FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (FOA)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017

Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI) of Higher Education: Center of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholars

Funding Opportunity Announcement — W911NF-17-S-0006

Issued by the U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground Research Triangle Park Division on behalf of the Army Research Laboratory and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (Research Directorate/Basic Research Office)

Issued: April 2017
Applications Due:
May 31, 2017
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Required Overview Content

1. Agency Name(s)
   Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OASD(R&E)).

2. Funding Opportunity Title
   Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority-Serving Institutions of Higher Education (HBCUs/MIs): Center of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholarship

3. Announcement Type
   This is the initial announcement.

4. Funding Opportunity Number
   W911NF-17-S-0006

5. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number
   12.630, Basic, Applied, and Advanced Research in Science and Engineering

6. Response Date
   Applications must be received by 3:00PM Eastern Time, May 31, 2017 to be considered. White papers are not required and will not be reviewed.

B. Additional Overview Information

Under the authority of 10 U.S.C. § 2362, the Army Research Laboratory, or on behalf of the OASD(R&E), is seeking unclassified proposals from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority-Serving Institutions of higher education (HBCUs/MIs) to establish a Center of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Scholars. This initiative is based on the vision of Dr. John Hopps, Jr., a renowned researcher and educator whose love of science and interdisciplinary research (1) encouraged students to pursue degrees in STEM disciplines that are important to the defense mission, (2) advanced the education of future scientists and engineers, and (3) fostered interest in a research career. This funding opportunity is expected to result in the award of one 4-year cooperative agreement, with an option for a fifth year. Please note that even though one award is anticipated, the Government reserves the right to make multiple awards, if appropriate, subject to the availability of funds.

The Recipient will select the student scholars (hereafter “students”) and must demonstrate approaches to, and techniques in, research education and training that encourage students to remain committed to STEM disciplines, including the pursuit of
advanced study, as applicable, and making a career choice in a STEM-related field. The Department of Defense (DoD) will not award scholarships directly to students under this FOA.
II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Program Description

General

DoD announces its intent to establish a Center of Excellence for STEM Scholarship. (hereafter “Center”) at an HBCU/MI (see Section II.C.1, Eligibility Information – Eligible Applicants, for a definition). The Center will be funded for a 4-year period of performance with an optional fifth year of support.

This initiative will support multiple objectives of benefit to the recipient HBCU/MI and its students, as well as to DoD. Primary among those objectives are (1) developing innovative approaches to the education and training of students in STEM disciplines that ensure they pursue such studies throughout their undergraduate education and, upon graduation or after obtaining an advanced degree(s), enter research careers, whether in the public or private sectors, in science and engineering fields that are critical to national security; and (2) supporting a cadre of students dedicated to obtaining an education in a STEM discipline and being well prepared for research careers. Establishing such a Center at an HBCU/MI will also contribute to the objective of increasing the diversity of the Nation’s STEM workforce.

The STEM disciplines of primary interest to DoD include:
- Biological Sciences
- Physical Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, and Materials Science)
- Mathematical Sciences
- Computer and Information Sciences
- Engineering (all categories)
- Geosciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Neuro Science and Cognitive Science

Funding will support activities that further the research education and training of those students (e.g., internships; travel to seminars and workshops; publications, etc.).

The Recipient will be expected to (1) select a cadre of 10-15 undergraduate students who have demonstrated capabilities, have selected a major in a STEM discipline, and provide them educational and research experiences leading to a research career; (2) develop a structured program, including a formal mentoring program, that will provide strong academic support (mentors may be STEM faculty or postdoctoral associates) and encourage their entry into advanced degree programs and research careers; (3) provide cross-disciplinary activities through seminars, invited speakers, and other activities to expand knowledge and broaden student perspectives; (4) have students select a research topic in an area of research interest to DoD and produce a research product for presentation to DoD prior to graduation; (5) provide strong STEM faculty commitment and involvement in the Center; (6) manage student support and student commitments;
and (7) as appropriate, assist supported students in job placement. The Center is not intended to conduct research except for the students’ research education indicated above.

Based on the above, the application narrative must clearly describe:
(1) the planned institutional approach to identifying STEM students for support under this award;

(2) the proposed activities and academic support to be provided to the students, including (a) how students will be exposed to the nature of research, research procedures, and research ethics, and (b) how required mentoring will be carried out;

(3) how DoD funding would be used to augment existing activities or provide new activities in preparing these students for research careers;

(4) the management support that will be provided to ensure fiscal and other oversight of student support, continuing eligibility of students throughout the period of performance.

(5) the proposed linkages among institutional functions/organizations that will comprise the Center; and

(6) how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of the Center as well as initiatives the applicant will pursue as the basis for enabling continuation of successful Center activities after the end of DoD support.

Cooperative Agreement Involvement

The DoD expects to be substantially involved in the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement. That involvement will include the following activities:

• Assist with defense research projects and coordination of mentoring activities by defense scientists and engineers.

• Identify programs and activities in which students should be involved, such as DoD-sponsored or other workshops and career fairs, to familiarize students with the Nation’s research enterprise generally and DoD specifically.

• Review mentoring agreements periodically with students and their faculty advisors, modifying as warranted to ensure compliance with program objectives.

• Sponsor periodic forums/poster sessions for students to present their research projects to stakeholders and to interact with DoD personnel.

• Work with recipient faculty and staff to promote, facilitate, encourage, and support the students’ academic success and their research efforts.
B. Federal Award Information

Pending the availability of funds, DoD intends to make one award under this announcement for a 4-year period in an amount not to exceed $1 million per year. Please note that even though one award is anticipated, the Government reserves the right to make multiple awards if appropriate. The award will include an option for one additional year in an amount not to exceed $500,000 to allow for systematic closeout and the institution’s assessment of the Center. Note that DoD reserves the right to conduct its own assessment of the Center during or after the period of performance. The award will be in the form of a cooperative agreement and will be made by ACC-AFG- RTP on behalf of ARL and OASD(R&E). The performance period is expected to begin in October 2017.

The principal purpose of the Government’s collaborative involvement with the Recipient is to ensure support or stimulation of basic and applied (fundamental) research in areas important to DoD. This relationship is in contrast to the acquisition of supplies or services for the direct benefit of the Government. It is envisioned that this collaboration will bring new talent, ideas, and techniques to DoD laboratories and will also introduce students to the roles of science and engineering in meeting the Nation’s defense needs. The collaboration will also provide access to DoD’s world class research facilities for the students and may influence their career choices. Substantial Government involvement with the Recipient is expected through the collaborative planning and management of the program and through the research to be performed by the students.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

   a. Only 4-year degree-granting covered educational institutions (HBCUs/MIs) will be considered for an award under this announcement.

      As provided in 10 U.S.C. § 2362, “covered educational institutions,” are defined as:

      (1) institutions of higher education eligible for assistance under Title III or V of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1051 et seq.), or

      (2) accredited post-secondary minority institutions.

Because enrollment and other factors may affect an institution’s eligibility in any given year, an institution must have a current eligibility designation from the United States Department of Education (DoEd). HBCUs and Tribal Colleges are exempt and do not require the DoEd eligibility letter. A copy of the DoEd letter dated November 2016 or later certifying eligibility for Title III or Title V assistance must be included with each application submitted under this announcement. The eligibility letter will not be included in the page limit (see
Section II.D.2 below). If a current eligibility letter is not submitted with the application, the applicant will be deemed ineligible and the application will not be accepted for review.

b. In addition to the requirements under Section II.C.1.a, the institution must be chartered as a co-educational institution. The application must include a website where this information is located.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required and will not be considered in the evaluation of applications submitted pursuant to this announcement.

3. Other

a. Given the nature of this funding opportunity, DoD will consider only one application from an eligible institution. If an applicant submits more than one application, ARL will contact the authorized representative (AR) and request that the institution formally indicate which application should receive further review. If the AR’s response is not received within the time specified by ARL, the application with the latest Grants.gov date stamp that was received by the due date will be accepted for review.

b. An applicant may not request more than $1,000,000 per year (combined direct and facilities and administrative costs) for years 1 through 4 and $500,000 (combined direct and facilities and administrative costs) for the option year. Any application exceeding these limits will be considered non-responsive and will not be accepted for review.

c. To be considered responsive, an applicant must propose a budget showing costs that will be attributable to support student activities such as fees and workshop attendance. The other portion of the budget may include such things as costs for mentoring, supplies, and instructional materials. Section II.D.6 includes additional limitations on the use of funds. If an application includes any of the types of costs described in Section II.D.6, the application will be deemed non-responsive and will not be accepted for review.

d. Funds provided under this award may not be used for research except for student research and associated efforts.

e. Facility Requirements: All students performing onsite collaboration at a Government or a non-federal facility are required to comply with the safety, environmental, security and operational regulations of that facility. Students may be required to attend Army designated mandatory training upon the Cooperative Agreement Manager’s (CAM) request. In addition, there may be some restrictions on work hours, facilities use, etc. that will be established in each
student’s letter of acceptance and/or when the onsite collaborative performance begins.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms and instructions are available at Grants.gov. To access these materials, go to https://www.grants.gov, select “Applicants/Applicant Actions/Apply for Grants,” and follow the instructions. In the Grants.gov search function, enter the funding opportunity number for this announcement (W911NF-17-S-0006). You can also search for CFDA Number 12.630, Basic, Applied, and Advanced Research in Science and Engineering. On the Selected Grant Applications for Download page, click on “download” under the heading “Instructions and Applications” to download the application package.

To view an application package, and complete and submit an application, you may need to download the appropriate software packages. Go to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html for further information.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. To submit an application through Grants.gov, in addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM (see Section D.3.), an HBCU/MI that has not already done so must register with the credential provider and Grants.gov, and obtain approval for an Authorized Representative (AR) to submit applications on behalf of the institution. Registration in Grants.gov must be completed before submitting an application. Go to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html for further information.

Questions relating to the registration process, system requirements, or the submission process should be directed to Grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. If you forget your user name or password, follow the instructions provided in the Credential Provider tutorial. Tutorials may be printed by right-clicking on the tutorial and selecting “Print.”

b. Applicants must complete all required forms and any optional forms (e.g., SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. The required fields should be completed in accordance with the “pop-up” instructions on the forms. To activate the instructions, turn on the “Help Mode” (icon with the pointer and question mark at the top of the form). All attachments must be in PDF format (Adobe Portable Document Format). Please ensure that your attachments are not password protected.
c. The following formatting rules apply for the file attachments except as indicated below:

- Paper size when printed – 8.5 x 11-inch paper, one-sided
- Margins – 1 inch
- Spacing – single
- Font – No smaller than Times New Roman, 12-point font (other than required fillable forms)
- Number of pages for technical portion of the application – 25 (when printed out), which includes the project summary/abstract, project narrative, and description of existing facilities, equipment, and other resources that may be used by the Center.

**Pages exceeding this limit will not be read or evaluated.** This page limitation does not apply to the SF 424 (R&R) forms that are part of the application. They also do not include the biographical sketches (curriculum vitae) to be attached under the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (see below), institutional charter (see Section II.C.1.b), or letters of endorsement.

d. A complete application consists of the following SF 424 forms and, as applicable, attachments. Nonconforming applications may be rejected without review.

(1) **FORM: SF 424 (R&R)** - The SF 424 (R&R) must be used as the cover page. Complete this form first because it populates data in other forms. To see the instructions and any additional information about the field, roll your mouse over the applicable field. By submitting an application through Grants.gov, the AR (identified by username and password) is providing an “electronic signature.”

The completion of most fields is self-explanatory, with the possible exception of the following:

Field 2  The Applicant Identifier may be left blank.
Field 3  The Date Received by State and the State Application Identifier are not applicable.
Field 4a Leave blank.
Field 4b Leave blank.
Field 7 Complete as indicated. Select “Other,” and under “Other (Specify)” note Historically Black College and University or the type of other MSI, e.g., Hispanic-Serving Institution.
Field 8 Specify “New.”
Field 9 Army Research Laboratory. This field is pre-populated in Grants.gov.
Field 11 Specify “Center of Excellence in STEM Scholarship.” Do not enter the abbreviation HBCU/MI or any individual’s name.
Field 16 Choose “No.” Check “Program is not covered By Executive Order 12372.”
Field 17 By selecting “I Agree” the applicant is providing the certification regarding lobbying that is required by law (31 U.S.C. 1352, as implemented by DoD at 32 CFR part 28) and the representation entitled “Prohibition on Contracting with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements.” See Section F.2, Award Administration Information – Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below, for the text of the certification and representation.
Field 18 Complete the SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) (see below) if your institution has lobbying activities that you are required to disclose under 31 U.S.C. 1352, as implemented by the DoD at 32 CFR part 28.
Field 20 Not applicable. Leave blank.

(2) FORM: Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile – Complete all information requested. Include biographical sketches (curriculum vitae) (not to exceed three (3) pages each) for the Center Director/Project Director, as well as any other personnel deemed by the HBCU/MI to be “key personnel.” Biographical sketches are required for these individuals, even if they will not receive support from the DoD funding. Be certain to include education and years of experience, and current and pending support. Current and pending support must include the titles of current or pending research projects (both federal and non-federal), the proportion of time to be devoted to that other support, the name of the funding agency or organization, and the dates of support.

To attach biographical sketches, click “Add Attachment” for the necessary number of attachments

(3) FORM: Research & Related Other Project Information – Complete questions 1 through 6 and attach a file for items 7, 8, 9, 10, and, as applicable, 12. The files must comply with the following instructions:

(a) Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7 on the form) – The project abstract must provide a concise description of the research-related education to be conducted by the Center, including objectives, approaches, and anticipated outcomes, and must be appropriately marked as “Approved for public release.” It should identify the Center Director/Project Director and other key personnel. The abstract must not exceed 300 words. Anything in excess of this limit may be removed for the evaluation of the application.
Attach the project summary/abstract to Field 7 on the SF-424 Research and Related Other Project Information form by clicking “Add Attachment.”

(b) **Project Narrative (Field 8 on the form)** – The project narrative provides the information by which the quality of the application is determined. The narrative must be complete and self-contained to qualify for review. The project narrative must include a one-page statement of objectives, entitled “Statement of Objectives,” summarizing the goals and objectives of the applicant, followed by a complete description of the following:

(i) The applicant’s understanding of DoD’s objectives in establishing the Center.

(ii) The applicant’s proposed plans for the Center, including the department’s involved and specialized activities the applicant will conduct to facilitate meeting the Center’s objectives. This should include a description of any activities already in place that promote STEM scholarship, including any research or STEM activities currently funded by DoD or other federal agencies.

(iii) The types of academic and research activities that students supported by the Center will be engaged in beyond their normal curriculum.

(iv) The strategies the Center will use to encourage students to excel in their undergraduate STEM studies and to pursue advanced degrees.

(v) The management structure the applicant will use to ensure coordination within the institution and with DoD, timely reporting (during the period of performance), and fiscal integrity, including management of student support.

(vi) A description of the responsibilities of the proposed Principal Investigator (PI)/Center Director, including the percentage of time to be spent managing the Center, and, as applicable, time spent on other federally or non-federally supported research, teaching, or other institutional activities.

(vii) The methods and metrics the applicant will employ to assess the effectiveness of the Center.

The application narrative must address all of the above. Applicants are encouraged to communicate this information in a way that demonstrates their understanding of DoD expectations and requirements rather than simply presenting the information sequentially based on the outline.
Attach the project narrative to Field 8 of the SF-424 Research and Related Other Project Information form by clicking “Add Attachment.”

(c) **Bibliography & References Cited (Field 9 on the form)** – Provide citations for any literature referenced in the application narrative. The attachment is not included in the page limit.

To attach literature citations, click “Add Attachment.”

(d) **Facilities and Other Resources (Field 10 on the form)** – Describe the facilities and equipment available for the proposed Center.

To attach information on facilities and other resources, click “Add Attachment.”

(e) **Equipment (Field 11 on the form)** – Not Applicable

(f) **Other Attachments (Field 12 on the form)** – To include any other relevant attachments, e.g., letters of endorsement, click “Add Attachment.”

(4) **FORM: SF 424 Project Performance Site Location(s)** – This form is self-explanatory.

(5) **FORM: SF 424 (R&R) Research & Related Budget** – This form allows for entry of a budget of up to 5 years. The budget must be consistent with a 4-year period of performance and a 1-year option and include a breakdown by year and a breakdown by cost category. The cumulative budget is generated by Grants.gov based on the year-by-year input. For budgeting purposes, assume a cooperative agreement start date of October 1, 2017, although the actual start date is subject to negotiation.

Funds may be requested for salaries of faculty and postdoctoral associates; student tuition and fees; supplies; travel; and other direct costs. See Section II.D.6, Funding Restrictions, for additional budget guidance.

Complete Sections A through I and attach a budget justification in Section K. The budget justification must provide an explanation of the data included in Sections A through I by category of cost that is sufficient to meet the guidance provided below and allow for meaningful evaluation. DoD does not pay fees under its financial assistance awards. Therefore, Section J must not have any entry.

(a) **Salary Costs:** For all employees/labor categories, in the Senior/Key and Other Personnel sections, indicate the amount of time to be charged to the
Center award (e.g., number of months) and show associated costs based on current or projected salary and fringe benefits.

(b) Equipment: Not applicable. No equipment may be acquired under the award resulting from this announcement.

(c) Travel: Identify in Section D, Travel, the total estimated costs of all travel (local and domestic non-local) by employees (see below for scholars). For other than local travel (as defined by the institution in its institutional policies), in Section K, list each proposed destination, purpose of the travel and its relationship to the students’ research or Center’s operation, duration of the travel, number of travelers, cost estimate, and basis for the estimate.

Breakout of local travel is not required.

Foreign travel is not allowed.

(d) Participant/Trainee Support Costs: Estimate amounts for the following categories only as shown in Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs: Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance; Travel; and Other. DoD will not provide any funding for stipends or subsistence.

Domestic, non-local travel may be included for a student’s travel to a professional technical meeting or other venue that may enhance achievement of the Center’s goals and objectives. List each proposed destination, purpose of the travel, duration of the travel, cost estimate, and basis for the estimate. Foreign travel is not allowed.

(e) Other Direct Costs: In Section F, Other Direct Costs, include the following, as applicable:

Materials and Supplies: Estimate costs of materials and supplies to include laptops for students, if needed. In Section K, list categories of materials and supplies and the basis for the cost estimates (e.g., vendor website, quotes, catalog, price lists).

Consultants: Funds may not be used for consultants.

ADP/Computer Services: Costs directly related to maintaining or servicing computers are not allowed under this announcement. However, laptops for students are allowed.

Subaward/Consortium/Contractual Costs: An applicant may not enter into a subaward or consortium agreement under the award resulting from this announcement. Contractual services may be proposed if fully justified.
**Equipment Rental/User Fees:** Estimate anticipated direct costs for rental of equipment, such as computers, and facility or equipment usage fees that will be incurred by the Center in the research education of the students.

**Alteration and Renovation:** Alteration and renovation of facilities is not an allowed cost under this announcement.

**Other:** In the blank spaces provided, include an estimate for any types of direct costs that do not fit into any of the previous categories.

**f. Indirect Costs:** Under Section H, Indirect Costs, provide the most recent rate(s), date of the facilities and administrative costs/indirect cost rate agreement for the applicant HBCU/MI, name of cognizant agency for indirect costs, the period to which the rate(s) apply, and a statement indicating whether the propose rates are provisional, final, fixed, or pre-determined. **Provide a copy of the rate agreement.**

To add the budget justification at Section K, click “Add Attachment.”

**Note:** The total amount requested in the budget must agree with the amount in Block 1 of the SF 424 R&R (application cover page).

**6. FORM: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL) –** This form must be completed if any funds other than federally 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 application for a cooperative agreement under this announcement.

e. DoD will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of the application and its evaluation. However, under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), such information (or portions thereof) may be potentially subject to release. It is the applicant’s responsibility to notify ARL of applications containing proprietary information or confidential information and clearly mark the relevant portions of the application that require such protection. Notwithstanding such marking, an application may be released to individuals outside of DoD for purposes of application review and evaluation. In the absence of any such markings, DoD will treat the entire application as not subject to restriction for DoD purposes.

**3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant is required to (a) be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting its application; (b) provide a valid Dun and Bradstreet
Universal Numbering System (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 a federal agency.

ACC-APG-RTP Division on behalf of ARL, as the awarding office for an agreement under this announcement, may not make an award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time ACC-APG-RTP Division is ready to make an award, the evaluation panel may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as the basis for making an award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received no later than 3:00 PM Eastern Time on May 31, 2017.

Applicants are responsible for submitting their applications in sufficient time to allow them to reach Grants.gov by the deadline date and time specified above. An applicant should receive confirmation of delivery at the Government site, not just successful relay from the applicant’s system. Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government site includes documentary and electronic evidence of receipt maintained by the Government site. All submissions shall be submitted before the deadline identified above in order to be considered – no exceptions.

If an application is received by Grants.gov after the exact date and time specified as the deadline for receipt, the application will be considered “late” and will not be accepted for review.

To avoid the possibility of late receipt, whether caused by high system usage or any potential technical and/or input problems involving the applicant’s own equipment, and ineligibility for consideration, it is strongly recommended that applications be uploaded at least 2 days before the deadline established in the announcement.

If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal federal government processes so that applications cannot be received by Grants.gov by the deadline specified in this announcement, and the situation precludes amendment of the announcement closing date/time, the deadline for receipt of applications will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the announcement on the first work day on which normal federal government processes resume.
Application Receipt Notices

After an application is submitted to Grants.gov, the AR will receive a series of three e-mails from Grants.gov. The first two e-mails should be received within 24-48 hours after submission. The first e-mail will confirm receipt of the application by Grants.gov, and the second will indicate that the application either has been successfully validated by Grants.gov before transmission to ARL or has been rejected due to errors. Once ARL has confirmed receipt of the application, within 10 days of the application due date, the AR should receive a third e-mail. That e-mail notes that the application has been received and provides the assigned tracking number. The application is not considered received until the AR receives the third e-mail. Applications may be tracked at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/tracking-my-application.html

5. Intergovernmental Review – Not applicable.

6. Funding Restrictions

   a. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used for the construction or alteration or renovation (modification) of buildings, building support systems (e.g., heating/ventilation/air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical), or fixed equipment (e.g., clean rooms and fume hoods).

   b. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used for subawards, consortium agreements, or consultants.

   c. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used to purchase equipment.

   d. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used for foreign travel.

   e. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used to provide student stipends or subsistence payments.

   f. Funds awarded under this announcement may not be used for costs directly related to maintaining or servicing computers, except for laptops purchased for the students.

7. Other Submission Requirements

An applicant may withdraw a proposal at any time before award by written notice, including e-mail, sent to the DoD Grants Officer (see Section G.). Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of the notice by the DoD Grants Officer.
E. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria

The primary evaluation criteria, which are of equal importance, are:

a. The applicant’s plan to establish and maintain a Center of Excellence for STEM students that is compliant with DoD’s objectives

b. The applicant’s plan for recruitment of students performing research with technical merit

c. The applicant’s plan to use innovative strategies and approaches for the research education and training of STEM students that will prepare them for advanced studies and research careers

d. The qualifications of the PI/Center Director and other key personnel to accomplish the goals of the Center

e. Adequacy of the management plan and organizational structure to ensure that DoD objectives are met

f. A comprehensive plan for record keeping, payments, financial reporting, and timely submission of reports to the Army

g. Periodic evaluations for each student to include processes and measures that the institution will use to monitor progress toward meeting each student’s academic goals and the DoD program objectives

The other evaluation criteria, which are of lesser importance than the primary criteria but of equal importance to each other, are:

a. The soundness of the proposed approach for selecting students for the scholarship, ensuring their continued eligibility, and methods for collecting and providing data during and after the period of performance.

b. The feasibility of the approach to assessing the Center’s effectiveness.

c. Realism and reasonableness of costs. Cost sharing is not an evaluation factor.

2. Review and Selection Process

DoD scientists and engineers will evaluate applications using the above criteria. The most meritorious application will be recommended for award. The Research Director of the ASD(R&E) Research Directorate/Basic Research Office is the approving authority for a recommendation for award.
3. **Recipient Qualification**

In accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance in parts 180 and 200 of Title 2, CFR, it is DoD policy that DoD Components must report and use integrity and performance information in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), or any successor system designated by OMB:

If the total federal share of a grant or cooperative agreement will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000):

a. The DoD Grants Officer, prior to making an award, will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

b. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

c. The DoD Grants Officer will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant’s integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.205, federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. **Award Administration Information**

1. **Federal Award Notices**

Notification of selection of an application for award will be e-mailed by ARL to successful applicant; however, that notice is not an authorization to begin work. The notification e-mail must not be regarded as an authorization to commit or expend funds (except at the applicant's own risk, to the extent that the institution elects to charge up to 90 days of pre-award costs, as permitted under 2 CFR 200.308(d)(1), as implemented by DoD in 2 CFR part 1103).

A cooperative agreement award signed by a DoD Grants Officer is the legal document indicating that an award has been made. The successful applicant will be contacted by a DoD Grants Officer, who will indicate if additional information is required, and by what date, including, as applicable, a revised budget. As part of that process, DoD will determine the award start date.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified shortly after notification to the successful applicant(s).
2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Each award under this announcement will be governed by the general award terms and conditions in effect at the time of the award that conform to DoD’s implementation of OMB guidance applicable to financial assistance in 2 CFR part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.” The DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions (latest version, July 2016) are located at https://www.onr.navy.mil/Contracts-Grants/submit-proposal/grants-proposal/grants-terms-conditions.

These terms and conditions are incorporated by reference in this announcement.

a. You must comply with all applicable national policy requirements. The key national policy requirements that may relate to an award under this announcement are included in the terms and conditions specified in paragraph 2.a above.

b. By electronically signing the SF-424, the applicant affirms its agreement with the following certification:

Certification Required for Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards

The certification at Appendix A to 32 CFR part 28 regarding lobbying is the only certification required at the time of application submission for a grant or cooperative agreement award. The certification is as follows (“grant” should be read to include “cooperative agreements”):

“By signing and submitting an application that may result in the award of a grant exceeding $100,000, the prospective awardee is certifying, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, 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.

(b) 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 this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit
Standard Form-LLL, “Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying,” in accordance with its instructions.

(c) The undersigned 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, and loans, or 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. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty or not less than $10,000.00 and not more than $100,000.00 for each such failure.”

c. Representations Required for Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards

Appropriations Provisions on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions

Check either “is” or “is not” for each of these two representations, as appropriate for the proposing institution, include the AR signature and point of contact information, and attach the representations page to Field 12 of the SF-424.

The page for these representations is provided with the application materials that are available for download at Grants.gov.

Representations

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.

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0704-0494  
OMB EXPIRATION DATE: 11/30/2019

AGENCY DISCLOSURE NOTICE

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Services Directorate, Directives Division, 4800 Mark Center Drive, East Tower, Suite 02G09, Alexandria, VA 22350-3100 [0704-0494]. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

Prohibition on Contracting with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements

Agreement with the representation below will be affirmed by checking the "I agree" box in block 17 of the SF424 (R&R) as part of the electronic proposal submitted via Grants.gov. The representation reads as follows:

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does not require any of its employees, contractors, or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, subrecipients from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.

Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in section 743 of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2015, Pub. L. 113-235) on provision of funds through grants and cooperative agreements to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and (2) section 743 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.
3. Reporting Requirements

a. Recipients must submit

(1) annual and final financial reports using the Standard Form (SF)-425;

(2) annual performance progress reports using the Research Performance Progress Report to indicate the progress of the project and other information as specified in the award;

(3) a final technical report; and

(4) annual follow-up reports for the cadre of supported students that include the information specified in the award.

b. As specified in 2 CFR part 170, recipients must report first-tier subawards as provided in Appendix A to that part ([https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0f58367a804777e957211b9a041464a8&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5#ap2.1.170_1330.a](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0f58367a804777e957211b9a041464a8&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5#ap2.1.170_1330.a))

c. If the total federal share of the award exceeds $500,000, the reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII to Part 200 of Title 2 CFR will be included in the terms and conditions of the award.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions regarding program policy should be directed to:

Evelyn Kent
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering
Evelyn.W.Kent.civ@mail.mil

Questions regarding program execution and administration should be directed to:

Vallen Emery
US Army Research Laboratory
Vallen.L.Emery.civ@mail.mil

The DoD Grants Officer is:

Kevin Bassler
US Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground
RTP Division
Kevin.J.Bassler.civ@mail.mil
II. Additional Information

Applications must not include any information that has been identified as classified national security information under authorities established in Executive Order 12958, Classified National Security Information.

Applicants are advised that employees of commercial firms under contract to the government may be used to administratively process applications. By submitting an application, an applicant consents to allowing access to its application(s) by these support contractors. These support contracts include nondisclosure agreements prohibiting their contractor employees from disclosing any information submitted by applicants.