



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers

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## **SECTION I: LETTER OF INTENT**

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**1. Can the PI of proposal be different from the site director?**

No. The PI of the proposal is the site director.

**2. Does the PI need to be tenured?**

Yes, but an exception can be made in cases where proper justification is provided by the department chair and/or dean of the college.

**3. Is Letter of Intent (LOI) submission mandatory?**

Yes. We encourage discussion with an I/UCRC program director before submitting a LOI.

**4. We need to submit a LOI for the addition of a new site to an existing center?**

Yes, the planned new site must submit a LOI.

**5. Does each institution intending to join the center need to submit a separate LOI?**

Each planned site must submit an LOI via FastLane. The entries with the same title and with complementary descriptions of the contributions to the planned center will be identified and considered together.

**6. Can I suggest any topic for the creation of the center?**

Read the solicitation very carefully. A center may be created around a topic that is addressed by an existing center, provided that there is not more than 10% overlap in technical content with any existing center.

## **SECTION II: PLANNING GRANT**

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**7. For a planning grant proposal for the addition of a new site to an existing center, are letters needed from the center and its Industry Advisory Board (IAB)?**

Yes. The planning grant proposal requires a letter of support from the center director stating how the new site complements the existing center. The proposal must also have a letter from the IAB chair stating the value the new site represents and that the new site addition was vetted and approved by the IAB.

**8. What is the budget for the planning grant proposal?**

Per the solicitation, for new centers, up to \$11,500, inclusive of all indirect costs, may be requested by each I/UCRC site for allowable expenses associated with the planning activity and attendance of the I/UCRC Boot Camp. For new sites to existing centers, \$10,000, inclusive of all indirect costs,

may be requested for each new site for allowable planning activity expenses. In all cases, the lead site must request an additional \$3,000 plus applicable indirect costs for the evaluator. Note that the solicitation requires that the \*entire\* \$3,000 must be paid to the evaluator.

**9. If a company sends more than one representative to the planning grant meeting, should all of them be present in the closed room meeting?**

Yes. All representatives present should attend the closed session of the planning meeting to add to the discussion.

**10. What is the optimal number of project presentations at the planning grant meeting?**

10 - 12 at most. Each project presentation could be of 10-15 minute duration, followed by 5 minutes for Q&A and 5 minutes for LIFE (Level of Interest and Feedback Evaluation) Form completion.

**11. What happens after the planning grant meeting?**

At the planning grant meeting, the group will come up with the plan of action (e.g., distribution of updated center materials and project executive summaries, ranking of revised projects, deadline for commitment letters) and timetable required to submit the full proposal.

**12. How many companies should be present at the planning meeting?**

The number of companies depends upon the number of sites and topical area, but we suggest 30 - 35 attendees. Seating should be designed such that there is more opportunity for face-to-face discussions.

**13. Can the planning grant proposal step be skipped?**

Never in the case of a new center. In the case of a new site addition to an existing center, consideration of direct submission of the full proposal submission may be given only when the potential site has in hand all commitment letters, meets the minimum membership requirements, and has the approval of the IAB and center.

### **SECTION III: FULL CENTER OR NEW SITE ADDITION PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

**14. If the holding company joins the center, does that automatically grant membership to the subsidiaries?**

Yes, but each membership has a fixed number of votes. If they do indeed qualify as a subsidiary, the pertinent clause regarding IP rights from the member entity holds. Please see the sample membership agreement.

**15. Do I account for membership fees in our full center/site proposal NSF budget?**

No. The NSF budget is only for your proposed expenditure of NSF award funds. Direct charges to NSF funds are subject to your institution's full applicable indirect rate. An estimate of your membership fee total is only used in your calculation of cost share and for your all-funds center budget summary (see [Question 16](#)).

**16. What is the all-funds budget referred to in the solicitation?**

This is a table that shows your expected operating budget for the center over the entire 5 year award period. It reflects all expected center income each year from membership fees, the NSF award and other sources as well as expected outlays for projects, center operation, semiannual meetings, staffing, etc.

**17. Is there a template for the letters from the industry?**

No. Letters should be unique to each industry. As a suggestion, the first paragraph should clearly state "I will join the center at .....level of membership". The next paragraph should describe why the company wants to become member of this center and its research interests. The last paragraph is a closing paragraph.

**18. What is the submission process for Phase III proposal?**

The Phase III submission process is identical to that for the Phase II renewal process. Please be sure to read the solicitation, especially the proposal preparation section.

**19. Where can I find the best practices information?**

See the section "operating the center" on the I/UCRC website, <http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/iucr/>.

**SECTION IV: INTERNATIONAL SUPPLEMENT**

**20. If a center applies for renewal (e.g., a center applying for a Phase II award), can it apply again for the international supplement? In other words, can Phase II and Phase III centers also get \$25K per year international supplement?**

Any center in good standing, regardless of its phase, can apply. However, note that the international supplement has to be renewed each year. The renewal is based on accomplishments, student participation, etc.

**21. How much of the \$25K is for the evaluator support? Is this evaluator support in addition to the cost already included in the main award?**

The \$25K is provided to cover both the costs of the evaluator travel to the international site to attend the IAB meeting AND the costs of student travel to the international site. The travel support for the evaluator is in addition to the cost already included in the main award.

**22. If the IAB meetings are held in the US for the remaining award period, must we still budget for evaluator travel in the international supplement request?**

No. Funding of evaluator travel to the international site is only required if the IAB meeting is held at the international site.

**23. Can the international supplement be used for exchange visits between the US and foreign counterpart at the discretion of center director?**

No. Funds can only be used for the evaluator and US students and faculty. No funds should be used for the international counterpart.

**24. Can the international supplement funds also used for**

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