

**Computer Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
(CS-STEM) Education Program
DARPA-RA-10-03**

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: Has this been funded in previous years?

Answer 1: No, this is a new research announcement. Similar 'study' efforts have been funded in previous years and have led to this research announcement.

Question 2: How many students is this RA expected to reach?

Answer 2: The RA itself is not expected to reach any students. Offerors submitting proposals to this RA are to propose an approach which will reach as many students as possible, with a minimum of one student from each of 15 different states, growing at least 20% per year.

Question 3: Can one town school apply or are you looking at a very broad population such as a semi large urban to apply?

Answer 3: Anyone can apply regardless of size, but Offerors must propose an approach that addresses the National Presence metric.

Question 4: Are you expecting the funded entity to partner with a university?

Answer 4: There are no expectations regarding partnerships. Proposals should focus on approaches to meet the metrics via the two program structure elements: student activities and organizational structure. A Teaming page is available at <https://www.csc-ballston.com/ra/CS-STEMTeaming.htm> for those interested in partnering.

Question 5: What is the difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement?

Answer 5: This RA is for Cooperative Agreements only. No grants will be issued. The major difference between the two is there *is* substantial involvement between the Government and the recipient during performance on a Cooperative Agreement.

Question 6: Page 5 states "In order to determine whether the proposed efforts can meet the project's goal, metrics will include continuity, national presence, and sustainability of a viable CS-STEM Education project." Can you describe what is meant by 'national presence' specifically for this RA?

Answer 6: In order for the CS-STEM Education project to have an effect, it is desirable that the proposed approach reach as many students as possible. Proposals will be evaluated, in part, based on their potential to engage a large number of students from a large number of states. 'National Presence', as a metric, is defined by having participation by at least one student in 15 or more states, growing by 20% per year.

Question 7: Are there 2 deadlines: 3/1 and 7/12?

Answer 7: Yes, but the initial deadline is March 1, 2010. The full proposal must be submitted by 1200 noon (ET) on 01 March 2010, in order to be considered during the initial evaluation phase. The final closing is July 12, 2010. While DARPA-RA-10-03 will remain open until 1200 noon (ET) 12 July 2010, offerors are warned that the likelihood of funding is greatly reduced for proposals submitted after the initial closing date.

Question 8: I was wondering if DARPA had any potential grants in the Computer Science area that would be appropriate for an individual school/district to apply for.

Answer 8: The best source for researching grant opportunities in Computer Science is Grants.gov.

Question 9: We wanted to clarify the Project Metric for National Presence. Does this mean the proposal must state how and involve youth from 15 different States within the U.S.?

Answer 9: Yes, the requirement is for at least one student from 15 or more U.S. states to participate.

Question 10: Could you please give me some guidance about how to go about getting involved in the DARPA initiative?

Answer 10: Please refer to the DARPA Teaming Page at <https://www.csc-ballston.com/ra/CS-STEMTeaming.htm>

Question 11: Are "for-profit" small business eligible to apply?

Answer 11: Yes

Question 12: If the answer to the above question is yes, will the proposing firm be able to commercialize the technology it develops to generate sales/profits?

Answer 12: The ability to commercialize technology derived from any potential Cooperative Agreement (CA) with the Government is dependent upon the intellectual property rights negotiated as part of the CA; however, for subject inventions, the Federal government shall have a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up license to practice or have practiced for or on behalf of the United States the subject invention throughout the world.

Question 13: What type of contract will the award be, i.e. fixed price, cost reimbursement, cost plus fixed fee, etc?

Answer 13: Cooperative Agreements are the ONLY vehicles being awarded and these are either Cost Share (not required) or Cost Reimbursement (no fee) arrangements.

Question 14: What is the payment schedule for Phase I, i.e. will proposed funds be given monthly, quarterly, etc., or is the payment schedule completely up to what is proposed by the submitting firm?

Answer 14: Payments are made on a Cost Reimbursement basis (usually monthly).

Question 15: In the funding profile section, there are two interpretations of "increasing at a rate of approximately \$500K per year". Please indicate which one was meant. YR1: \$1-\$2 million; YR2: \$1.5-\$2.5 million; YR3: \$2-3 million VERSUS YR1: \$1-\$2 million; YR2: \$500K; YR3: \$500K

Answer 15: Funding levels may be subject to change and are currently expected to be: YR1: \$1-\$2 million; YR2: \$1.5-\$2.5 million; YR3: \$2-3 million

Question 16: Page 8 indicates that phases will be 12-15 month in length, and that the first phase is anticipated to be longer. Figure 1 seems to suggest a specific pattern (i.e., 15 months followed by 12 then 12).

--> Does this mean that projects with three 15 month phases are probably too long?

--> Does the funding profile (which indicates funding by year) still apply (i.e., the first phase could be \$1.25 million to \$2.5 million), or was the funding profile intended to indicate levels by "phase" (i.e., the first phase could be \$1 to \$2 million).

Answer 16: An Offeror must propose a schedule commensurate with their technical approach, however, each Phase is anticipated to last 12-15 months. Phase 1 is expected to be slightly longer than the second and third phases to accommodate an initial recruitment and startup period. The funding allotted for Cooperative Agreements under this RA is approximately \$1-2 million for the first Phase (for each award), increasing at a rate of approximately \$500k each year".

Question 17: Is there an anticipated start date for the effort?

Answer 17: The start date will vary based on contract negotiations, human use panel constraints, and internal DARPA procedures, but is anticipated to start in mid July 2010.

Question 18: On page 6 it says: "Therefore, the age level range addressed by the proposed project should minimally start at middle school and continue through high school." How should we interpret 'minimally'? i.e., are you open to approaches that start at a younger age?

Answer 18: Yes, we are open to approaches that start at a younger age. Efforts to include a younger mix of students may detract from funding to be made available to the middle and high school students, and will be considered but proposals will be evaluated based solely on ability to reach and engage middle and high school students.

Question 19: On page 6: Reference: "by transitioning it to a nationally recognized CS-STEM Program after DARPA's involvement ends." The question regards the interpretation of 'transition'. Do you expect a 'transition' to another government agency who will fund further development/deployment via a formal

understanding/agreement (one typical interpretation of 'transition' at DARPA), or do you expect a 'self-funded' organization to be created.

Answer 19: Either funding approach would be acceptable. The key goal is once DARPA funding/involvement concludes the Offeror must have an approach to demonstrate how continued student activities will be viable. Whether a government funded approach, a 'self-funded' organization or some other means of funding the program, an Offeror's funding approach should be addressed in the proposed Sustainment Plan.

Question 20: Can a potential offeror bid as a prime on one proposal, and also bid as a subcontractor on a different proposal?

Answer 20: Yes

Question 21: The RA asks for many different things that are somewhat at odds with each other. Its biggest push is for a system of programming for kids that will increase their chances of becoming computationalists, and with that, the evaluation needed to make sure that is happening and learn how to make it happen better, and putting together of a small business to sustain the programming past the three years of DARPA funding. However, there is also a paragraph towards the end that discusses basic research. A well-developed research program related to CS education will eat into the funding available for putting a huge nation-wide set of formal and informal educational programs in place. What mix of the two do you envision?

Answer 21: The emphasis of the program is on the student activities and the organizational structure. Only a small fraction, if any, is anticipated to be proposed to devote to research.

Question 22: Key to making an endeavor like this work, some of us think, is keeping track longitudinally of how kids' interests evolve and change over many years and using that to refine the formal and informal educational programs that are offered. Yet there is only three years of funding available. Will there be additional funding after the three years for this endeavor, or is this set of tasks something that needs to be part of the plan for sustaining the effort?

Answer 22: Data collection about students, including changing attitudes and interests over time, should be considered as something that needs to be part of the plan for sustaining the effort. Funding is currently allocated for just over 3 years of effort. A successful approach will have a well defined Sustainability Plan indicating how the effort will proceed after DARPA involvement and funding ends.

Question 23: Everything we know about other large-scale programs addressed at engaging more kids in science or technology (e.g., FIRST, Computer Clubhouses) shows that it takes many more than three years to get something that is both meaningful and large-scale going (and that it takes far more than 7.5 million dollars). Is there really only three years of support for this? Can we put in options for additional years?

Would that be looked upon in a kindly way or not?

Answer 23: Funding is currently allocated for just over 3 years of effort. DARPA is not interested in options to extend the effort. Extended effort is derived from an Offeror's approach to sustainability and how the effort will proceed after DARPA involvement and funding ends.

Question 24: Some of us believe that you have to catch kids well before middle school to draw them into technical fields. What do you think about including efforts beginning in elementary school into the mix of proposed programming?

Answer 24: Our program focus is on middle and high school students. Efforts to include a younger mix of students may detract from funding to be made available to the middle and high school students, and will be considered but proposals will be evaluated based solely on ability to reach and engage middle and high school students.

Question 25: Just how large-scale are you looking for? Are you looking for proposals that address the whole of the call for proposals or smaller proposals that do a good job at some smaller piece of it (say, informal programs or high-school programs)?

Answer 25: Proposal packages should focus on approaches to meet the metrics (Continuity, National Presence, Sustainability, and Retention) via a clear, substantiated, comprehensive approach toward Student Activities and Organizational Structure program elements. In other words, you need to address the whole program. If your organization may be able to do a good job at a small piece of this puzzle, visit the teaming page at <https://www.csc-ballston.com/ra/CS-STEMTeaming.htm>

Question 26: Are you primarily looking for responses from academia or would a submission for industry also be considered?

Answer 26: DARPA is looking for proposal submissions from any organization that can propose innovative new ideas to encourage students to major in CS-STEM and pursue careers as engineers and scientists. The intention is to include folks from academia, industry, and non-profits. Ideally, we will have participation from a team of folks from each of these categories. As a result, I strongly encourage you to post information about your company on our teaming page: <https://www.csc-ballston.com/ra/CS-STEMTeaming.htm>

Question 27: Our education programs could consider informal programming that occurs during formal classroom time. How does DARPA see this type of programming?

Answer 27: DARPA is soliciting proposals for Student Activities that occur *outside* the classroom. Therefore, programs that include formal classroom activities will not be satisfying the requirement for Student Activities.

Question 28: The proposal states that we are to have as many students as possible and at least 1 student for a minimum of 15 states. In the proposal format instructions, the sustainability plan allows 2 pages for letters of

recommendation for partners. However, this would be inadequate to support letters from every participating student or school or other partners for a project of this scope (assuming 1 page per participant). So how does DARPA expect us to handle letters of participation? Is there unlimited space for these or does DARPA not required letters of participation to be submitted with the proposal?

Answer 28: The page limitations for the Appendices to the Sustainability Plan increased from 2 pages to 5 pages. This change was reflected in an amendment to the RA on 17 Feb 2010. See www.fbo.gov and www.grants.gov.

Question 29: Does DoD allow stipends for the students for their work on Saturdays and Summer?

Answer 29: The answer to this question depends on whether the stipends are for students performing "contractually" under the Cooperative Agreement or not. Several other factors that affect the answer include: whether the associated costs are allowable; the status of your organization (e.g. educational institution, state or local government, non-profit, for profit, etc.); your organization's Cost Accounting Standards coverage, if any; and possibly others. The best way to address this issue is to contact your local Defense Contract Management Administration, Defense Contract Audit Agency or Office of Naval Research office with cognizance over your organization.

Question 30: The problem of low enrollment of students in undergraduate computing is explained in the RA. Is it necessary to present the problem in section 2.3 or elsewhere in the proposal? Or is the approach to solving the problem all that is needed?

Answer 30: It is necessary to fully document your proposed approach. Each Proposal Section provides specific details for what should be addressed in your proposal.

Question 31: Under the "Top Level Sustainability Plan" description, the last item is "Appendices [2 pages]." Which of the following interpretations is correct:

* Appendices can be added, but no more than a total of two pages, limiting the Sustainability Plan to 10 pages

* Appendices can be added, each totaling two pages, making the Sustainability Plan 8 pages + total pages of all appendices

Answer 31: The total page limitation for the Sustainability Plan is 13 pages which includes 5 pages for appendices. This change was reflected in an amendment to the RA on 17 Feb 2010. See www.fbo.gov and www.grants.gov.

Question 32: If no more than two pages are allowed for Sustainability Plan appendices, how can we demonstrate the commitment of multiple partners?

Answer 32: The page limitations for the Appendices to the Sustainability Plan increased from 2 pages to 5 pages. This change was reflected in an amendment to the RA on 17 Feb 2010. See www.fbo.gov and www.grants.gov.

Question 33: Marketing and promotion costs are usually unallowable under FAR.

Given this effort, will we have to have a marketing component in the form of community outreach? Would those efforts be considered allowable direct costs under the contract?

Answer 33: The answer to this question depends on several factors including: the status of your organization (e.g. educational institution, state or local government, non-profit, for profit, etc.); your organization's Cost Accounting Standards coverage, if any; the underlying cost principles your organization is subject to (Educational Institutions - 2CFR220; State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments - 2CFR225; Non-Profit Organizations - 2CFR230 and all other organizations - 48CFR32) and possibly others. The best way to address this issue is to contact your local Defense Contract Management Administration, Defense Contract Audit Agency or Office of Naval Research office with cognizance over your organization.

Question 34: If we have several letters of recommendation or support, can we attach them in a separate appendix?

Answer 34: No. The page limitations for the Appendices to the Sustainability Plan increased from 2 pages to 5 pages. This change was reflected in an amendment to the RA on 17 Feb 2010. See www.fbo.gov and www.grants.gov.

Question 35: Can we attach scientific references in an appendix or must they fit in the technical approach or sustainability plan sections?

Note: The instructions in the RA say that "Approaches and conclusions should be clearly substantiated, and assumptions should be clearly supported." which means a need for a reasonable number of citations.

Answer 35: The page counts are strict limitations, and references must be included within the allotted page counts. Technical references should be included in the Technical Approach section, Sustainability references should be included in the Sustainability Plan section.

Question 36: I have a couple of questions regarding the grants.gov package I downloaded as none of the guidelines seem to go with the forms in the package. (1) If we are using grants.gov, do the files have to be zipped and encrypted before we upload them into the grants.gov portal? They are usually PDF files. (2) When I went to extract the subcontract files, the form that was attached is the one the instructions said "do not use". Should I just use the standard subcontract form? It is not included with the package but we have this particular form in our files. (3) The form to upload the sub contract files only has 10 spots to upload. If we have more than 10 subs, should the rest of the budgets get uploaded under the Attachments form? (4) The RA states in section 2.8 the information required for key personnel. Should we eliminate the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile form from the application? (5) The Place and Periods of Performance are included on the Cost Proposal Cover Sheet. The "Other Project Information Form" also does not seem to fit this solicitation. Should we eliminate these forms from the Grants.gov Application?

Answer 36: For answers to these questions, please contact grants.gov (see <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>).