website (http://www.nist.gov/NCNR) that provides information pertaining to this NOFO. Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov.

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FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

The statutory authority for the NIST Center for Neutron Research (NCNR) Comprehensive Cooperative Agreement Program is 15 U.S.C. § 272(b)(4) and (c) and 15 U.S.C. § 278g-1(e)(1) and (e)(3).

NIST's mission is to drive innovation and industrial competitiveness through measurement science and standards by cultivating a culture of belonging that integrates diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all ways of working. One component of this mission is NIST's ongoing effort to develop a diverse, world-class pool of scientists and engineers to engage in NIST's measurement science and standards research, and to support the development of a general population that understands and appreciates measurement science and standards. NIST also seeks to collaborate with a wide range of organizations, including but not limited to minority-serving institutions such as Historically Black colleges and universities, as well as community colleges in support of NIST's mission.

Neutrons play an essential role in the nation's scientific infrastructure, as they provide detailed information about the structure and dynamics of materials that is challenging or even impossible to obtain using other methods. Neutron studies

advance a wide variety of technologies including those pertaining to biopharmaceuticals, drug delivery systems, personal care products, advanced polymers, energy conversion and storage technologies, chemical production and separation, advanced data storage systems, quantum information technologies, dissipation-free electronics, and advanced engineering materials such as those produced through additive manufacturing.

The NIST Center for Neutron Research (NCNR) is a national user facility that offers scientists from industry, government, and academia access to world-class neutron instrumentation with which to conduct research that advances the nation's research priorities. Neutron facilities are rare, so it is essential that these instruments operate as efficiently as possible to allow visiting researchers to collect as much information as possible in a limited time. This also means that educating the next generation of scientists in neutron methods is quite important.

To maximize the return on the nation's investment in neutron technologies, it is also essential to improve the quality of neutron instrumentation. Over the last 50 years, advances in neutron measurements have largely been driven by the development and construction of new instruments. This is also a more cost-effective approach to advancing the nation's neutron measurement capabilities than building new neutron sources. Thus, the development of novel instrumentation is a high priority.

The NCNR seeks to achieve the following program objectives in soliciting applications leading to cooperative agreements with NIST that will advance the research of NCNR users and NIST scientists by:

1) operating neutron instrumentation at the NCNR;
2) developing new neutron instrumentation and measurement capabilities at the NCNR;
3) conducting collaborative research with NIST scientists and visiting researchers at the NCNR;
4) broadly disseminating the results from neutron research and the development of new neutron measurement technologies to the scientific community;
5) research on neutron source and neutron delivery systems, such as cold sources, beams and guides, nuclear reactor core analysis, optimization, and methodologies to support novel neutron source concepts; and
6) undertaking education and outreach activities that promote the use of neutrons by academic and industrial scientists and that contribute to the development of the next generation of neutron scientists, including but not limited to outreach to increase the participation of persons historically underrepresented in the science,

technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.[1]

Activities funded under this program will largely, though not exclusively, take place at the NCNR.

Examples of jointly-pursued activities under previous cooperative agreements include the integration of expert academia research and technical staff to assist neutron users at the NCNR in conducting their scientific research on various neutron instruments, the design and development of state-of-the-art double-focusing neutron monochromator for use on MACS (the Multi-Analyzer Crystal Spectrometer), the development of new data acquisition software for neutron instruments, the development of new flow devices for use on neutron scattering instruments, the design and development of a neutron phase space transformation chopper for use on the High-Flux Backscattering Spectrometer (HFBS), the design and development of the new very Small Angle Neutron Scattering instrument (vSANS), the design and development of a cryogenically-cooled, energy-dispersive detector assembly for CANDOR, shutter assemblies for neutron guides, and computer modeling studies of neutron scattering measurements from biomolecular systems.

Applicants and team members must possess the education, experience, and training to pursue and advance the field of neutron scattering efficiently. In addition, the applicant and team members must possess a demonstrated record of excellence in research involving neutron scattering methods.

II. Federal Award Information

1. Funding Instrument.

[1] An “underrepresented” population refers to a subgroup of the population whose representation is disproportionately low relative to their numbers in the general population. Women, persons with disabilities, and three racial and ethnic groups — African Americans or Blacks, Hispanics or Latinos, and American Indians or Alaska Natives — are underrepresented in science and engineering education and employment. *See* *Diversity in Stem: Women, Minorities and People with Disabilities* (National Science Foundation, 2023).

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The funding instrument that will be used is a cooperative agreement. The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally include collaboration with the recipient organization in developing and implementing the approved scope of work, consistent with the definition of cooperative agreement in 2 CFR § 200.1.

2. Multi-Year Funding Policy.

When a proposal for a multi-year award is approved, funding will usually be provided for only the first year of the program. If a project is selected for funding, NIST has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of NIST. Continued funding will be contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the mission and priorities of the NCNR, and the availability of funds.

3. Funding Availability.

In FY 2023, NIST NCNR anticipates funding one (1) to three (3) projects for up to $12,000,000 per award with a project performance period of up to five (5) years, consistent with the multi-year funding policy (see Section II.2. of this NOFO).

4. Indirect (F&A) Costs.

NIST will reimburse applicants for proposed indirect (F&A) costs in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414. Applicants proposing indirect (F&A) costs must follow the application requirements set forth in Section IV.2 of this NOFO.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for the program listed in this NOFO is open to all non-Federal entities. Eligible applicants include accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations incorporated in the United States; state, local, territorial, and Indian tribal governments; foreign public entities; and foreign organizations. Please note that individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered "non-Federal entities" and are not eligible to apply under this NOFO. Although Federal entities are not eligible to receive funding under this NOFO, they may participate as unfunded collaborators.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

   Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. **Address to Request Application Package**

   The application package is available at Grants.gov under Funding Opportunity Number 2023-NIST-NCNR-01.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission.** Set forth below are the required content and form of applications submitted pursuant to this NOFO.

   a. **Required Forms and Documents.** The Application must contain the following:

   (1) SF-424 (R&R), Application for Federal Assistance. The SF-424 (R&R) must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

   For SF-424 (R&R), Items 5, 14, and 19, use the Zip Code + 4 format(##### - ####) when addresses are called for.

   SF-424 (R&R), Item 18. If the SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (item (6) below) is applicable, attach it to field 18.

   The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 17 of the SF-424 (R&R) is contained in the Federal Financial Assistance Certifications and Representations (Certs and Reps) as part of the SAM.gov entity registration.

   Instructions for filling in the SF-424 (R&R) can be found on Grants.gov, as well as in the NIST Grants Management Division SF-424 Research & Related (R&R) Application Package Guidance.

   (2) Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed). The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the full term of the project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments.

   The budget should be detailed in these categories:
   A. Senior/Key Person;

B. Other Personnel;
C. Equipment Description;
D. Travel;
E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs
F. Other Direct Costs;
G. Direct Costs (automatically generated);
H. Indirect Costs;
I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs (automatically generated);
J. Fee (not relevant to this competition);
K. Total Costs and Fee (automatically generated);
L. Budget Narrative and Justification document (item (8) below) should be attached to field L.

A separate detailed R&R Budget must be completed for each budget period during the proposed award (e.g., annual basis). To add additional budget periods (e.g., year 2), click "Add Period" embedded at the end of the form. Instructions for completing the Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form Fed) form is available in the R&R Family Section of Grants.gov, as well as at the NIST Grants Management Division SF-424 Research & Related (R&R) Application Package Guidance.

(3) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying. Enter "203-NIST-NCNR-01" in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

(4) Research and Related Other Project Information.
Answer the highlighted questions and use this form to attach the Project Narrative (item (6) below), Resume(s) or CV(s) (item (7) below) the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (item (9) below), the Data Management Plan (item (10) below), and the Current and Pending Support Form (item (12) below). Instructions for completing the Research and Related Other Project Information can be found in the Grants.gov R&R Forms Repository by scrolling down to Research And Related Other Project Information and clicking the Instructions link, as well as in the NIST Grants Management Division SF-424 Research & Related (R&R) Application Package Guidance**.**

Please note that the Project Summary/Abstract is not relevant to this competition. **However, Grants.gov requires an attachment to field 7 of the Research and Related Other Project Information form to successfully pass through Grants.gov. Please attach a document to field 7 stating, "A Project Summary/Abstract is not relevant to this competition".**

(5) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

(6) Project Narrative. The Project Narrative is a word-processed document of no more than twenty (20) pages, which is responsive to the program description and the evaluation criteria. The page limit includes Cover Page; Table of Contents (if included); Project Narrative with all required information, including figures, graphs, tables, images, and pictures). The projective narrative should contain the following information**:**

a) **Executive Summary.** An executive summary of the proposed project, consistent with the objectives, requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). The executive summary should include information indicating how each evaluation criterion (see Section V.1. of this NOFO) and its sub-factors are addressed. A table can be helpful in providing this information. The executive summary should not exceed two (2) pages. Please note, if an applicant's proposal is selected for funding, NIST may use all or a portion of the Executive Summary as part of a press release issued by NIST, or for other public information and outreach purposes. Applicants are advised not to incorporate information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary. See also 15 C.F.R. § 4.9(c) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant.

b) **Project Approach.** A description of the applicant's approach to clearly address and to implement the NCNR program objectives identified in the Program Description section of this NOFO (see Section I. of this NOFO). This section should be responsive to and will be evaluated under the Problems, Solutions and Technical Approach evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.a. of this NOFO).

c) **Statement of Work.** A complete statement of work covering all aspects of the project, including a schedule of measurable events and milestones as well as measurable performance objectives that can be used to determine the success of the project. This section should be responsive to and will be evaluated under the Problems, Solutions and Technical Approach evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.a. of this NOFO).

d) **Development of the Scientific Field and Dissemination Plan.** The plan should describe how the project will positively impact the neutron scattering field of science, particularly in the areas of

macromolecular science, condensed matter physics and chemistry and how the results will be broadly disseminated. This section should be responsive to and will be evaluated under the Development of the Scientific Field and Dissemination Plan evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.b. of this NOFO).

e) **Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel and Resource Availability.** A description of professional accomplishments, skills and training of the proposed key personnel relative to neutron scattering research or in related scientific or engineering areas that are key to the activities contained in the application to assess the likelihood of achieving the goals and objectives of the project. ,in accordance with details included in the Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel and Resources Availability evaluation criterion (Section V.1.c. of this NOFO).

f) **Match of Budget to Proposed Work.** A description of the budget against the proposed project to ascertain the reasonableness of the budget request, in accordance with details included in the proposal Evaluation Criteria (Section V.1.d. of this NOFO).

(7) Resume(s) or CV(s) of Key Personnel. Resumes for all key personnel, including the principal investigator assigned to the project must be provided. Resumes are limited to two (2) pages per individual. Resumes will be evaluated under the Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel and Resources Availability evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.c. of this NOFO).

(8) Budget Narrative and Justification. There is no set format for the Budget Narrative and Justification, however, a detailed explanation must be provided for the specific cost categories and line items identified in the Instructions R&R Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Budget, as well as any other information the applicant deems necessary for NIST's consideration. The Budget Narrative and Justification must be attached to the Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed).

The written justification for the proposed costs should include the necessity and the basis for the cost, as described below. Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program.

The Budget Narrative does not count against the twenty (20) page limit of the Project Narrative.

The Budget Narrative will be evaluated in accordance with the Match of Budget to Proposed Work evaluation criteria (see Section V.1.d. of this NOFO). It will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles.

Information needed for each budget category is as follows:

A. Senior/Key Person – At a minimum, the budget justification should include the following: name, job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total direct charges on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.

Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.

B. Other Personnel - Data is requested at the project role level, and not at the individual level for Other Personnel. The budget justification should include the following: job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total direct charges on the proposed project, description of the role of the position on the proposed project and the work to be performed.

Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.

C. Equipment Description – Equipment is defined as an item of property that has a per unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower capitalization levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. See 2 C.F.R. 200.1 for the definition of equipment. The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to

the successful completion of the proposed project. Please note that any general use equipment (computers, etc.) charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to expected usage on the project. Applicants should provide at least two (2) quotes, if available, for equipment costing $25,000 or more. If two (2) quotes are not available, please provide a statement as to why two (2) quotes are not available. Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the Materials and Supplies line item in Section F, Other Direct Costs.

D. Travel - For all travel costs, required by the recipient to complete the project, including attendance at any relevant conferences, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names or number of people traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide best estimates based on prior experience. If a destination is not known, an approximate amount may be used with the assumptions given for the location of the meeting.

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs – Participant support costs are stipends, subsistence allowances, travel, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees, who are not employees of your organization, for conferences or training projects. The budget justification should indicate the names or number of participants or trainees, a description and calculation of costs per person, a description and date of the event, and a description of why the cost is necessary for the successful completion of the proposed project.

F. Other Direct Costs – For costs that do not easily fit into the other cost categories, please list the cost, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project. Only allowable costs can be charged to the award.

Each subaward or contractual cost should be treated as a separate item in the Other Direct Costs category. Describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining goods and services. Subawardees perform part of the project scope of work. For each subaward, applicants must provide budget detail justifying the cost of the work performed on the project.

G. Indirect Costs – Commonly referred to as Facilities &

Administrative Costs, Indirect Costs are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. For more details, *see* Section IV.2.a.(9) of this NOFO.

(9) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, dated November 12, 2020.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in appendix VII, paragraph D.1.b. of 2 CFR 200, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note, this election as part of the budget portion of the application. Please be aware that Foreign applicants will be limited to use of the de minimis rate and will not have the opportunity to negotiate an indirect cost rate with NIST.

(10) Data Management Plan. Consistent with NIST Policy 5700.00[2], *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, and NIST Order 5701.00[3], *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, applicants proposing projects that include the conduct of research must include a Data Management Plan (DMP).
All applications for activities that will generate scientific data using NIST funding are required to adhere to a DMP or explain why data sharing and/or preservation are not within the scope of the project. For the purposes of the DMP, NIST adopted the definition of "research data" at 2 C.F.R. § 200.315(e)(3).

The DMP must include, at a minimum, a summary of proposed activities that are expected to generate data; a summary of the types of data expected to be generated by the identified activities; a plan for storage

[2] https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/2018/06/19/final_p_5700.pdf
[3] https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/2019/11/08/final_o_5701_ver_2.pdf

and maintenance of the data expected to be generated by the identified activities, including after the end of the award's period of performance; and a plan describing whether and how data generated by the identified activities will be reviewed and made available to the public.

A template for the DMP, an example DMP, and the rubric against which the DMP will be evaluated for sufficiency is available at: Information for Applicants and Awardees. An applicant is not required to use the template as long as the DMP contains the required information.

If an application stands a reasonable chance of being funded and the DMP is determined during the review process to be insufficient, the program office may reach out to the applicant to resolve deficiencies in the DMP. If an award is issued prior to the deficiencies being fully rectified, the award will include a Specific Award Condition (SAC) stating that no research activities shall be initiated or costs incurred for those activities under the award until the NIST Grants Officer amends the award to indicate the SAC has been satisfied.

Reasonable costs for data preservation and access may be included in the application.

(11) Subaward Budget Form. The Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment Form is required if sub-recipients and contractors are included in the application budget.

Instructions for completing subaward budget forms are available by visiting the R & R Family section of the Grants.gov Forms Repository and scrolling down to the R & R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form and selecting "Instructions."

(12) Current and Pending Support Form.
Any application that includes investigators, researchers, and key personnel must identify all sources of current and potential funding, including this proposal. Any current project support (e.g. Federal, state, local, public or private foundations, etc.) must be listed on this form. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, and key personnel must be included, even if no salary support is received. The total award amount for the entire award period covered, including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of the source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or that are being submitted

concurrently to other potential funders.

Applicants must complete the Current and Pending Support Form, using multiple forms as necessary to account for all activity for each individual identified in the PI, co-PI and key personnel roles. A separate form should be used for each identified individual.

Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

b. Attachment of Required Documents

Items IV.2.a.(1) through IV.2.a.(4) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Item IV.2.a.(5), the SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form, is an optional application form which is part of the standard application package in Grants.gov. If item IV.2.a.(5), the SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form is applicable to this proposal, attach it to field 18 of the SF-424 (R&R), Application for Federal Assistance.

Item IV.2.a.(6), the Project Narrative, should be attached to field 8 (Project Narrative) of the Research and Related Other Project Information form by clicking on “Add Attachment”.

Item IV.2.a.(7), Resume(s) or CV(s), should be attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 12 (Other Attachments) of the Research and Related Other Project Information form.

Item IV.2.a.(8), the Budget Narrative and Justification, should be attached to field L (Budget Justification) of the Research and Related Budget (Total Fed + Total Non-Fed) form by clicking on “Add Attachment”.

Items IV.2.a.(9), the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; IV.2.a.(10), the Data Management Plan; and IV.2.a.(12), the Current and Pending Support Form must be completed and attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 12 (Other Attachments) of the Research and Related Other Project Information form.

Item IV.2.a.(11), the Subaward Budget Form(s), if applicable to the submission, should be attached to the Research & Related Subaward

Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form in the application package.

Following these directions will create zip files which permit transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.

Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.Grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred successfully. Applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application. Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov's "Download Submitted Forms and Applications" option to check that their application's required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, check the status of your application here: CHECK APPLICATION STATUS. If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

If the directions found on the Grants.gov Online Help page are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk immediately. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to support@grants.gov. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays.

Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov Track My Application page. It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.

NIST uses the Tracking Numbers assigned by Grants.gov and does not issue Agency Tracking Numbers.

c. Application Format

(1) Paper, Email, and Facsimile (fax) Submissions. Will not be accepted.

(2) Figures, Graphs, Images, and Pictures. Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be displayed in landscape orientation. Any figures, graphs, images, or pictures will count toward the page limits for the Project Narrative.

(3) Font. Easy to read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.

(4) Page Limit. The Project Narrative is limited to twenty (20) pages, noting the limit of two (2) pages for the Executive Summary. Resumes are not included in the page count of the Project Narrative. However, if resumes are included, resumes must be a maximum of two (2) pages each.

(5) Page Limit Exclusions:

SF-424, (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance;
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable);
CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying;
Resume(s) or CV(s);
Budget Narrative;
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
Data Management Plan; and
Current and Pending Support Form.

(6) Page Layout. The Proposal must be in portrait orientation.

(7) Page size. 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).

(8) Page numbering. Number pages sequentially.

(9) Application language. All documents must be in English, including but not limited to the initial application, any additional documents submitted in response to a NIST request, all reports, and any correspondence with NIST.

(10) Typed document. All applications, including forms, must be typed; handwritten forms will not be accepted.

d. **Application Replacement Pages.** Applicants may not submit replacement pages and/or missing documents once an application has been submitted. Any revisions must be made by submission of a new application that must be received by NIST by the submission deadline.

e. **Pre-Applications.** Pre-applications will not be accepted under this NOFO.

3. **Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).** Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 25, applicants and recipients are required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, unless otherwise excepted from these requirements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 25.110. NIST will not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time that NIST is ready to make a Federal award pursuant to this NOFO, NIST may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4. **Submission Dates and Times**
Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, May 15, 2023. NIST will consider the date and time recorded by Grants.gov as the official submission time. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system closes periodically for routine maintenance. Applicants should visit Grants.gov for information on any scheduled closures.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in the SAM.gov generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than three weeks; and applicants will receive e-mail notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (See Grants.gov for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov.) Please note that a Federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated

recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

5. **Intergovernmental Review**
   Applications submitted by State and local governments are subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," pursuant to which each State designates an entity to coordinate, and review proposed federal financial assistance and direct federal development. All other applicants should consult the Intergovernmental Review State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to determine whether the application is subject to State review pursuant to E.O. 12372. The current SPOC List may be found here: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.

6. **Funding Restrictions**
   Construction activities are not an allowable cost under this program. In addition, a recipient or a subrecipient may not charge profits, fees or other increments above cost to an award issued pursuant to this NOFO. Applications for product development and/or commercialization are not considered responsive to this NOFO.

7. **Other Submission Requirements**

   a. **Applications must be submitted at** Grants.gov. **Paper applications will not be accepted.**

      Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure that all attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2023-NIST-NCNR-01 announcement, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 800-518-4726.

   b. **Amendments.** Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by e-mail.

V. Application Review Information

1. **Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and their assigned weights are as follows**:**

   a) Problems, Solutions and Technical Approach.

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the application clearly addresses the program objectives identified in the Program Description section of this NOFO (see Section I. of this NOFO). Reviewers will also evaluate the appropriateness, quality, reasonableness, and completeness of the applicant's technical approach and plans for project implementation, including the plans to manage the project tasks, timelines and milestones, and the work of project staff to ensure realization of project goals and objectives. **(0-40 points)**

b) Development of the Scientific Field and Dissemination Plan.
Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the neutron scattering field of science, particularly in the areas of macromolecular science, condensed matter physics and chemistry, is likely to be positively impacted by the project, including the applicant's efforts pertaining to:

(1) Disseminating neutron scattering data and research results broadly to the public through publication in the appropriate scientific and technical literature and white papers and presentations at public meetings or other technical events;
(2) Contributing to the development of the next generation of researchers focused on neutron scattering science, including but not limited to increasing the participation of persons historically underrepresented in STEM disciplines;
(3) Developing capabilities and a plan to provide research assistance to U.S. researchers using the NCNR facilities, including related training, education and outreach;
(4) Contributing to the development and utilization of neutron measurement technologies; and
(5) Demonstrating support for project objectives by collaborating with NIST scientists on the operation of neutron instrumentation at the NCNR. **(0-25 points, sub-criteria receive equal weight)**

c) Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel and Resources Availability.
Reviewers will evaluate the appropriateness and extent of the qualifications and experience of the proposed key personnel and project staff relative to neutron scattering research or in related scientific or engineering areas that are key to the activities contained in the application to assess the likelihood of achieving the goals and objectives of the project. Reviewers will also evaluate the quality of the applicant's plan for integrating the applicant's staff effectively into the activities of the NCNR facility, including establishing robust communications between the applicant's staff and NCNR staff. **(0-25 points)**

d) Match of Budget to Proposed Work.
Reviewers will assess the proposed budget against the proposed project to ascertain the reasonableness of the budget request. **(10 points)**

2. Selection Factors

The Selection Factors for this program are:

(1) Results of the merit reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments;
(2) The availability of funding;
(3) Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by NIST or other Federal agencies; and
(4) The alignment of the project with the NCNR program objectives.

3. Review and Selection Process

Proposals, reports, documents, and other information related to applications submitted to NIST and/or relating to financial assistance awards issued by NIST will be reviewed and considered by Federal employees, and/or by non-Federal personnel who have entered into conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering such information, when applicable.

a. Initial Administrative Review of Applications.
Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFO and to the scope of the stated program objectives (See Section I. of this NOFO). Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or nonresponsive may be eliminated from further review. However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information, the absence of which may easily be rectified during the review process.

b. Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.
Applications that are determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection process below:

(1) Merit Review. At least three (3) independent, objective reviewers, who may be Federal employees or non-Federal personnel, with appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this NOFO, will evaluate and score each eligible, complete,

and responsive application based on the evaluation criteria (see section V.1. of this NOFO). While every application will have at least three (3) reviewers, applications may have more than three (3) reviewers if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate an application. During the review process, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus. Applicants may receive written follow-up questions during the review process relative to requested clarifications of items contained in the applicant's proposal. Each reviewer will provide a written technical assessment against the evaluation criteria and based on that assessment will assign each application a numeric score, with a maximum score of 100. Based on the numerical average of the reviewers' scores, a rank order will be prepared and provided to the Selecting Official for further consideration.

(2) Selection. The Selecting Official, the Director of the NIST Center for Neutron Research or designee, will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application[s] for an award based upon the rank order of the applications The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of rank order based on one or more of the Selection Factors (see Section V.2. of this NOFO).

(3) Pre-Award Negotiations.
NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with any applicant selected to receive an award, which may include requesting that the applicant removes certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that successful applicants modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NIST also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the responsibility of the applicant. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any application. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final**.**

c. Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the NIST Grants Management Division (GMD) performs pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, the quality of the applicant's

management systems, the history of performance, and/or the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

In addition, prior to making an award where the total Federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may, at its discretion, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIIS by a Federal awarding agency. As part of its review of risk posed by applicants, NIST GMD will consider any comments made by the applicant in FAPIIS in making its determination about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards. Upon completion of the pre-award risk assessment, the Grants Officer will make a responsibility determination concerning whether the applicant is qualified to receive the subject award and, if so, whether appropriate specific award conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

Review of applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed by August 2023. NIST expects the earliest start date for awards under this NOFO to be September 2023.

5. Additional Information

a. Safety. Safety is a top priority at NIST. Employees and affiliates of award recipients who conduct project work at NIST will be expected to be safety-conscious, to attend NIST safety training, and to comply with all NIST safety policies and procedures, and with all applicable terms of their guest research agreement.

b. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail and will have the opportunity to receive a debriefing after the opportunity is officially closed. Applicants must request within 10 business days of the email notification to receive a debrief from the program office. The program office will then work with the unsuccessful applicant in arranging a date and time of the debrief.

c. Retention of Unsuccessful Applications. Unsuccessful applications will be retained in accordance with the General Record Schedule 1.2/021.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

1. **Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer.

2. **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

   a. **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements.** Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

   b. **Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award. The current version, dated November 12, 2020, is accessible at Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you need more information.

   c. **Pre-Award Notification Requirements.** The Department of Commerce will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, for more information.

   d. **Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability.** Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. NIST or the Department of Commerce will not responsible for application preparation costs, including but not limited to if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of agency priorities. Publication of this NOFO does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

   e. **Collaborations with NIST Employees.**
   All applications should include a description of any work proposed to be performed by an entity other than the applicant, and the cost of such work should ordinarily be included in the budget. If an applicant proposes collaboration with NIST, the statement of work should include a statement

of this intention, a description of the collaboration, and prominently identify the NIST employee(s) involved, if known. Any collaboration by a NIST employee must be approved by appropriate NIST management and is at the sole discretion of NIST. Prior to beginning the merit review process, NIST will verify the approval of the proposed collaboration. Any unapproved collaboration will be stricken from the application prior to the merit review. Any collaboration with an identified NIST employee that is approved by appropriate NIST management will not make an application more or less favorable in the competitive process. NIST's costs should not be included in the application.

f. Use of Federal Government-Owned Intellectual Property. If the applicant anticipates using any Federal Government-owned intellectual property, in the custody of NIST or another Federal agency, to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should clearly identify such intellectual property in the proposal. This information will be used to ensure that no Federal employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that competition. In addition, if the applicant intends to use the Federal Government-owned intellectual property, the applicant must comply with all statutes and regulations governing the licensing of Federal government patents and inventions, described in 35 U.S.C. §§ 200-212, 37 C.F.R. Part 401, 2 C.F.R. §200.315, and in Section C.03 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, dated November 12, 2020. Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Chief Counsel for NIST, (301) 975-2803, nistcounsel@nist.gov.

Any use of Federal Government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government and will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the recipient and the Federal agency having custody of the intellectual property if a project is deemed meritorious. The applicant should indicate within the statement of work whether it already has a license to use such intellectual property or whether it intends to seek a license from the applicable Federal agency.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a NIST employee arise in the course of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, the United States Government may retain its ownership rights in any such invention. Licensing or other disposition of the Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government, through NIST as custodian of such inventions, and include the possibility of the

Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

3. Reporting

a. Reporting Requirements. The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated November 12, 2020, apply to awards in this program:

(1) Financial Reports. Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. A final financial report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

(2) Research Performance Progress Report (RPPRs). Each award recipient will be required to submit a RPPR on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. The RPPR shall conform to the requirements in 2 C.F.R. § 200.329 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section A.01.

A final RPPR shall be submitted within 120 days after the expiration date of the award, and publication citation information as well as links to publicly available data shall be submitted as soon as they become available.

If a recipient's Data Management Plan (DMP) has changed since their last submission of a RPPR, the recipient must include their revised DMP in the next RPPR following the revision to the DMP. The revised DMP must include all the requirements described in Section IV.2.a.(11) of this NOFO.

(3) Patent and Property Reports. In accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements and other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may need to submit property and patent reports.

(4) Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters. In accordance with section 872 of Public Law 110-417 (as amended; see 41 U.S.C. 2313),

if the total value of a recipient's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds $10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award made under this NOFO, then the recipient shall be subject to the requirements specified in Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, for maintaining the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in FAPIIS about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings involving the recipient.

b. Audit Requirements. The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, require any non-Federal entity (i.e., including non-profit institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations) that expends Federal awards of $750,000 or more in the recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Subpart. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend $750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must submit to the Grants Officer either: (i) a financial related audit of each DOC award or subaward in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards; or (ii) a project specific audit for each award or subaward in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. § 200.507. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized Federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

c. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 170, all recipients of a Federal award made on or after October 1, 2010, are required to comply with reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law No. 109-282). In general, all recipients are responsible for reporting sub-awards of $25,000 or more. In addition, recipients that meet certain criteria are responsible for reporting executive compensation. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should they receive funding. Also see the Federal Register notice published September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55663.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions should be directed to the following:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Tanya Burke Phone: 301-975-4711 E-mail: Tanya. Burke@nist.gov with '2023-NIST-NCNR-01' in subject line
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	grants.gov Phone: 800-518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Nuria Martinez Phone: 301-975-6215 E-mail: nuria.martinez@nist.gov

VIII. Other Information

1. Personal and Business Information

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. If an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial

information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law. NISTNCNR has a public website, http://www.nist.gov/NCNR that provides information pertaining to this Funding Opportunity[4]. Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov.

Applicants must submit all questions pertaining to this funding opportunity in writing to tanya.burke@nist.gov with 2023-NIST-NCNR-01 in the subject line.

[4] Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Programmatic and Technical Questions, if more information is needed.