NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 21-105

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Predictive Intelligence for Pandemic Prevention Phase I: Development Grants (PIPP Phase I) (NSF 21-590)

1. When is the Webinar? How can I access webinar materials?

2. Is it required that an envisioned center be multi-organizational? How important is this? How many organizations should be involved in a center?

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9. What constitutes a grand challenge (GC)?

10. In any future (related) PIPP Center program solicitations, will such a competition be restricted to PIPP Phase I development grant awardees?

11. Can I send a short summary of my proposed idea to one of the program officers along with a specific question I may have related to the project idea?

12. Is it possible to schedule a meeting with one or more of the program officers to discuss my proposed idea?

13. I have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ. Should I contact one of the listed program officers?

14. Four potential research areas are listed in the program solicitation. Is the program restricted to these four "themes"?

15. Workshops from early 2021 are mentioned in the program solicitation. Can we obtain materials or proceedings of the workshops?

16. Can we deviate from the 18-month duration mentioned in the program solicitation?

17. Our team is focusing not on pandemic prevention, but on the prevention of other disasters (such as energy shortage, natural disasters, food supply, etc.). Is this permissible?

18. Are any areas of research, such as artificial intelligence, a required component of a PIPP Phase I proposal?

19. I understand that PIPP stands for Predictive Intelligence for Pandemic Prevention. My team's perspective is that pandemics are not preventable. Is that perspective welcome in the pursuit of a given grand challenge?

20. One of our senior personnel (or PI/co-PI) is also participating on another PIPP Phase I development grant proposal. Is this permissible?

21. I need help in forming a team. Where can I get more information?

22. Is it possible to provide any funding to industrial collaborators?

23. Can Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) participate in proposals to this solicitation?

24. How does NSF view international collaboration?

25. Can a foreign institution, as a partner or subcontractor, be financed with funds from a development grant award?

26. Can an existing "institute" or "center" participate in a proposal to this program?

27. We have industry partners that may serve as subawardees. May they apply indirect costs to their budgets?

28. What is the limit on budgetary allocation to a subawardee or consultant?

29. To which division should I submit my proposal?

30. Can you provide more information on the review process that will be used to evaluate proposals? How will proposals that touch on multiple research areas be reviewed?

31. What is the proposed size and number of actual center grants to be funded (following the development grants)?

32. What relationship is expected between the development grants awarded in PIPP Phase

1. **When is the Webinar? How can I access webinar materials?**

   The Webinar was held on July 13, 2021, 2-4 pm EST. Please check the program web page https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505908 for webinar materials (slide, recordings, transcripts).

2. **Is it required that an envisioned center be multi-organizational? How important is this? How many organizations should be involved in a center?**

   This program encourages multi-organizational efforts but does not require such. Teams should be designed to achieve the goals of the grand challenge (GC) and to demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion in composition and leadership.

3. **Would a development grant proposal from a single organization (with no or few subawards) be competitive?**

   Refer to the answer in FAQ 2 above. It is possible (and permissible) for an organization to propose such an arrangement without the need for subawards to partner organizations. Such a proposal should make a strong case that the goals embodied in the solicitation are best achieved in the manner proposed. To assess the potential competitiveness of a proposal, please note the solicitation-specific review criteria.

4. **Does a proposal need to incorporate the research areas supported by the participating NSF Directorates?**

Proposals are encouraged to integrate research across the BIO, CISE, ENG and SBE directorates and be compelling across the subdisciplines spanned. Projects that do not engage teams with participation adequate to address the grand challenge stated by considering a multitude of disciplines from computer and information science, biology, engineering, and social, behavioral, and economic sciences are not encouraged.

5. **Can members (including PIs and co-PIs) be added to the envisioned center AFTER the development grant proposal is submitted and potentially funded?**

   Yes. One of the stated activities for the PIPP Phase I development grants is filling gaps in expertise.

6. **Are medical/health researchers required or encouraged?**

   No restriction is in place regarding the associated fields of the researchers on the team. NSF encourages the formation of a team that fits the proposed Grand Challenge. See also FAQ 4.

7. **Is the focus of the PIPP Phase I program on the COVID-19 pandemic?**

   The focus is on the future, and research can include pandemics in all organisms, including humans, other animals, or plants. A PIPP Phase I project can cover any of these areas, and may use lessons learned and data gathered from COVID-19, but is not limited to COVID-19.

8. **Is the participation of the PIs or co-PIs in the past PIPP workshops required to submit to this solicitation?**

   No.

9. **What constitutes a grand challenge (GC)?**

   A grand challenge is an ambitious, difficult, but achievable goal with important and valuable impacts when achieved. A GC requires coordinated strategies and integrated collaborations from multiple disciplines with outcomes that are larger and more impactful.

10. **In any future (related) PIPP Center program solicitations, will such a competition be restricted to PIPP Phase I development grant awardees?**

    No.

11. **Can I send a short summary of my proposed idea to one of the program officers along with a specific question I may have related to the project idea?**

Yes, please send a one-page summary to PIPP@nsf.gov. Please do not send your summary to an individual program officer or to multiple specific program officers. Use PIPP@nsf.gov. Emails that do not use PIPP@nsf.gov will not be considered. See also FAQ 13.

12. **Is it possible to schedule a meeting with one or more of the program officers to discuss my proposed idea?**

    No. Please use PIPP@nsf.gov to communicate with PIPP program officers; see FAQ 11.

13. **I have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ. Should I contact one of the listed program officers?**

    We encourage you to send your question(s) to PIPP@nsf.gov.

14. **Four potential research areas are listed in the program solicitation. Is the program restricted to these four "themes"?**

    The program is not restricted to just those four themes. See FAQ 4. Additional questions should go to PIPP@nsf.gov.

15. **Workshops from early 2021 are mentioned in the program solicitation. Can we obtain materials or proceedings of the workshops?**

    Yes, please find links to the individual workshop websites and materials here: https://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=302023&org=NSF.

16. **Can we deviate from the 18-month duration mentioned in the program solicitation?**

    Commensurate with the scope of the solicitation and the timeline for a future potential Phase II solicitation, we strongly suggest an 18-month duration.

17. **Our team is focusing not on pandemic prevention, but on the prevention of other disasters (such as energy shortage, natural disasters, food supply, etc.). Is this permissible?**

    No. The PIPP program is focused on pandemic prevention with a particular focus on those caused by disease-causing organisms.

18. **Are any areas of research, such as artificial intelligence, a required component of a PIPP Phase I proposal?**

    No, although the proposal must be responsive to the solicitation

19. **I understand that PIPP stands for Predictive Intelligence for Pandemic Prevention. My team's perspective is that pandemics are not preventable. Is that perspective welcome in the pursuit of a given grand challenge?**

    Yes, PIPP program welcomes all perspectives and also encourages basic research that does not presume any specific answers or outcomes.

20. **One of our senior personnel (or PI/co-PI) is also participating on another PIPP Phase I development grant proposal. Is this permissible?**

    An individual may be designated as PI or co-PI on only ONE project team submitting to this solicitation.

21. **I need help in forming a team. Where can I get more information?**

    One of the purposes of the early 2021 PIPP workshops was to provide ideas and show opportunities in team forming.

    Please refer to the posted material and videos from the PIPP workshops for insight and ideas on interdisciplinary team building. https://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=302023&org=NSF

22. **Is it possible to provide any funding to industrial collaborators?**

    Yes, it is allowable to include a for-profit organization as a subawardee to a planning grant proposal. Please consult the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) for guidance on subawards (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2gvie).

23. **Can Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) participate in proposals to this solicitation?**

    FFRDCs are not eligible as proposing (lead) organizations.

    In general, NSF does not normally support research or education activities by scientists, engineers or educators employed by Federal agencies or FFRDCs. However, FFRDCs may, under certain circumstances, be included as subawardees to proposals to this program. The PAPPG provides guidance on the circumstances under which this is appropriate (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_1.jsp#IE7).

24. **How does NSF view international collaboration?**

    NSF promotes international collaboration when it provides U.S. students and researchers the opportunity to benefit from foreign expertise and/or from resources, equipment, data and geographically-based phenomena that are located abroad. PIs are

encouraged to consider how international engagement can enhance effectiveness of the proposed research and includes the potential to develop a globally-engaged U.S. workforce. NSF encourages a close working arrangement with local scientists and engineers in all international components of research projects. Projects in a foreign country should be designed to be of mutual benefit and must encourage wide distribution of the resulting materials, data, analyses, and publications within the host country as well as in the U.S.

25. **Can a foreign institution, as a partner or subcontractor, be financed with funds from a development grant award?**

The PIPP Phase I Development initiative broadly welcomes but does not require that projects include international collaborations. It is expected that any non-U.S. participants will secure support from their own national programs. However, international subawards may be included if the investigators bring unique research and training expertise and/or resources not available in the U.S. Information about international subawards is available in PAPPG Chapter I.E.6. (See https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_1.jsp#IE6).

26. **Can an existing "institute" or "center" participate in a proposal to this program?**

There is no restriction regarding how an existing institute or center may participate in a proposal to this program. Any envisioned center funded in this program is expected to build significant new capacity as outlined in the review criteria for the program. This includes proposals that build upon or collaborate with existing organizations, including existing institutes or centers. Proposers are reminded that as a network of multiple organizations that together serve as nexus points for collaborative efforts, proposed centers must be meaningfully integrated in such a way that it creates a capability that is more than just the sum of the parts.

27. **We have industry partners that may serve as subawardees. May they apply indirect costs to their budgets?**

Please see the PAPPG for guidance on indirect costs for subawardees (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2gvie).

28. **What is the limit on budgetary allocation to a subawardee or consultant?**

No limit is imposed by the program or the PAPPG. This is to be determined by the proposing organization; the merit of the arrangement will be evaluated by reviewers and the participating NSF Directorates.

29. **To which division should I submit my proposal?**

All proposals will be submitted to the **CISE Division of Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF)**. When you are preparing your proposal, you will find that this is the only available Unit of Consideration for submissions.

30. **Can you provide more information on the review process that will be used to evaluate proposals? How will proposals that touch on multiple research areas be reviewed?**

    All information about proposal processing and review is provided in Section VI of the solicitation.

31. **What is the proposed size and number of actual center grants to be funded (following the development grants)?**

    NSF does not comment on the content of unpublished funding opportunities. We can say that at NSF currently, center grants range in size from $1 million to $5 million per year, over five years.

32. **What relationship is expected between the development grants awarded in PIPP Phase I and future center solicitations?**

    NSF does not comment on the content of unpublished funding opportunities.

33. **I have a question about the requirements for sections of the proposal listed in the NSF PAPPG (e.g., Budget and Budget Justification, Current and Pending Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources) that are not addressed in the solicitation.**

    The solicitation addresses only deviations from the PAPPG, including program-specific considerations for certain sections. Where not otherwise addressed, submissions must conform fully to the Proposal Preparation Instructions outlined in the NSF PAPPG, including all required sections of the proposal (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp).

34. **Is there a limit on the number of PIs, co-PIs, or Senior Personnel on my proposal?**

    The proposal cover page does limit the number to one PI and up to 4 co-PIs and any remaining participants can be listed as Senior Personnel.

35. **Can individuals from organizations other than the lead (submitting) organization be listed as co-PI?**

    The following guidance for submission of a collaborative proposal from one organization is contained in the PAPPG (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IID3):

"The single proposal method allows investigators from two or more organizations who have developed an integrated research project to submit a single, focused proposal. A single investigator bears primary responsibility for the administration of the grant and discussions with NSF, and, at the discretion of the organizations involved, investigators from any of the participating organizations may be designated as co-PIs. Note, however, that if awarded, a single award would be made to the submitting organization, with any collaborators listed as subawards. (See Chapter II.C.2.g(vi)(e) for additional instructions on preparation of this type of proposal.)"

36. **What is NSF's guidance regarding collaborations with a partner who would not be a subawardee, but instead an unfunded collaborator, and in which case such a collaborator might agree to provide their own funding or other sources of support to the institute?**

    The NSF guidelines for unfunded collaborations apply. Please follow the policy/guidance in the PAPPG: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2.

    Take care also to not structure this as voluntary committed cost sharing, which is prohibited: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2gxii.

37. **Are letters of interest/support from individuals or organizations permitted?**

    This program does NOT allow the submission of letters of endorsement. Letters of collaboration are permitted. Please consult the PAPPG for this distinction and for guidance on submission of letters of collaboration: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2j.