

## 20th Annual P3 Awards: A National Student Design Competition Focusing on People, Prosperity and the Planet Request for Applications (RFA)

Informational Webinar Questions and Answers

October 25, 2022

### P3 Program Changes

- **How is the P3 Program different this year than from previous years?**  
Answer: The former two-phased competition has been streamlined into a single phased program. Individual awards are \$75,000 over two-years. The National Student Design Expo now occurs in the second year of the award.
- **Have Phase II awards been discontinued, including for current Phase I awardees?**  
Answer: The new single-phase structure applies to the current 20<sup>th</sup> Annual RFA and any future RFAs. Phase I recipients from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> annual P3 cycle will be given the opportunity to apply for Phase II awards as described in those solicitations.
- **When will announcements be made about the applications of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Annual awards?**  
Answer: Funding decisions for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Phase I Awards are coming soon. Awards for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Phase I are posted on our website (<https://www.epa.gov/P3/18th-annual-p3-grant-recipients>). The 18th Annual Phase II RFA has not yet opened to Phase I recipients. Phase II award recipients will be announced after the project period ends for the Phase I awards in July 2023. Please check our webpage (<https://www.epa.gov/P3>) for updates.

### Eligibility

- **What students are eligible to apply?**  
Answer: Undergraduate and/or graduate students enrolled in an eligible U.S. college or university may participate in the research. It is up to the faculty advisor to determine the mix of students and disciplines appropriate for the proposed research project.
- **Are Graduate Teaching Assistants eligible to apply?**  
Answer: The academic institution applies for a P3 grant. Graduate students, including teaching assistants, may participate in the student team. The Principal Investigator, however, must be a faculty member. Research funds may be used for undergraduate or graduate student stipends.
- **How many people can there be in a team?**  
Answer: There is no maximum number for team members, and the final size of the team is up to the Principal Investigator (PI) that serves as the faculty advisor. The teams should be comprised of at least two students. Keep in mind the budget when selecting team members for travel to the National Student Design Expo.
- **Do I need to already have the student team, or could I apply and then form the team?**

Answer: No, the team does not have to be in place to apply to the RFA.

Per the solicitation, “If student investigators are known at the time of application submittal, list them, indicate whether each student is an undergraduate or graduate student, and indicate the expertise they will contribute to the P3 team. If student investigators are not yet known, provide a brief explanation of how and when the P3 student team will be formed and the areas of expertise to be recruited for the team. Include in the team students from schools and disciplines that will help make a successful project (e.g., from business, social science, and educational schools or departments).”

- **Can the group be a mix of both graduate and undergraduate students?**

Answer: Yes. The team can include both graduate and undergraduate students.

- **Do students have to be from the same university as the PI? Can student teams be from multiple universities?**

Answer: The PI leads a student team from the lead academic institution receiving the grant. However, other institutions or subawardees can partner on the project along with students at that institution.

- **Are two-year institutions (community colleges) eligible to apply?**

Answer: Yes, community colleges are eligible to apply.

- **Do the students need to be U.S. citizens?**

Answer: No, international students can participate as well, provided they are in the U.S. legally and are enrolled at the applicant institution.

- **Can someone apply from an international institution?**

Answer: No, international institutions are not eligible to receive P3 grants. However, collaboration with an international university is allowed.

Per the Solicitation: “Public and private institutions of higher education (limited to degree-granting institutions of higher education) located in the U.S. (includes eligible institutions of higher education located in U.S. territories and possessions) are eligible to apply to be the recipient of a grant to support teams of undergraduate, graduate students, or both. Profit-making firms and individuals are not eligible to receive assistance agreements from the EPA under this program.”

- **If your organization is a university based in the United States, but your research is going to benefit people in another country would we be eligible for this grant?**

Answer: Refer to Section V.B of the RFA for relevancy review criteria. Criterion 2 evaluates “the degree to which the research is primarily performed in the U.S. and the benefits of the research primarily accrue to the U.S.” If the proposed research does not meet the requirements for this criterion,, it is possible that this proposal may score low in the relevancy review.

- **If you don't get the P3 this year, can you reapply next year?**  
Answer: Yes. An unsuccessful applicant can reapply to future solicitations. However, the application should not be the same as previously submitted.
- **Are recipients that were previously funded for Phase I but not Phase II eligible to apply?**  
Answer: Yes. However, you should ensure the application is responsive to one of the four FONs (Funding Opportunity Numbers), listed in Section I.D. of the RFA.
- **Our team is participating in an EPA challenge (with prize money), are we still eligible for a P3 award?**  
Answer: Yes, as long as the proposed P3 research is distinctly different from the work to be funded in the challenge.

### Principal Investigators (PI)

- **Can staff serve as the PI or must the PI hold an appointment at the applicant institution? Can a student serve as a PI?**  
Answer: The PI must hold an appointment at the applicant institution. It is possible for the PI to change after the award has been made. A student may not serve as the PI.
- **Can a postdoc serve as a PI? If a postdoc wants to participate as a student, is that allowed?**  
Answer: Principal investigators must be faculty at the granted institution.

Per the solicitation, "The students on the teams supported by the institution receiving the grant must be enrolled in the college, university, or post-secondary educational institution they will be representing at the time the application is submitted."

- **Can one PI submit multiple projects?**  
Answer: Yes. One PI can submit multiple proposals as long as the proposals are substantially different.
- **Can there be more than one faculty on proposal? Can there be Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on the team?**  
Answer: The application should include one principal investigator, but can include, as appropriate, co-PIs who will significantly contribute to the project. However, the applications must be submitted with a single lead PI who will serve as the primary faculty advisor for the P3 student team.
- **Does the PI need to be a U.S. citizen?**  
Answer: Faculty advisors/PIs must be U.S. citizens and/or lawfully admitted to U.S.
- **Does the university faculty advisor submit the application or does a student in the group submit the application?**

Answer: The institution of the primary faculty advisor serving as the lead PI submits the application via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If you have any trouble submitting the application on Grants.gov, use the Grant.gov helpline (1-800-518-4726), note the case number and send an email with case number to the email box ([electronic-grant-submissions@epa.gov](mailto:electronic-grant-submissions@epa.gov)) before the February 1, 2023, deadline. Applications submitted directly by students will not be accepted.

- **If your project is in collaboration with another university, does a PI from each university need to be on the team? Or is it possible to list as co-PIs?**

Answer: If another university is proposed as a subawardee, then the application should list a faculty member as a co-PI.

### Research Areas and Objectives

- **Do we need to address both objectives under the listed research area? Or can we address only one of the objectives listed?**

Answer: Applicants must address one of the research areas (Clean and Healthy Air, Clean and Safe Water, Safeguard and Revitalize Communities, and Ensure Safety of Chemicals) in their application. Note that each application must be submitted using a single Funding Opportunity Number (FON). Projects must not exceed the \$75,000 budget and two-year duration.

- **Can a proposal cross-cut or cover more than one research area?**

Answer: A proposal may focus on more than one research area, but each application must be submitted using a single Funding Opportunity Number (FON). The PI should determine the primary focus of the application and apply to that FON.

### Budget and Funding

- **How will the awarded Institution receive grant funds?**

Answer: Once work under the grant commences, the awarded institution submits invoices for expenditures outlined in the project budget.

- **Do you fund the same number of projects under each research area?**

Answer: The number of awards per Funding Opportunity Numbers (FONs) may not be proportionate and can vary from year to year.

- **Can you elaborate on the budget categories? Can we pay students under this award?**

Answer: Some student support is provided by funding (e.g., participant support costs such as stipends or travel assistance). If students are considered employees of the university, those expenses would be indicated under the Personnel category. If not, these costs are considered participant support costs. For more information, refer to Section IV.C.4 of the RFA for specific information on each budget category.

- **Do you have any suggestions on the budget allocated to the PIs and Co-PIs? Is there a limit on the budget? Does EPA have a limit on indirect costs? Is there a cap on facility and administrative costs from my institution? Is institutional overhead an allowable budget cost?**  
Answer: Requests for amounts in excess of a total of \$75,000 per award, including direct and indirect costs, will not be considered. Peer reviewers evaluate the application for “Budget and Project Management”, so it is important to ensure that the budget realistically supports the research being proposed including travel to the National Student Design Expo which is a requirement.

## Requirements

- **What is the page count and requirements for the abstract and research plan? Are figures and tables included in the page count?**  
Answer: Refer to Section IV.C.5 of the RFA for information on the page counts, headers and other requirements for the abstract and research plan respectively. Figures and tables are included in the page limit.
- **Is there a requirement to have the Human Subjects Research Statement?**  
Answer: Yes. Even if your project does not include any human subjects research, your application must contain a statement to this effect. Consult the solicitation for exact wording for non-human subjects research.

## Partners

- **Can there be industrial, federal agencies partners or International partners?**  
Answer: Yes. We strongly recommend that applicants obtain letters of support from organizations with which they plan to partner.

Per the solicitation, “Partnerships are strongly encouraged and will be particularly important for the demonstration strategies. While formal partnerships need not be established prior to submitting the application, indicate anticipated partnerships including the type of partner (educational institution, industry and/or NGOs). Formal letters of understanding or commitment from partners should be submitted in support of the application, when available and appropriate and will be considered letters of intent/support as described in Section IV.C.5.vii.a.”

Per the solicitation, “The applicant institution may enter into an agreement with a Federal Agency to purchase or utilize unique supplies or services unavailable in the private sector to the extent authorized by law. Examples are purchase of satellite data, chemical reference standards, analyses, or use of instrumentation or other facilities not available elsewhere. A written justification for federal involvement must be included in the application. In addition, an appropriate form of assurance that documents the commitment, such as a letter of intent from the Federal Agency involved, should be included.”

- **How detailed does the letters of support have to be?**

Answer: In general letters of support should be one page, with a short paragraph stating their endorsement and what support they intend to provide, if any.

- **How many letters of support do we need to submit?**

Answer: There is no minimum or maximum.