

PFAS in Landfills and Groundwater Informational Webinar

Sept. 5, 2018

Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** Can an individual Principal Investigator (PI) be a PI on more than one application?
 - **Answer:** The Request for Application (RFA) does not impose a limit on the number of applications for an individual PI. However, each application must be distinct from each other in terms of proposed research.

2. **Question:** Is there a limit to the share of project an outside contractor can have?
 - **Answer:** The RFA does not give a numerical limit to the share of a project designated to a contractor or sub-awardee. However, applicants are urged to exercise discretion to avoid the appearance of a “pass through” of work to contractors.

3. **Question:** In an early career proposal, can a full professor be a co-PI?
 - **Answer:** Please see the funding notice here regarding co-PI involvement <https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/practical-methods-analyze-and-treat-emerging-contaminants-pfas-solid-waste-landfills>.

Section III.A. EXCERPT:

“Senior researchers may collaborate in a supporting role for early career awards. Early career applications should not propose significant resources for senior researchers and may not list senior researchers as co-PIs.”

4. **Question:** What are the expectations or opportunities to work with local communities dealing with PFAS? I represent a small City in NH dealing with PFAS in groundwater and associated with landfills (separate areas) and we'd be interested in relating to research to share our issues and learn from the ongoing results/ findings.
 - **Answer:** The Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Program’s goal is to stimulate and support scientific and engineering research that advances EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment. It is a competitive, peer-reviewed, extramural research program that provides access to the nation’s best scientists and engineers in academic and other nonprofit research institutions.

While some RFAs require a research project to collaborate with a community (e.g. community based participatory research (CBPR) project), this RFA does not include that requirement. However, applicants may still submit a research project proposal that addresses solving real-world PFAS problems (aligned with the RFA research requirements) and includes engagement and working with a community.

5. **Question:** Can multiple early career individuals serve as co-PIs on an early career proposal?
 - **Answer:** Yes, but one lead PI must be clearly identified.

6. **Question:** In an early career proposal, can a second assistant professor be a co-PI and be a substantial contributor?
 - **Answer:** Yes.

7. **Question:** With regards to the regular awards, if we have a foreign entity as a sub-awardee, is there a limit to the funding that must be considered?
 - **Answer:** The RFA does not specify limits to funds given to sub-awardees, foreign or domestic.

8. **Question:** Does the scope cover Construction & Demolition Debris landfills?
 - **Answer:** Yes.

9. **Question:** Can a professor from an academic institution, who is not a PI, be considered a contractor?
 - **Answer:** If the person is working as a private person (rather than a sub-award going to that professor's institution), the person can be considered a subcontractor or consultant. It is up to this professor to make sure that the institution approves of these activities.

10. **Question:** Does the sub-awardee PI have to be listed as a co-PI on the proposal?
 - **Answer:** Any key person should be listed as a co-PI on the application. We encourage you to list these names and institutions on the "Additional Key Contacts" form as well as in the Abstract. Please also include resumes (within page limits as specified in the RFA) for these individuals.

11. **Question:** Can a PhD student serve as a co-PI?
 - **Answer:** The RFA does not restrict a PhD student from being a co-PI on the regular grant. Whether such a person should be included in the grant as a key researcher is up to the policies of the applicant institution. However, funding for graduate or undergraduate students tend to be listed under the budget or budget justification. Please note that the peer review criteria includes a criterion that states, "The degree to which the application demonstrates that the Principal Investigator(s) and other key personnel have the appropriate qualifications (including research training, demonstrated knowledge of pertinent literature, experience, and publication records)." Also, please note that the Early Career Criteria requires that the Principal Investigator has a Ph.D. in a relevant field.

12. **Question:** Is cost match accepted to elevate the priority?
 - **Answer:** A matching fund/cost is not required.

13. **Question:** Is wastewater, along with others, covered under this RFA?
 - **Answer:** Yes.

14. **Question:** For the early career proposal, there are also three focuses- detection, fate/transport, and treatment. Will each research focus award one early career proposal? Or one focus can award more than one and another focus award zero?
- **Answer:** There is no pre-set number of awards under each research area. The research projects will be funded based on the review scores and ratings, regardless of the research area.
15. **Question:** 6.b.vii says "EPA's participation in the salary rate (excluding overhead) paid to individual consultants retained by recipients or by a recipient's contractors or subcontractors is limited to the maximum daily rate for a Level IV of the Executive Schedule." Does that mean a contractor's overhead cannot be considered in its hourly/daily rate?
- **Answer:** That is correct. The consultant cap applies to the consultant's salary only.
16. **Question:** Is pilot study, collaborating with some industrial consultants, a plus to the proposal?
- **Answer:** The RFA calls for practical or applicable methods/technology to solve PFAS problems, so when a research project is strong on the component, it will be deemed to be responsive to the RFA's research goals.

More Information: <https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/informational-webinar-pfas-landfills-and-groundwater>

RFA Funding Opportunity: <https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/practical-methods-analyze-and-treat-emerging-contaminants-pfas-solid-waste-landfills>