

Document Type: Request for Full Proposal – Special Notice

Contracting Office Address:

Department of the Army, Army Contracting Command, ACC - APG (W911NF) Research Triangle Park Division, 800 Park Office Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Reference:

Funding Opportunity Announcement W911NF-19-S-0013 Amendment #2, Research and Education Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority-Serving Institutions. Amendment #2 issued in January 2023 can be found at Grants.gov.

Synopsis:

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) seeks unclassified research proposals from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI) under Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) W911NF-19-S-0013 Amendment #2 to establish a Center of Excellence (COE) in the area of Advanced Computing and Software. The Government will evaluate proposals through a scientific review process in accordance with evaluation criteria listed in the FOA. One highly meritorious proposal may be awarded a Cooperative Agreement with a performance period of five years at level up to \$2.0M per year for a total of \$10M. The Center led by the Principal Investigator (PI) will be expected to conduct collaborative research within the proposing HBCU/MI and with one other institution of higher education (IHE), defined below, and with involvement of scientists (Cooperative Agreement Managers) from the Army Research Laboratory (ARL). A subaward to the collaborating IHE partner is limited to no more than 40 percent of the annual budget. The COE HBCU/MI lead must meet the eligibility requirements as stated in the FOA W911NF-19-S-0013 Amendment #2 under section II.C.1.

The PI and key personnel selected for the Center must be U.S. citizens at the time of proposal submission because of the need to access Government facilities.

As defined by 20 U.S. Code § 1001, an IHE is an educational institution that:

- (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) Is legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or awards a degree that is acceptable for admission to a graduate or professional degree program;
- (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is an agency or association within a reasonable time.

The subawardee may be an HBCU/MI or non-HBCU/MI that is capable of enhancing research applicable to the challenges facing DoD in the area of Advanced Computing and Software and attracting both established and promising early-career researchers. A discussion of collaborations must be included in the proposal. Provide the name and location of the collaborating institution, name and credentials of the collaborating investigator, and explain how the collaborator's expertise will contribute to the proposed research. Likewise, collaborating investigators should describe their support of the project, including cost sharing where applicable, via a letter addressed to the PI. Such letter must be included with the proposal but will be excluded from the page count. Letters of support from organizations or individuals that will not participate in the project will be counted in the 25-page limit.

The USD(R&E), in a memorandum dated February 1, 2022, outlined a science and technology strategy with fourteen critical technology areas (https://www.cto.mil/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/usdre_strategic_vision_critical_tech_areas.pdf). Advanced Computing and Software is among the fourteen critical technology areas. Accordingly, the DoD seeks to establish a Center of Excellence in Advanced Computing and Software to perform research in the following areas:

- **High performance computing/supercomputing**
- **Parallel computing**
- **Distributed computing**
- **Human-computer interaction**
- **Large-scale networks**
- **Data storage**
- **Embedded systems**
- **Architectures**
- **Neural networks**
- **Quantum computing**
- **Databases and data mining**
- **Cloud computing**
- **Computer vision**
- **Security and trust**
- **Natural language processing**
- **Software tools**
- **Software lifecycle (design, construction, testing, and maintenance)**
- **Applications, e.g., artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet-of-Things, robotics, and virtual reality**

Scientific knowledge and technologies produced in the Center of Excellence will enable the DoD to address a broad range of technical challenges. Some of the research will be applicable to Master's and Ph.D. level work that breaks new ground in Advanced Computing and Software.

Proposals must be compliant with instructions provided in this special notice and with the associated FOA, with the exception that no white papers are to be submitted prior to full

proposals. When preparing a proposal under this special notice, applicants should enter “COE Advanced Computing and Software” in Field 4.b., Agency Routing Identifier, of the SF-424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance form.

The principal purpose of a cooperative agreement is to support and stimulate research. It is not for the acquisition of property or the provision of services for the direct benefit or use of the Government. The recipient of a cooperative agreement awarded as a result of this special notice will work collaboratively with scientists from the Army Research Laboratory (ARL). The ARL will participate in the research and jointly use its in-house technical expertise to plan and execute the research program. Proposals must indicate how the HBCU/MI team will interact and collaborate with ARL through means such as personnel exchanges, technology transition opportunities, educational seminars, workshops, and cooperative research arrangements.

An HBCU/MI institution may submit no more than one (1) proposal under this RFP. If a given HBCU/MI submits more than one proposal, the institution will be required to withdraw all proposals that exceed this limit.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with instructions provided in the referenced FOA and must be received no later than 4:00 PM (ET), May 4, 2023. An award announcement is expected by July 31, 2023. The recipient of an award will be contacted by a Contracting Officer/Grant Specialist of the Army Contracting Command.

Questions regarding the intent or scope of this Request for Full Proposal - Special Notice must be submitted to osd.pentagon.ousd-r-e.mbx.rt-rtl-hbcu-mi@mail.mil. The deadline to submit questions is 4:00 PM (ET), April 18, 2023.