

Government Responses to Questions Received for RFA #EPA-ORD-NRMRL-CI-09-02, “Research Training Program for College and University Students”

Following is a list of questions that the government received in response to RFA EPA-ORD-NRMRL-CI-09-02. Below each question is the Government’s official written response. These written responses supersede any other information provided. The period for receiving questions has closed.

1. **Question:** I am writing for clarification about this grant opportunity. The notice seems to indicate that only one institution will receive a very large grant over a 3-year period. However, it also mentions, “Research training will be conducted at EPA’s facilities in Cincinnati, Ohio, and academic training will be conducted at the home institutions of the students.” Is it possible for students from smaller institutions (which are unlikely to be competitive for the single grant) to benefit from the research training program?

Response: EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this RFA. Applicants may propose separately or in partnerships as set forth in the RFA. The RFA is geared for the applicants to have a national focus in attracting students. However, all students must be available for mentorship at EPA's Cincinnati facilities. How an applicant and any team members, if applicable, accomplishes this is a business decision that will be subject to EPA's peer review evaluation process.

2. **Question:** This grant specifies training in Cincinnati, OH. Do you know what the duration of this training is?

Response: There will be some training such as orientation and health and safety related to students working in an EPA Laboratory setting; however, the government is not clear on what you are referring to. Please cite the location of the statement, as well as the statement, that is causing you concern. This is a mentorship program and therefore, students must be available to work at the EPA's Cincinnati facilities with his/her mentor.

3. **Question:** Are international students eligible for research trainee appointments?

Response: Students must be U.S. citizens

4. **Question:** Because the RFA is through the Risk Management Research Laboratory Is it necessary to have an RM focus to the academic education or is it acceptable for it to be included as one component of the broad environmental education each student would receive?

Response: As stated in the RFA, various disciplines of students would be acceptable. Some examples of the field of study for desirable student participants include (but are not limited to) those majoring in chemistry, engineering, biology, computer science, physical sciences, life sciences, ecology, and urban planning. Furthermore, other ORD labs in Cincinnati will also mentor students as set forth in Section I.

5. **Question:** With the award amount per year being relatively high we are assuming that money is expected to fund more than student stipends.

Response: Each applicant is responsible for submitting a budget to carryout the student mentorship program as described in Section I of the RFA. While each applicant's budget may vary dependent on its technical approach, the objectives of the RFA must be met. The number and academic levels of the students would dictate the cost. The applicants will be evaluated on the ability to maximize student mentorship opportunities. EPA anticipates awarding one agreement up to \$1.8M over the period of performance; however, the award will be subject to the availability of funds.

6. **Question:** Is it fair to assume that faculty salaries, consultants, laboratory supplies, instrumentation purchases and instrumentation maintenance are acceptable budget items for conducting the academic activities at our university?

Response: This is an EPA mentor program. The program will supplement the academic training of students by enabling them to complete mentored projects in a world class federal research laboratory with EPA scientists. All resources necessary for the students to conduct research while in the EPA's Laboratory are or will be in place. The applicant's budget should be consistent (in line) with its technical approach and tasks for meeting the objectives of the RFA as set forth in Section I. The applicant's budget will be reviewed to ensure proposed costs are necessary, reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the project's objectives.

7. **Question:** Other than limits and comments made in the RFA regarding budget, are there any limitations on the budget regarding items in #2?

Response: The RFA instructions address all budget requirements.

8. **Question:** Has this grant been made available before? If so, which institution(s) received the award?

Response: A similar cooperative agreement has been in existence for over six years. The University of Cincinnati has been the recipient of those agreements.

9. **Question:** Is it allowable for a co-investigator to be part of more than one proposal? A YES or NO answer ASAP would be helpful so we can decide whether to continue to prepare our proposal.

Response: Yes. EPA cannot dictate to potential applicants what partnership arrangements to propose. A proposal might include team members that are also proposed under another proposal. The team members will be evaluated in accordance with their proposed contribution to each individual applicant's proposal.