NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

NSF 16-062

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Innovation-Corps (I-Corps) Nodes Program for Submission in Year 2016

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Innovation Corps (I-Corps) Node Program Solicitation. They are not intended to be a modification of the Program Solicitation. If there are any inconsistencies between the I-Corps Node Program Solicitation and these FAQs, the information in the Program Solicitation prevails.

For general submission information to the I-Corps Node program solicitation refer to the NSF proposal submission guidelines including the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) at: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg.

FastLane FAQ's can be found at:
https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#fastlane_faqs_introduction.htm

NSF Guide to Programs (for descriptions of NSF's research-supporting programs):
https://www.nsf.gov/funding/browse_all_funding.jsp

This document is organized according to the appropriate headings.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Whom should I contact to discuss my ideas for an I-Corps Node Program proposal?
2. I am a current PI on an I-Corps Site. Can my institution submit an application for an I-Corps Node?
3. I am submitting an application as the PI for my institution. May I also participate as a partner, PI, or co-PI on another application?
4. The I-Corps Node Program Solicitation states that a proposer must be at the Dean-level or higher. As the Director of a University incubator or commercial technology office, am I eligible to apply?
5. My institution is the lead organization on an existing I-Corps Node, may I apply as a new node?
6. My institution has an I-Corps Node, may I apply as a partner with an additional new or renewal node proposal?

LETTER OF INTENT

7. Is the Letter of Intent (LOI) submission mandatory?
8. Does each institution in a multi-institution node need to submit a separate LOI?
9. Does the PI need to be at the Dean-level or higher?
10. Can the partners, PI, or co-PIs change between the LOI submission and proposal submission?

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

BUDGET PREPARATION

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

PROPOSAL REVIEW

ANNOUNCEMENT

ELIGIBILITY

1. **Whom should I contact to discuss my ideas for an I-Corps Node Program proposal?**

   The I-Corps Node Program cognizant program officer is:

   Lydia McClure, telephone: 703-292-8798, email: lmcclure@nsf.gov

2. **I am a current PI on an I-Corps Site. Can my institution submit an application for an I-Corps Node?**

   Yes, your institution may submit an application. A different PI from the I-Corps Site must submit the I-Corps Node application.

3. **I am submitting an application as the PI for my institution. May I also participate as a partner, PI, or co-PI on another application?**

   No, the PI may not participate in any other LOI.

4. **The I-Corps Node Program Solicitation states that a proposer must be at the Dean-level or higher. As the**

Director of a University incubator or commercial technology office, am I eligible to apply?

No, the PI must be an academic Administrative Lead at the level of Dean or higher, preferably at the level of a provost or vice president.

5. **My institution is the lead organization on an existing I-Corps Node, may I apply as a new node?**

No, an institution with an existing Node may only participate in a Track 2 proposal submission when applying with the same or similar Node organizational structure.

6. **My institution has an I-Corps Node, may I apply as a partner with an additional new or renewal node proposal?**

No, organizations may only be associated with one I-Corps Node that is receiving NSF I-Corps Node funding at a given time.

LETTER OF INTENT

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

Yes, applicants for the new and renewal node program must submit a LOI. We encourage discussion with the I-Corps program director before submitting a LOI.

8. **Does each institution in a multi-institution node need to submit a separate LOI?**

No, only the Lead institution must submit the LOI. In the synopsis of the LOI, the lead institution must list the partnering institutions and the representative PI/Co-PIs of the proposed Node.

9. **Does the PI need to be at the Dean-level or higher?**

Yes, the PI for the institution (or of each institution for a multi-institutional node) must currently hold a position at the level of Dean or higher, preferably at the level of a provost or vice president.

10. **Can the partners, PI, or co-PIs change between the LOI submission and proposal submission?**

No, the PI or co-PIs must not change between submission of the LOI and the full proposal. Multi-institutional Nodes may not change their partner Universities or PI/co-PIs.

Non-funded partners do not need to be included in the LOI submission and may be changed if included between the LOI and proposal submissions.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

11. **What elements are required in the 15-page project description to submit the I-Corps Node Program proposal and which have page limitations?**

The project description of the I-Corps Node proposal should include a compelling story to describe the proposer's Level 1, 2, and 3 contributions, logic model, plan for sustainment, plan for coordination with I-Corps Sites, and the

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broader impacts of the proposed activities. The project description is limited to 15 pages. You can decide the length of description for each element.

12. **What are the expectations for describing contributions and activities in the full proposal?**

Expression of an in-depth knowledge of the I-Corps curriculum, delivery process, and network are expected. Both Track 1 and Track 2 proposals are expected to have a well-argued and specific proposal for activities over a 5-year period that will build a firm foundation for the I-Corps Node contributing entrepreneurial education, network infrastructure, and research to academic innovation. The proposal should also illustrate a strong history of supporting entrepreneurial success.

13. **What documentation should I submit to show collaborative efforts with I-Corps Sites?**

Letters of Collaboration from all partnering institutions (at the level of a Dean or higher) must be provided as Supplementary Documents. These letters should only attest to collaborations. Do not include letters of endorsement. Please see GPG Chapter II.C.2.J for additional guidance on preparing Letters of Collaboration.

14. **I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 15-page limit on the length of the project description. Can I submit this information as an appendix?**

No, elements of the project description must be contained within the 15-page limit. However, the Logic Model and Letters of Collaboration from all partnering institutions should be submitted as Supplementary Documents.

BUDGET PREPARATION

15. **Can I-Corps Node Program funding be used for legal expenses during commercialization?**

No, I-Corps Node Program funding cannot be used for commercialization legal expenses.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

16. **What if my proposal is submitted after the submission deadline?**

Only proposals submitted by the submission deadline will be accepted for review.

17. **I am having problems submitting my proposal and the deadline is almost here? Who should I contact?**

Issues and questions related to the NSF FastLane system should be directed to the FastLane User Support desk at (800) 673-6188. You can also send an e-mail message to fastlane@nsf.gov. For information on the availability of the NSF FastLane system, phone (800) 437-7408 for a recorded message. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov contact center by phone at (800) 518-4726 or by email at support@grants.gov. If FastLane or Grants.Gov is unable to resolve the submission problem and you cannot submit your proposal by the deadline, please make sure to get documentation that you tried to contact these support centers before your deadline. For NSF to consider a deadline extension you must provide NSF with supporting documentation from FastLane or Grants.gov that there was a problem with the system at the time of submission that could not be resolved in time. A possible slowdown of these systems due to volume is not a valid reason for an extension. PIs are strongly encouraged to submit their I-Corps Node program proposals well in advance of the deadline to allow time to correct any problems that may occur

in the submission process.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

18. **In addition to the two NSF merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts), what other factors will be considered in the review process?**

    Additional solicitation specific review criteria will include demonstration of:

    a. Command of the currently-deployed I-Corps curriculum;
    b. Support from institution leadership;
    c. Coordination of innovation research, education, and commercial development programs across the network;
    d. An appropriate mixture of geographically distributed personnel and institutions that provide diverse and complementary capabilities to support current and anticipated needs for fostering innovation across a broad spectrum of science and engineering domains;
    e. An effective management structure to ensure close linkage and cooperation among the nodes such as they operate as a cohesive national network;
    f. Seamless methods of network operation that support projects across the network, through development and utilization of compatible internet-based networking/collaboration tools;
    g. Ability and success in the dissemination of shared knowledge to research and development communities;
    h. The promotion of diversity among students, faculty, staff, management, and outreach activities;
    i. Methods for assessment and metrics of node/network performance and impact;
    j. Planning processes to accommodate emerging areas and future growth of external/internal node participants, (e.g., adding/removing participants to/from the network);
    k. Sustainability plan by fostering additional support from non-NSF sources, including Federal agencies, State governments, and the private sector;
    l. Coordination with I-Corps Sites and other partners in the geographical region.

ANNOUNCEMENT

19. **Will there be a response to the LOI?**

    No, there will be no official response from NSF regarding the LOI.