



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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**NSF 23-144**

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Predictive Intelligence for Pandemic Prevention Phase II (PIPP Phase II Centers Program)

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

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2. What is the anticipated funding amount for each center?
3. What is the limit on the number of proposals an organization can submit?
4. What is the limit on the number of proposals an individual may serve on as PI, co-PI or other senior personnel?
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7. 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 center?
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## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

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19. How can one ask additional questions that are not addressed in this FAQ?
20. To which NSF directorate and division should the PIPP Phase II Centers Program proposal be submitted?
21. Where can one find more information on the review process used to evaluate Phase II Centers Program proposals and how proposals that touch on multiple research areas be reviewed?
22. What are the requirements for sections of the proposal that are listed in the NSF PAPPG (e.g., Budget and Budget Justification, Current and Pending (Other) Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources) that are not addressed in the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation?
23. Can individuals from organizations other than the lead (submitting) organization be listed as co-PI?
24. Are letters of commitment from individuals or organizations permitted?

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1. Is prior PIPP Phase I funding required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation?**

Submission or award of a development grant (PIPP Phase I) is not required to participate in the PIPP Phase II Centers Program competition.

**2. What is the anticipated funding amount for each center?**

NSF anticipates making 4 to 7 awards in the amount of \$15 - \$18M each (total over 7 years).

**3. What is the limit on the number of proposals an organization can submit?**

An organization may submit no more than one Letter of Intent to this solicitation as the lead organization. An organization may submit up to one full proposal that corresponds to a Letter of Intent submitted to the solicitation.

**4. What is the limit on the number of proposals an individual may serve on as PI, co-PI or other senior personnel?**

An individual may be designated as PI or co-PI (this does not include non PI/co-PI senior personnel) on at most one full proposal to this solicitation. A PIPP Phase II Centers full proposal may have a maximum of 4 co-PIs, and a balanced number (as deemed necessary for a successful project) of Other Senior Project Personnel are permitted.

**5. What types of organizations are eligible to submit a proposal?**

As the PIPP solicitation (NSF 23-608) states, proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) - Two- and four-year IHEs (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Special Instructions for International Branch Campuses of US IHEs: If the proposal includes funding to be provided to an international branch campus of a US institution of higher education (including through use of subawards and consultant arrangements), the proposer must explain the benefit(s) to the project of performance at the international branch campus and justify why the project activities cannot be performed at the US campus.
- Non-profit, non-academic organizations: Independent museums, observatories, research labs, professional societies and similar organizations in the U.S.

associated with educational or research activities.

## COLLABORATIONS

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**6. Is it possible to request funding for for-profit organizations or federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs)?**

For-profit organizations or FFRDCs can only participate as subawardees.

**7. 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 center?**

Per the guidance in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG), any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal and documented in a letter of collaboration.

**8. How can international collaboration fit in a PIPP Phase II Centers Program proposal?**

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.

**9. Can a foreign organization, as a partner or subawardee, be funded by the PIPP Phase II Centers Program award?**

The PIPP Phase II Centers Program 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. NSF will consider subawards or consultant arrangements to foreign organizations if there is sufficient justification that the investigators bring unique research and training expertise and/or resources not available in the U.S. Information about subawards to or consultant arrangements with foreign organizations is available in the PAPPG.

- 10. Is the PIPP Phase II Centers proposal required to be multi-organizational? If so, how many organizations should be involved in a center?**

PIPP Phase II Centers Program encourages multi-organizational efforts but does not require such efforts. If a proposal involves multiple organizations, it must be submitted as a single proposal with subawards to other participating organizations. Separately submitted collaborative proposals are not permitted and will be returned without review.

- 11. Can an existing "institute" or "center" participate in a proposal to the PIPP Phase II Centers program?**

Yes. There is no restriction regarding how an existing institute or center may participate in a proposal to PIPP Phase II Centers program. Any envisioned center funded by 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.

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

No limit is imposed by the PIPP Phase II Centers program or the PAPPG. The budget allocation should be determined based on what resources the proposing organization needs to carry out their work. The relation between the scope of the research and the budget will be evaluated by reviewers and NSF.

## **SCIENTIFIC SCOPE**

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- 13. Is the focus of the PIPP Phase II Centers program on the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The PIPP initiative focuses on foundational research and development activities needed to tackle grand challenges in infectious disease pandemics through prediction and prevention. Research may relate to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this is not a requirement.

- 14. Is a proposal focusing on the prevention of other disasters (such as energy shortage, natural disasters, food supply, etc.) rather than pandemic prevention responsive to the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation?**

No. The PIPP initiative focuses on fundamental research and development activities needed to tackle grand challenges in infectious disease pandemics through prediction and prevention.

**15. Is the PIPP Phase II Centers program restricted to the four themes listed in the solicitation?**

Successful Centers will be motivated by clear and compelling foundational and *interdisciplinary research questions and pursue activities that are focused in at least one of the four themes listed below*. While each theme has a clear focus in some disciplines, *research and development activities must draw together data, theory, tools, infrastructure, and ideas that cross all relevant disciplinary boundaries (e.g., environmental, biological, chemical, physical, materials, social, behavioral, economic, mathematical, computer and information science and/or engineering science)* and reflect this in balanced expertise on the team of collaborators and participants. Connectivity to other themes may be pointed out in the proposal.

Themes:

Theme 1: Pre-emergence – Predicting and detecting rare events in complex, dynamical systems;

Theme 2: Data, AI/ML and Design - Computing, manufacturing and technology innovation for pandemics;

Theme 3: The Host as the Universe - Identifying host-pathogen tipping points that dictate control or spread of an infection;

Theme 4: Human Systems – The role of human behavior, activities and environments in disease emergence, transmission, and response or mitigation.

**16. Are there any areas of research that are required to be present in a PIPP Phase II Centers Program proposal?**

Yes. The solicitation outlines four themes and the research should be responsive to at least one of these four areas. While each theme has a clear focus in some disciplines, research and development activities must draw together data, theory, tools, infrastructure and ideas that cross all relevant disciplinary boundaries (e.g., environmental, biological, chemical, physical, materials, social, behavioral, economic, mathematical, computer and information science and/or engineering science) and reflect this in balanced expertise on the team of collaborators and participants.

**17. Does the PIPP Phase II Centers Program proposal have to include research that is thematically part of the BIO, ENG, CISE and SBE Directorates at NSF?**

No. In the previous PIPP Phase I competition, there was a requirement to include research from each of the following NSF directorates: Biological Sciences (BIO); Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE); Engineering (ENG); and Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE). For the PIPP Phase II Centers solicitation, this is no longer a requirement. However, based on the four themes

described here, and the requirement for a multi-disciplinary approach needed for predicting pandemics as listed in the solicitation, it is expected that proposals will be comprised of multi-disciplinary teams. Research and development activities must draw together data, theory, tools, infrastructure, and ideas that cross all relevant disciplinary boundaries (e.g., environmental, biological, chemical, physical, materials, social, behavioral, economic, mathematical, computer and information science and/or engineering science) and reflect this in balanced expertise on the team of collaborators and participants.

**18. Is it possible to send a short summary of a proposed idea to one of the program officers along with a specific question the PI may have related to the project idea?**

After submission of a LOI, the PI(s) may send a one-page summary to [PIPP@NSF.gov](mailto:PIPP@NSF.gov). Please do not send the summary to an individual program officer or to multiple specific program officers. Use [PIPP@NSF.gov](mailto:PIPP@NSF.gov). **Emails that do not use [pipp@nsf.gov](mailto:pipp@nsf.gov) will not be considered.**

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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**19. How can one ask additional questions that are not addressed in this FAQ?**

Additional questions should be sent to [PIPP@NSF.gov](mailto:PIPP@NSF.gov).

**20. To which NSF directorate and division should the PIPP Phase II Centers Program proposal be submitted?**

All proposals must be submitted to the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI) Centers, Facilities, and Additional Research Infrastructure Cluster (CFARI) cluster. This is the only available Unit of Consideration for submissions to the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation.

**21. Where can one find more information on the review process used to evaluate Phase II Centers Program proposals and how proposals that touch on multiple research areas be reviewed?**

All information about proposal processing and review is provided in Section VI of the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation.

**22. What are the requirements for sections of the proposal that are listed in the NSF PAPPG (e.g., Budget and Budget Justification, Current and Pending (Other) Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources) that are not addressed in the PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation?**

The PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation includes program specific requirements

that supplement or deviate from the guidance specified in the PAPPG. Where not otherwise addressed, submissions must conform fully to the Proposal Preparation Instructions outlined in Chapter II of the PAPPG, including all required *Sections of the Proposal*.

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

Per the guidance in PAPPG Chapter II.E.3.a, collaborators from the subaward organization may be named as co-PIs under the lead's proposal although that is at the discretion of the lead organization. Proposers should check their organizational policies regarding PI/co-PI eligibility to determine whether the organization permits non-employees to serve in this capacity.

**24. Are letters of commitment from individuals or organizations permitted?**

PIPP Phase II Centers Program solicitation requires that a Letter of Commitment from the Dean or equivalent at the lead institution is submitted as part of the proposal. The letter should confirm the institution's support of faculty involvement in the Center, as well as the existing resources that will be available to the Center for its lifespan. These resources should be identified in the project description and/or Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources document.

Besides the required Letter of Commitment described above, letters of collaboration from other individuals or organizations are permitted. Please consult the PAPPG for guidance on the format and submission of letters of collaboration.