Nuclear Reactor Safety Training and Workforce Development Program Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)		SEPT. 25, 2024
		Oct. 24, 2024
Questions		

	25 September 2024	
1	We're within 50 miles, but that reactor's been shut down for about 20 years. Are institutions in this scenario qualified?	See FOA Part III Eligibility Information. Universities located in proximity to nuclear power plants with decades of operational safety experience and challenges are expected to receive priority consideration.
2	In regards to the 50% cost share, where does that 50% have to come from? Can it be a national lab that we partner with that provides that?	It is a 50% minimum cost share. This falls under the responsibility of the prime applicant, however, does not have to come from the university lead. National lab funding may only be as cost share if the funding comes from a non-federal source such as the contractor's management fee. See 2 CFR 200.306 and the FOA, Part III section B.5.
3	Are you going to give preference to particular types of institutions? Are you more interested in having development of programs at the university level? Since these will be university-led, what do you envision for a degree requirement? (trades, bachelors, masters, PhD)	Applications will be evaluated against the criteria provided in Part V of the FOA. We would be interested in seeing any or all ideas that you have. The intent is looking at training here, but how that is defined in terms of at the university, at a utility near the plant, or at a national laboratory, is up to the proposing team.
4	What is the required match contribution for the application?	Cost share requirement is a 50% minimum. For example, if total project cost are $2 million, then there is a $1 million cost share requirement.

5	This program seems primarily garnered for secondary education and not utility specific unless utilities were to be a co-applicant or a sub- applicant for a particular topic. Is that correct?	This program should be university-led but we fully anticipate that, in order to have a successful model, especially one that leads to an industry-recognized credential, there would be partnerships from a range of organizations which could include utilities. We are looking for those kinds of proposed partnerships that can lead to the outcome of having an effective and sustained workforce development program that is recognized throughout the industry for producing people who are ready and capable of contributing to the safe operation of plants.
6	Please clarify what's happening on the September 30th, 2024 date?	That is the date where we're hoping to issue the funding opportunity on grants.gov. Again, there'll be courtesy copies at NEUP.gov and on the GAIN websites. You can also reach out to us and be added to our contacts list where you'll receive notification when the FOA is released.
7	Does this effort include craftworker training or engineering and design staff only?	This could include craft worker training as well.
8	Does the applicant need to already have a nuclear engineering program in place?	You don't have to have a Nuclear Engineering or energy type program in place to apply.
9	There seems to be a lot of flexibility for teams, partnerships, consortia, that type of thing. It was mentioned that awards will be contingent on appropriated funds. Is the $100 million no year appropriated dollars?	Teaming arrangements are up to the applicant as long as the prime applicant is an Institution of Higher Education (IHE). These dollars are from an infrastructure funding source for which the $100 million is available as no year funds until the funds are expended. We anticipate having those funds available to support awards we'll have this initial round, but we expect additional rounds until we have met the objectives of the funding opportunity and the funds remain available.

10	Has there been much collaboration with NRC on this funding opportunity or is this an independent NE initiative? I recall the Advance Act explicitly directed such workforce development be done by NRC, collaborating with industry and third parties as well.	The Office of Nuclear Energy maintains strong coordination with NRC on a range of activities. As an example, when we read language about what's expected around the safety of operating plans, one of our first go-to partners is the NRC to help us understand how we should interpret the language, think about that language, etc. We have reached out to NRC and will continue to do so if we need any help clarifying and refining our program to make sure it is meeting the high level objectives of the funding which is to support safe operations of our existing fleet, also recognizing that these workforce skills are going to be essential for broader deployments that will hopefully emerge to meet our climate goals.
11	Can you elaborate on the review process? Who may be the reviewers?	See part V of the FOA. We have a well-established process that focuses on fairness and transparency that is conducted using the funding opportunities required evaluation and selection plan.
13	On Topic Area One review criteria, which is on knowledge, skills and experience, being at 10% overall evaluation percentage, are institutions of higher education supposed to be able to scope a Topic One proposal? This would be complex and it would seem to be important to determine that they in fact have the wherewithal to execute the program and not just write an attractive proposal.	We can certainly take a look at, and discuss, as a team here on this side of fence. Nothing is set in stone, so we can take a look at those percentages and those weights to make sure they're appropriate for the criteria that is established in the funding opportunity. We look at the capability of the lead and the proposed team to address all aspects in the proposed work, the probability of success from that team, diversity of expertise and perspectives, inclusion of industry partners, etc. We know partnerships will be critical to project success. We also look at the sufficiency of the facilities to support the work that's being proposed, as well as the reasonableness of the budget and spend plan that is proposed from a team.

14	Will health, physics, radiation safety technicians and radio chemistry programs be considered?	Yes.
15	How many awards/teams are expected under this FOA?	For Topic Area One we are looking at one to eight projects to be awarded and for Topic Area Two we are looking between one and ten.
16	Is this opportunity open to law enforcement personnel who deal with nuclear and radioactive materials?	The justification needs to tie to the objectives which will be clearly stated in the FOA. Generally, we're looking at supporting the safe operations of the existing fleet. So, it would need to be relevant to safe operations of nuclear plants.
17	The goal of the project is an industry-recognized credential. This has been done in the past by accrediting institutions like INPO, but advanced reactor developers may not be using the same model. How do we account for what would be 'industry-recognized' in this context?	The key thing is that the impact of this program will produce workers who will be recognized as being qualified workforce for plants. You'll see that the request says to 'enhance something that's already in place or being developed' or even potentially develop something new. This means the team will need to provide evidence that their approach would result in an industry-recognized credential, either through current industry accepted approaches or through new approaches developed by the team.
18	Do you have a metric associated with what may be called a penalty for universities who apply that sit outside the 50-mile radius?	All submitted applications will be considered and there is definitely not a penalty. The FOA is looking more at giving priority consideration to those universities located in proximity to plants, but it is the quality of applications that is most important. Even an application from a university within the 50-mile radius will have to meet all of the requirements of the FOA.

19	Please summarize the difference between Topic Area One and Topic Area Two.	Topic Area One is designed for teams who are ready to hit the ground running. It focuses on the demonstration and implementation of the reactor safety training program, as well as the establishment or enhancement of industry-recognized nuclear reactor safety training credentials. This is a larger project with a $40 million federal funding ceiling and is up to five years in duration. These will be awarded as cooperative agreements. Topic Area Two are smaller projects for teams who may be trying to establish their team. Perhaps they are looking more into the development of training curriculum and faculty at universities and community colleges to help support the sustainable long term partnerships with utilities and other entities. These are two years with a federal funding ceiling of $2 million and these will be awarded as grants rather than cooperative agreements.
20	Can I submit a proposal to both Topic Area One and Topic Area Two?	For the first round of applications you must apply to one topic area. As additional rounds are offered, applicants may submit for either topic area 1 or topic area 2.
21	Is there a citizenship requirement for the lead or co-PIs?	If a person is eligible to work in the United States, they are eligible to apply as lead or co-PI.
22	Would 100 hours of personnel time equating to X number of dollars count as a cost share contribution?	Yes. See the FOA, Part III, Section B (Cost Sharing), for more information.
23	If a university opts to not charge indirect costs against a project, could those costs be considered part of the required cost share?	Yes, if it is consistent with your indirect rate agreement. Foregone charges for allowable indirect costs are permitted to be counted as cost share. Proposals must show the indirect values that would have been charged in order to be counted as part of cost share. 2 CFR 200.306 has further details regarding cost share/cost matching.

24	For woman-owned small businesses, is there a certification involved from a third party or is it simply being a small business that is owned by a woman sufficient?	You have to show that you meet the requirements for a small business as found in Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) part 19 for a small business and FAR 19.308 for a women owned small business. You do not have to have a certification to qualify as a small business, but certification can help improve an application. Please visit the Small Business Administration at sba.gov or 800-827-5722 for small business assistance.
25	Would in-kind contributions from a nuclear power company count as a contribution? For example, contributing workforce training spaces?	In-kind contributions would need to be more defined and assigned reasonable dollar values. Reasonable values can include rental costs for office spaces and training rooms that are rented and depreciation values for equipment or buildings that are owned. Regarding the example, "training spaces," this could be used as an in-kind contribution. See the FOA, Part III, Section B.4. (Cost Share Types and Allowability) for more information.
26	A waiver of 50% indirect would mean the university would not charge indirect on the project. Is that a correct clarification?	Yes, 22 CFR 200.306.306 has further details in regards to cost sharing or matching.
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27	Can an IHE serve as lead applicant on one proposal and then participate as a subaward on other application(s)?	Yes. IHEs are limited to one application as the prime applicant; however, there is no limit to the number of applications an IHE may submit as a sub-applicant.
28	Can salaries from a collaborator company be counted towards cost share?	Salaries from subrecipients may be counted toward cost share requirements with limitations. Cost share contributions of salaries from collaborator companies are limited to those portions of the salaries that are connected to the specific percentage of work that is actually contributed to the application.

29	Can costs associated with proposed new nuclear related certificate programs, undergraduate/graduate degree program, or other coursework be counted toward the required cost share?	Costs related to proposed certificate programs, undergraduate/graduate degree programs or other coursework may be counted toward cost share requirements. Costs related to these types of programs must be specifically connected to the submitted application. These costs may only be included in one portion of the application.
30	Can costs associated with leased equipment or software licensing contribute to cost share requirements?	Costs associated with leased equipment or software licenses may be used to contribute toward cost share requirements. These contribution amounts are limited to the actual lease or licensing costs and the total percentage of equipment or software usage that is specifically connected to the application for this project. These costs may only be included in one portion of the application.
31	Can donated equipment, software, or personnel time be used to contribute to cost share requirements?	Donated equipment, software, or personnel time may be used to contribute to cost share requirements. In order to do so, the applicant must show what the reasonable fair market value is for the donated equipment, software, or personnel time, and is limited to that percentage of equipment, software, or personnel time that is associated with the application. These costs must only be included in one area of the application.
32	Can costs related to new hire start up packages or community outreach programs be included as part of cost share requirements?	Costs related to new hire packages or community outreach programs may be used to contribute to cost share requirements. Costs associated with these types of packages or outreach programs are limited to cost specifically connected to this application.

33	We have some work that we would like to know if it would be considered cost share if performed after the appropriations bill was signed, but before the award can be considered.	Work directly related to the application may be considered as cost share no sooner than the date of FOA release (09-30-24) and subject to 2 CFR 200.306 and 2 CFR 910.130.
34	We are seeking guidance on placing value on some contributions that are difficult to quantify, for example, creating an undergraduate program in health physics	Refer to 2 CFR 200.306(b).
35	In the funding announcement, is the term Nuclear Reactor Safety specific to a safety basis or does it include any training that is developed for nuclear reactor including operators, maintenance and engineering?	The interpretation for nuclear safety basis is too narrow while training that could also include operators, maintenance, engineering and others is more correct