

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH OFFICE

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

W911NF-15-R-0010

Staff Research Program

**Issued by the U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground
Research Triangle Park Division on behalf of the Army Research Office (ARO)**

20 February 2015 – 19 February 2020

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

A. Required Overview Content

1. Federal Agency Name(s):

U.S. Army Research Office

Issuing Acquisition Office:

U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Research Triangle Park Division

2. Funding Opportunity Title:

Staff Research Program

3. Announcement Type

Initial Announcement

4. Research Opportunity Number:

W911NF-15-R-0010

5. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

12.431 – Basic Scientific Research

6. Response Dates:

This Program Announcement (PA) is a continuously open announcement valid throughout the period from the date of issuance through 19 February 2020. Amendments to this PA will be sent directly to the qualifying institutions when they occur.

B. Additional Overview Information

This PA is expected to result in the award of cooperative agreements (CAs) as defined at 31 U.S.C. 6305 for the execution of the program. The CA is in accordance with Chapter I, Subchapter C of Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations (Reference (b)) and Chapter XI of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (Reference (c)) and implementing regulations. The principal purpose of this PA is to establish CAs that will allow U.S. Army Research Office (ARO) scientific staff members to participate in collaborative research at qualified educational institutions. The Universities should offer all core facilities on the campus to ARO personnel on the same basis that they are available to members of the regular faculty. ARO's partnership with the Recipient is to carry out the public purpose of the support or stimulation of basic and applied (fundamental) research in areas of science with potential interest to ARO rather than the acquisition of supplies or services for the direct benefit of the Government. Substantial Government involvement is expected through the collaborative planning, management and research to be performed by the participants in the Staff Research Program and ARO.

II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Funding Opportunity Description

The ARO is soliciting proposals for Staff Research Program opportunities. The purpose of the program is to enable ARO scientific staff to maintain and expand professional competence in support of fulfilling the ARO mission through the conduct of personal, staff research. The staff research will be performed collaboratively with institutions external to ARO. Staff research efforts will involve scientific study directed toward advancing the state-of-the-art or increasing knowledge and scientific understanding in engineering, physical, life and information sciences, when there is an intersection with the interests and capabilities of the participating external institutions in these basic research areas. Due to the purpose and constraints of the ARO Staff Research Program, only certain universities are suited to effectively conduct collaborative research with ARO scientists and engineers.

Requirements of the collaborating institution: The ARO Staff Research Program is unique in that it enables personal research by the scientific staff in support of the mission yet it is constrained to not interfere with the principal duties of ARO program management. Accordingly, the research must fit within certain bounds and the institutions at which the research is conducted must meet certain criteria. These and the rationale are as follows.

1. *Locality.* ARO scientific staff must be responsive to requirements and duties at the ARO duty station. The institution must be within a reasonable commuting distance to the ARO offices to enable the ARO researcher to return to ARO on short notice to handle such matters. A commute time of approximately one hour is considered reasonable.
2. *Infrastructure.* ARO staff research is expected to produce publishable cutting-edge research. The institution must be a major research institution with sufficient infrastructure to support novel science and engineering, including adequate instrumentation which can be made available to an ARO staff researcher, the institution's ARO collaborators and students. The institution must have adequate research laboratory and/or office space which can be made available to ARO staff to support leading experiment, theoretical or computational research.
3. *Research programs.* ARO staff only conducts research in fields of importance to the Department of the Army and specifically ARO. The institutions must be able to readily conduct research in scientific and engineering fields of interest.
4. *Logistics.* The institutions must have adequate personnel to support sponsored research programs and maintain administrative infrastructure sufficient to ensure that the conducting the research does not involve undue logistical details burdensome to the ARO staff researcher.

Protection of Mission Integrity: The primary role of the ARO scientific staff is to objectively assess and fund extramural research at numerous institutions across the U.S. and throughout the world. Since it is vitally important that the ARO be impartial in its actions, ARO scientists cannot engage in activities, such as staff research with a particular institution, that could compromise the perceived objectivity of that scientist with respect to the institution, or with respect to the areas of science/engineering that they are responsible for as Program Managers.

Staff research will be conducted, directed and managed by an ARO scientist at the institution's laboratory facilities or field research sites. The Staff Research Program enables ARO scientists to perform collaborative basic research, publish research results and present at scientific forums.

NOTE: ARO scientific staff will seek out a collaborating institution to engage in staff research as opportunities arise and at the discretion of ARO.

B. Award Information

It is anticipated the awards will be made in the form of cooperative agreements and are subject to the availability of appropriations. Funding for subsequent years will be contingent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funds.

The following is a brief description of the award instrument.

Cooperative Agreement - A legal instrument which, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6305 , is used to enter into a relationship where:

- a. The principal purpose of which is to transfer a thing of value to the recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law or the United States, rather than to acquire property or services for the DOD's direct benefit or use.
- b. Substantial involvement is expected between the DoD and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The term does not include "cooperative research and development agreements" as defined in 15 U.S.C. 3710a. No fee or profit is allowed.

Cooperative agreements are governed by the following regulations:

Chapter I, Subchapter C of Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations (Reference (b)) and Chapter XI of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (Reference (c)) and implementing regulations

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants:

List of qualifying institutions: Local universities within approximately an hour's drive of ARO and RDECOM Forward Expeditionary Command (RFEC)- Atlantic have been evaluated based on the requisite criteria. Based on national academic standing, university websites and discussions with university faculty, the following institutions have been identified as meeting the above requirements:

- Duke University
- North Carolina State University
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- North Carolina A&T
- Imperial College of Science Technology and Medicine of London
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Local universities will be regularly monitored and added to the list if they are found to meet the requisite criteria. Please also review the discussion labeled “Requirements” under Section II A.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching:

There is no requirement for cost sharing, matching, or cost participation to be eligible for award under this PA.

3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM):

Each applicant (unless the applicant has an exception approved by the agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (a) Be registered in the SAM prior to submitting its application; (b) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (c) 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 an agency.

An Agency receiving an application may not make an award to the applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, the agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Program Announcement

This PA is being disseminated to the Office of Sponsored Research for the Universities listed in Section C.1.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. General Information

The proposals submitted under this PA must address unclassified fundamental research. Proposal submissions will be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with applicable laws and DoD regulations.

b. Submission of a Full Proposal:

Application forms are available at the ARL website entitled “Forms & ARO Reporting Instructions” at <http://www.arl.army.mil/www/default.cfm?page=218>.

Applicants, who are not registered with SAM should allow at least 21 days to complete these requirements. It is suggested that the process be started as soon as possible.

Submitting the Application

Offerors should submit full proposals in accordance with the requirements set forth in this PA. Submission will be by email to the following address: usarmy.rtp.aro.mbx.baa@mail.mil.

Submit the following:

Form: ARO Form 51 (Mandatory)

The Army Research Office Proposal Cover Page (ARO Form 51) form is to be used as the cover page for all proposals.

Form: Research & Related Other Project Information

Project Abstract

The project summary must be a single page that identifies the research problem, proposed methods, and anticipated outcome of the research, if successful. It should identify the principal investigator, the institution (and other institutions involved in the team, if applicable), the proposal title, and the total funds requested for the effort. The project summary must not exceed one page when printed using standard 8.5” by 11” paper with 1” margins (top, bottom, left and right) with a font no smaller than Times New Roman, 12 point. The project summary/abstract should be a concise description of the proposed research (200 words or less).

Project Description

The following formatting rules apply:

- Paper size when printed - 8.5 x 11 inch paper
- Margins - 1 inch
- Spacing - single
- Font – No smaller than Times New Roman, 12 point

Bibliography and References Cited

Attach a listing of applicable publications cited in above sections. The bibliography and references are not included in the page count.

Form: ARO 52A

Protection of Proprietary Information During Evaluation, and After Award/Statement of Disclosure Preference.

Budget

The budget must be attached as a PDF file. You must provide a detailed cost breakdown of all costs, by cost category, by the funding periods described below, corresponding to the proposed Technical Approach. Each year must be separately priced.

Annual budgets should be driven by program requirements. Elements of the budget should include:

- Direct Labor – Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates. Provide escalation rates for out years. Provide the basis for the salary proposed.
- Indirect Costs – Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, etc. (must show base amount and rate). Provide the most recent rates, dates of negotiations, the period to which the rates apply, and a statement identifying whether the proposed rates are provisional or fixed. If the rates have been negotiated by a Government agency, state when and by which agency. Include a copy of the current indirect rate agreement.
- Travel – Identify any travel requirements associated with the proposed research and define its relationship to the project. List proposed destinations, cost estimate, and basis of cost estimate.
- Materials/Equipment – Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Provide budget justification.
- Other Directs Costs – Provide an itemized list of all other proposed other direct costs such as Graduate Assistant tuition, laboratory fees, report and publication costs and the basis for the estimate (e.g., quotes, prior purchases, catalog price lists).

Research and Related – Senior/Key Person Profile Form

Personnel Portion (Not to exceed five (5) pages.):

Describe the qualifications of the ARO principal investigator and other key researchers involved in the project, along with the amount of effort to be expended by each person during each year, and include brief biographies for each. For all proposals, one individual should be the designated principal investigator for purposes of technical responsibility and contact.

All applications should be in a single PDF file.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Proposals:

For consideration, proposals will be submitted to usarmy.rtp.aro.mbx.baa@mail.mil until and including 19 February 2020 **no later than 4:00 PM**.

Applicants are responsible for submitting electronic proposals in sufficient time to insure it receipt by the time specified in this PA.

4. Intergovernmental Review

Not Applicable

5. Funding Restrictions:

The actual amount of each award will be contingent on availability of funds, the specific topic, and the scope of the proposed work. Depending on the results of the proposal evaluation, there is no guarantee that any of the proposals submitted in response to a particular topic will be recommended for funding. On the other hand, more than one proposal may be recommended for funding for a particular topic.

6. Other Submission Requirements: None

E. Application Review Information:

1. Criteria:

Proposals submitted in response to this PA will be evaluated using the factors listed below (in descending order of importance):

- a. The overall scientific and/or technical merits of the proposal.
- b. The potential contributions of the effort to the Army mission and the extent to which the research effort will contribute to balancing the overall ARL/ARO research program.
- c. The offeror's capabilities, related experience, facilities, techniques, or unique combinations of these, which are integral factors for achieving the proposed objectives.
- d. The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed principal investigator, team leader, or other key personnel who are critical to achievement of the proposed objectives.
- e. The offeror's record of past performance.
- f. The reasonableness and realism of proposed costs.

2. Review and Selection Process:

- a. Upon receipt of a proposal, the ARL/ARO staff will perform an initial review of its scientific merit and potential contribution to the Army mission and also determine if

funds are expected to be available for the effort. Proposals not considered having sufficient scientific merit or relevance to the Army's needs or those in areas for which funds are not expected to be available may be declined without further review.

- b. All proposals are treated as privileged information prior to award and the contents are disclosed only for the purpose of evaluation. Proposals not declined as a result of an initial review will be subject to a peer review by highly qualified scientists. While the offeror may restrict the evaluation to scientists from within the Government, to do so may prevent review of the proposal by those most qualified in the field of research covered by the proposal. The offeror must indicate on the appropriate proposal form (Form 52A) any limitation to be placed on disclosure of information contained in the proposal.
- c. Each proposal will be evaluated based on all the evaluation criteria rather than against other proposals for research in the same general area.
- d. **For ARO Internal Purposes:** The Proposal Action Brief (PAB) shall be reviewed by the Division Chief, Directorate Director, and ARO Director.

F. Award Administration Information:

1. Award Notices:

Applicants whose proposals are recommended for negotiation of award will be contacted by an Agreement Specialist to discuss additional information required for award. This may include representations and certifications, revised budgets or budget explanations, and other information as applicable to the proposed award.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

SAM - Successful applicants not already registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) will be required to register in SAM prior to any award resulting from this PA. Information on SAM registration is available at www.SAM.gov.

Certifications – Grant awards greater than \$100,000 require a certification of compliance with a national policy mandate concerning lobbying. The following certification applies to each applicant seeking federal assistance funds exceeding \$100,000 and must be included with the proposal.

Certification Regarding Lobbying Activities

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid by or on behalf of the applicant, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative

agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the applicant shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The applicant shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, title 31, U.S.C. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Representations under DoD Assistance Agreements: Appropriations Provisions on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions

The applicant is () is not () a "Corporation" meaning any entity, including any institution of higher education, other nonprofit organization, or for-profit entity that has filed articles of incorporation.

If the applicant is a "Corporation", please complete the following representations:

- (1) The applicant represents that it is () is not () a corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.
- (2) The applicant represents that it is () is not () is not a corporation that was convicted of a criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months.

NOTE: If an applicant responds in the affirmative to either of the above representations, the applicant is ineligible to receive an award unless the agency suspension and debarment official (SDO) has considered suspension or debarment and determined that further action is not required to protect the Government's interests. The applicant therefore should provide information about its tax liability or conviction to the agency's SDO as soon as it can do so, to facilitate completion of the required considerations before award decisions are made.

Use and Protection of Human Subjects in Research

All research involving human subjects must be conducted in accordance with 32 CFR 219, 10 U.S.C. 980, and DoDI 3216.02, as well as other applicable federal and state regulations. Contractors/grantees must be cognizant of and abide by the additional restrictions and limitations imposed on the DoD regarding research involving human subjects, specifically as regards vulnerable populations (32 CFR 219 modifications to subparts B-D of 45 CFR 46), recruitment of military research subjects (32 CFR 219), and surrogate consent (10 U.S.C. 980). The regulations mandate that all DoD activities, components, and agencies protect the rights and welfare of human subjects of study in DoD-supported research, development, test and evaluation, and related activities hereafter referred to as “research”. The requirement to comply with the regulations applies to new starts and to continuing research.

ANIMAL USE

DoDI 3216.01, provides policy and requirements for the use of animals in DOD-funded research. The DoD definition of animal is any live nonhuman vertebrate. All proposals that involve the use of animals must address DoDI compliance with DoDI 3216.01.

Provisions include rules on animal acquisition, transport, care, handling, and use in 9 CFR parts 1-4, Department of Agriculture rules implementing the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (7 U.S.C. 2131-2156), and guidelines in the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) “Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” (1996), including the Public Health Service Policy and Government Principles Regarding the Care and Use of Animals in Appendix D to the Guide.

Military Recruiting

"As a condition for receipt of funds made available by the Department of Defense (DoD) under this award, the recipient agrees that it is not an institution of higher education (as defined in 32 CFR part 216) that has a policy of denying, and that it is not an institution of higher education that effectively prevents, the Secretary of Defense from obtaining for military recruiting purposes: (A) entry to campuses or access to students on campuses or (B) access to directory information pertaining to students. If the recipient is determined, using the procedures in 32 CFR part 216, to be such an institution of higher education during the period of performance of this agreement, and therefore to be in breach of this clause, the Government will cease all payments of DoD funds under this agreement and all other DoD grants and cooperative agreements to the recipient, and it may suspend or terminate such grants and agreements unilaterally for material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of award."

If your institution has been identified under the procedures established by the Secretary of Defense to implement Section 558, then: (1) no funds available to DoD may be provided to your institution through any grant, including any existing grant, (2) as a matter of policy, this restriction also applies to any cooperative agreement, and (3) your institution is not eligible to receive a grant or cooperative agreement in response to this solicitation.

3. Reporting:

Reports, including number and types, will be specified in the award document. The reports shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with the procedures contained in the award document and mutually agreed upon before award. Reports and briefing material will also be required as appropriate to document progress in accomplishing program metrics. A final report that summarizes the project and tasks will be required at the conclusion of the performance period for the award.

G. Agency Contacts:

Questions of a business nature shall be directed to the cognizant Agreements Officer, as specified below:

Mr. Kevin Bassler
Agreements Officer
Email address: kevin.j.bassler.civ@mail.mil

Comments or questions submitted should be concise and to the point, eliminating any unnecessary verbiage. In addition, the relevant part and paragraph of the PA should be referenced.