

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
FOR  
Defense Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education  
Consortium (DSEC) Cooperative Agreement**



**W911NF24S0003**

**ISSUED BY:**

**U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground  
Research Triangle Park Division on behalf of Army Research Office  
and the  
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering  
(Basic Research Office)**

**Issued: January 11, 2024**

**Application Inquiries and Questions (Deadline): February 12, 2024**

**Applications Due: March 11, 2024**

**AMENDMENT 1, [22 February 2024]: Summary of Significant Changes**

- Section I, Required Overview Content, #7, page 5: Updated Important FOA dates.
- Section II.A.3, Page 8: Clarified language to specify that the Government recommends that the Consortium Member leading Fundamental Element 5 does not also provide Strategic STEM Initiatives programming, to eliminate any bias in recommending budget allocations for STEM education and outreach partners to the Lead Organization and to the Government.
- Section II.A.3, Page 12: Called out the Interim Program Review as a Consortium requirement through including this requirement as a stand-alone bullet.
- Section II.A.3, Page 20: Clarified language to specify that under Fundamental Element 4 the applicant should consider current DSEC Hub efforts to determine if these regional Hubs are to be sustained and captured in their application. Under the award, Fundamental Element 4 will work with Fundamental Element 2 to assist in evaluation efforts that examine the effectiveness of existing regional hubs.
- Section II.D.2, Page 32: Page limit for Chapter 4 (Credentials) extended from 10 pages to 20 pages total, to include the any resumes or biographical sketches of individuals.
- Section II.D.2, Page 34: Added Attachment 5 (A copy of the proposed Articles of Collaboration, signed by a duly authorized representative for each CMC) as application submission content.
- Section II.E.1, Page 37: Specified that the proposed Articles of Collaboration signed by each CMC Member should be submitted as Attachment 5.
- Section II.F.3.a, Page 51-52: Deleted language and requirements that are not relevant to this DSEC solicitation. Deleted text includes, “The report will contain a listing of students added to the program, departing from the program, and continuing in the program as of the report date...” and “Progress Reports and Final Reports.”

**Table of Contents**

- I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ..... 3**
  - 1. Agency Name..... 4
  - 2. Issuing Acquisition Office ..... 4
  - 3. Opportunity Title ..... 4
  - 4. Announcement Type ..... 5
  - 5. Opportunity Number ..... 5
  - 6. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number and Title..... 5
  - 7. Response Dates ..... 5
  - 8. Funding ..... 5
  - 9. Cost Share or Matching ..... 6
  - 10. Profit/Fee..... 6
  - 11. Place of Performance ..... 6
  
- II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY..... 6**
  - A. Funding Opportunity Description ..... 6
    - 1. Program Description ..... 5
    - 2. Guiding Policies and Authorities..... 7
    - 3. Fundamental Elements ..... 7
  - B. Federal Award Information ..... 23
  - C. Eligibility Information ..... 29
  - D. Application and Submission Information..... 31
  - E. Application Review Information ..... 35
    - 1. Criteria..... 29
    - 2. Review and Selection Process..... 32
  - F. Award Administration Information ..... 42
  - G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts..... 54
  - H. Other Information ..... 54

## I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**Short Description of funding Opportunity:** The Department of Defense Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (DoD STEM), under its National Defense Education Program (NDEP) and 10 U.S. Code 2192, seeks to enter into a cooperative agreement with a Consortium of like-minded organizations (herein “Consortium Members”) to provide a continuum of meaningful STEM learning experiences for students and educators through effective STEM education and outreach programs. The Consortium will be named the Defense STEM Education Consortium (DSEC). The Department intends to award ONE (1) cooperative agreement award of up to \$190M over a period of performance of (up to) ten-years. This cooperative agreement will consist of ONE (1) two-year base period of up to \$37M, followed by up to FOUR (4) two-year option periods of \$37.5M to \$39M each, totaling up to ten years and up to \$190M total. Optional renewal periods are subject to availability of funds based on annual budget appropriations.

**Background:** The pace of innovation is accelerating globally, and with it, the competition for scientific and technical talent. The Department of Defense (DoD) is cultivating the future STEM workforce by providing unique education opportunities to students and educators of all ages and across all demographics throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> Building the STEM workforce of tomorrow starts with STEM education and outreach investments beginning as early as PreK-12. According to the latest National Defense Science and Technology Strategy, the Department of Defense seeks to build enduring advantages by investing in the future workforce at every level of education to address national security challenges of today, and tomorrow.<sup>2</sup> Building skills and STEM interests at an early age through various STEM activities like competitions and immersive STEM camps is critical to excite and encourage students’ interests in pursuing STEM careers. As the largest employer of Federal scientists and engineers across the Federal agencies,<sup>3</sup> the DoD is committed to developing the Nation’s STEM talent.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has a comprehensive approach in developing STEM talent through its PreK-20 STEM activities under DoD STEM<sup>4</sup>. DoD STEM aims to inspire, cultivate, and develop talent to address the Nation’s technological challenges, now and into the future. DoD STEM encompasses efforts from across the military services (Department of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and Air and Space Forces) and other Defense Agencies (e.g., Missile Defense Agency, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, National Security Agency, etc.). The largest program under DoD STEM is the National Defense Education Program (NDEP) which fosters and enhances the DoD’s ability to develop and access high-quality STEM talent vital to national defense. Aligned to the Federal STEM Education Strategic Plan<sup>5</sup> and to the DoD STEM Strategic Plan (2021-2025)<sup>1</sup>, NDEP addresses critical STEM education and talent development challenges

---

<sup>1</sup> DoD STEM Strategic Plan - [https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DoD\\_STEM\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2021.pdf](https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DoD_STEM_Strategic_Plan_2021.pdf)

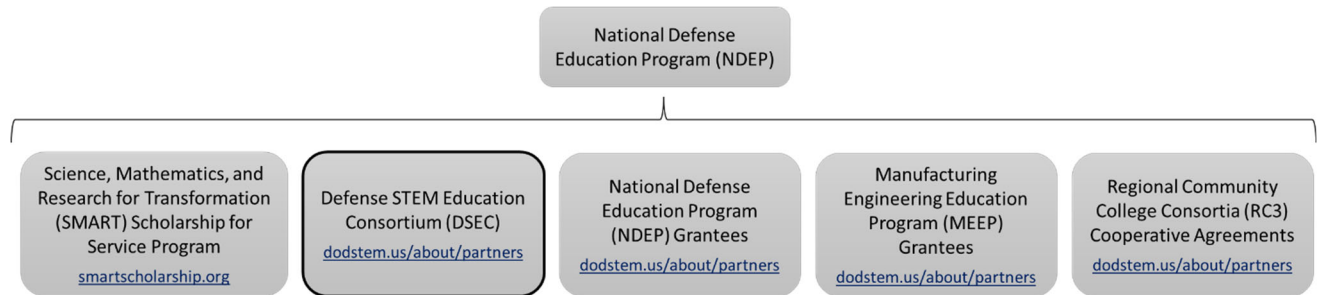
<sup>2</sup> National Defense Science & Technology Strategy 2023. United States Department of Defense. <https://www.cto.mil/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-NDSTS.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Based on Office of Personnel Management FedScope Data, June 2019, <https://www.fedscope.opm.gov/>

<sup>4</sup> DoD STEM Website: <https://dodstem.us/>

<sup>5</sup> Federal STEM Education Strategic Plan - <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/2018-23-Federal-STEM-Education-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

using a continuous learning structure and evidence-based approaches. NDEP activities support the DoD STEM effort in providing authentic learning experiences through a variety of education and outreach initiatives in the form of scholarships, internships, enrichment activities, competitions, and mentorships, by leveraging partners from industry, academia, and other government organizations with a shared STEM mission. DSEC is one of the main efforts under NDEP to address STEM talent development (see figure below).



The STEM education and outreach activities of DSEC should leverage the strengths and unique capabilities of each consortium member to align with the Federal Education and DoD STEM Strategic Goals. Enhancing the permeability of ideas into the DoD's STEM workforce, through mutually beneficial regional/national alliances with States, local governments, Indian tribes, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, and other partners in STEM, should deliver far-reaching sustainable and scalable programs and partnerships. DSEC efforts will align with the DoD STEM mission to “inspire, cultivate, and develop exceptional STEM talent through a continuum of opportunities to enrich our current and future Department of Defense workforce poised to tackle evolving defense technological challenges.” DSEC efforts should focus primarily on PreK-12 activities for students, educators, and parents. However, applicants are welcome to include activities that continue to engage students at the undergraduate level. DSEC will work collaboratively with the Government to provide a cohesive strategy to meet the vision, roles, and goals outlined in the DoD STEM Strategic Plan.

**Required Overview Content**

**1. Agency Name**

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E))

**2. Issuing Acquisition Office**

U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Research Triangle Park (ACC-APG-RTP) Division

**3. Opportunity Title**

Defense Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Consortium (DSEC) Cooperative Agreement

#### 4. Announcement Type

This is an initial announcement. This is a follow on to W911NF-19-2-0007.

#### 5. Opportunity Number

W911NF24S0003

#### 6. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number and Title

12.006 - "National Defense Education Program (NDEP) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education and Outreach Activities"

#### 7. Response Dates

**Applications must be received by 3:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, March 11, 2024.**

The following is an estimated summary of the events and dates associated with the DSEC Cooperative Agreement (COA) Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). Additional information will be posted on the Grants.gov website regarding the Opportunity Day.

EVENT	DATE
Funding Opportunity Announcement Posted on Grants.gov	11 JAN 2024
Opportunity Day	24 JAN 2024
Deadline to submit questions	12 FEB 2024
Applications DUE	11 MAR 2024
Estimated date range for award notification	1-15 JUN 2024
Estimated date to Finalize Cooperative Agreement Award	31 JUL 2024
Estimated start of Period of Performance	1 AUG 2024

Opportunity Day will be held virtually on **Wednesday, January 24, 2024 from 1:00-4:00 pm** Eastern Standard Time (EST). To Register, email [osd.dodstem@mail.mil](mailto:osd.dodstem@mail.mil) with subject heading W911NF-24-S-0003 Opportunity Day. More details will be provided prior to the event.

#### 8. Funding

The FOA issued is subject to the availability of funds. The FOA provides the estimated funding levels for the cooperative agreement. The Government has submitted the requisite documents to request funding for the period covered by the cooperative agreement; however, applicants are reminded that this request is subject to Presidential, Congressional and Departmental approval. **The funding levels provided in the FOA are for application preparation purposes only. The actual funding level of the cooperative agreement will be updated annually as part of the appropriation process.**

Hereafter, the terms COA and Cooperative Agreement are synonymous; the terms DSEC and Consortium are synonymous; and the terms Applicant, Lead Organization (LO), and Recipient are synonymous. The term "Consortium Members" refers to all organizations and entities

within the cooperative agreement, to include the Lead Organization (“Recipient”) as well as any subawardees, including those responsible for providing STEM education and outreach programming.

**9. Cost Share or Matching**

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this FOA.

**10. Profit/Fee**

Profit/fee is not permitted under the cooperative agreement.

**11. Place of Performance**

The recipient’s place of performance is limited to the United States. However, DSEC programs may reach U.S. students in Puerto Rico, Guam, or other U.S. Territories, as well as DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) locations<sup>6</sup> around the world.

**II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**A. Funding Opportunity Description**

**1. Program Description**

The Defense STEM Education Consortium (DSEC) is a collaborative partnership between States, local governments, Indian tribes, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations and other partners in STEM that aims to broaden STEM literacy and prepare the STEM workforce of the future for the Department of Defense and for the Nation.

Aligned to the Federal STEM Strategic Plan<sup>5</sup> and the DoD STEM Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>, DSEC will aim to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers through activities that engage students and educators in meaningful STEM experiences; connect student and educator participants to the DoD science and technology mission; empower parents and legal guardians of student participants to be better informed of the DoD STEM opportunities; serve military-connected students and those historically underrepresented in STEM; leverage the network of Consortium Members to broaden reach and impact; and to evolve approach based on data.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSDR&E)) provides the strategic direction of the DoD STEM activities and sets department-wide policy in coordinating these programs across the DoD. These DoD STEM programs<sup>7</sup> are currently comprised of several activities that span across the formal and informal learning environments in support of the DoD STEM Strategic goals:

1. Inspire community engagement in DoD STEM education programs and activities to provide meaningful STEM learning opportunities for students and educators.
2. Attract the Nation’s and DoD’s current and future workforce through multiple pathways to education and career opportunities.

---

<sup>6</sup> DoDEA Schools Worldwide: <https://www.dodea.edu/about/about-dodea/dodea-schools-worldwide>

<sup>7</sup> DoD STEM Website: <https://dodstem.us/>

3. Increase participation of underserved and underrepresented groups in STEM education and workforce development programs, activities, and outreach.
4. Advance the efficiency and effectiveness of STEM education and workforce development programs, activities, and outreach through evaluation and assessment.

Additionally, the DoD STEM portfolio intends to strategically invest in programs that encourage students to pursue STEM education and career opportunities, and that will provide students with exposure to DoD research and career opportunities. Education and outreach activities will support the future mission of the DoD through sustainable partnerships, student engagement opportunities (including authentic STEM experiences), and mentorship. This DoD-wide strategic plan<sup>1</sup> is an overarching framework that is driven by the Federal priorities with a focus on developing education and outreach initiatives that are unique to the DoD's mission, needs, and resources and required to build enduring advantage in human capital to defend our Nation. The STEM education and outreach partnerships and programs<sup>8</sup> which are expected to be part of DSEC should be treated as critical elements of the DoD's Science and Technology strategy<sup>2</sup>, and cultivating, recruiting, and retaining the best STEM professionals possible is key to building a future force capable of ensuring technical superiority in an increasingly competitive world. Addressing this challenge requires a multi-faceted approach that expands beyond our traditional approaches of internships and scholarships.

There are five Fundamental Elements under the DSEC Cooperative Agreement (COA): (1) Consortium Management; (2) Program Evaluations: Near-, Mid-, and Longitudinal Data Collection, Analysis, and Reports; (3) Strategic Communications, Outreach, and Alumni Engagement; (4) Regional Hubs and Ecosystems; and (5) Strategic STEM Initiatives. These Fundamental Elements are the essential components of the consortium effort that will support the DoD STEM education and outreach goals. The five (5) Fundamental Elements above are provided for Applicants to functionally organize the efforts the Recipient and Consortium Members will perform under DSEC.

Since the resulting award will be a cooperative agreement with substantial Government involvement, the Recipient will be in regular communication with the Government working collaboratively to administer and execute DSEC goals, as well as to identify new and emerging areas of interest and targeted areas of emphasis during performance under the cooperative agreement.

## **2. Guiding Policies and Authorities for DoD STEM Programs**

- 10 U.S. Code Section 2192 – Improvement of education in technical fields: general authority regarding education in science, mathematics, and engineering.
  - Under Section 2192, “The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall, on a continuing basis – (i) identify actions which the

---

<sup>8</sup> Current STEM education and outreach partnerships and programs under DSEC detailed here: <https://dodstem.us/about/partners/>. Previous partnerships and programs, as well as details on programmatic outcomes are included in publicly available reports available under “Partners’ Impact Reporting” at <https://dodstem.us/about/impact/>.

Department of Defense may take to improve education in the scientific, mathematics, and engineering skills necessary to meet the long-term national defense needs to the United States for personnel proficient in such skills; and (ii) establish and conduct programs to carry out such actions.”

- 10 U.S. Code Section 2192b – Program on enhancement of preparation of dependents of members of armed forces for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

STEM education programs executed under U.S.C. Title 10, Section 2192 must adhere to the guidance provided by the Federal Coordination in STEM (FC-STEM) as established by the America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), and supported by U.S.C. Title 42, Section 6621.

- 10 U.S. Code Section 2193a – Improvement of education in technical fields: general authority for support of elementary and secondary education in science and mathematics.

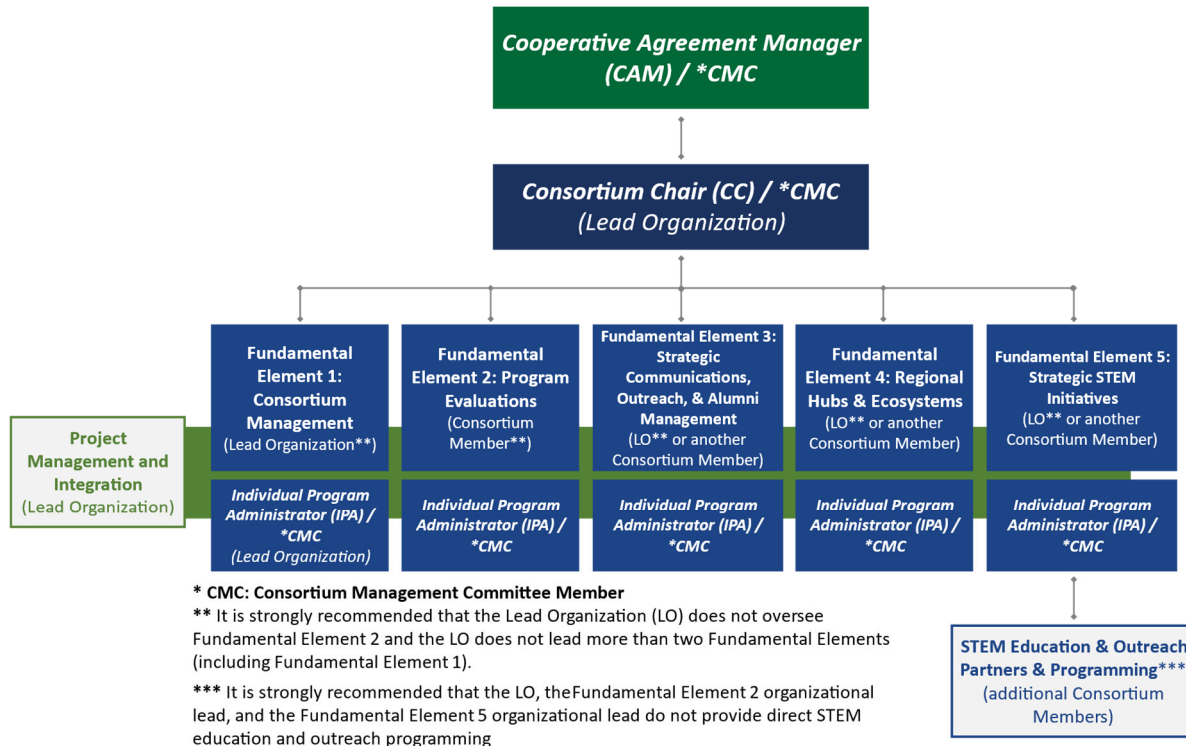
**3. Fundamental Elements:** It is the intent of this FOA to solicit the most creative, innovative, and effective approaches to assist in the success of DSEC. In response to the FOA, an Applicant must submit an application that provides evidence of their ability to perform the following:

DSEC Efforts	
1	Consortium / COA Management
2	Program Evaluations: Near-, Mid-, and Longitudinal Data Collection, Analysis, and Reports
3	Strategic Communications, Outreach, and Alumni Engagement
4	Regional Hubs and Ecosystems
5	Strategic STEM Initiatives

An overview of the Consortium structure is provided in the figure below. Note that Consortium Members leading the Fundamental Elements are not required to also provide STEM education and outreach programming.

The Lead Organization (LO), in its leadership role to the Consortium (Fundamental Element 1), is ALSO able to engage in the administration of Fundamental Elements 2-5. However, it is strongly encouraged that other Consortium Members lead the other Fundamental Elements, and that the LO does not lead more than two Fundamental Elements (including Fundamental Element 1). In order to eliminate bias and ensure robust evaluation, it is strongly recommended that the LO does not oversee Fundamental Element 2. Finally, it is further recommended that the Lead Organization (Fundamental Element 1), the Consortium Member overseeing Fundamental Element 2 (Program Evaluations), and the Consortium Member overseeing Fundamental Element 5 do *not* provide direct STEM education and outreach programming under the Fundamental Element 5, Strategic STEM Initiatives (although either may serve in the administrative and oversight role of Fundamental Element 5). These recommendations are

made in order to ensure unbiased funding and evaluation efforts can be executed by the LO and Consortium Member leading Fundamental Element 2.



**FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT 1: CONSORTIUM/COA MANAGEMENT**

**Overview:** The Recipient will lead the Consortium to ensure the Fundamental Elements are focused on planning and executing programs in alignment with STEM priorities and goals as outlined in the DoD STEM Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>. It is critical the Consortium be structured and managed to foster an open, collaborative environment in which each Consortium Member is equal and receptive to leveraging knowledge and resources as well as sharing and adapting best practices to achieve the Government’s priorities and objectives. The Recipient will be responsible for planning Consortium Management Committee (CMC) Meetings (CMC is described below), submitting consolidated Consortium-wide deliverables, overseeing holistic evaluation and assessment of the Consortium, and facilitating cross-Consortium outreach and communications efforts. The Recipient will also be responsible for the distribution of funding to all members of the Consortium.

The organizational framework of the Consortium should be efficient and flexible with defined areas of responsibility among the Consortium Members to minimize overhead and duplication while ensuring relevance and proper oversight. Applicants should identify management tools and mechanisms in their application, but in doing so they must also justify and demonstrate the benefit and cost effectiveness of these management activities.

The Applicant (Lead Organization) is to assemble a qualified team of organizations (Consortium Members) that have expertise and a proven track record in the areas required to successfully

manage and implement Fundamental Elements described in this announcement. The Recipient (Lead Organization) must be a **“non-federal entity,” defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as a State, local government, Indian tribe, Institution of Higher Education (IHE), or nonprofit organization or a for-profit organization per 32 CFR 34.** The Applicant will propose a Consortium structure that seamlessly integrates the COA Fundamental Elements and program components in a way that promotes and enables collaboration, creativity, and synergy, ultimately aiming to achieve the goals established by the Government. The Lead Organization should establish structure and guidance such that at the request of the Consortium and at the approval of the CMC and the government, additional Consortium Members may be added to or removed to advance DSEC efforts and improve alignment to emerging areas of interest or to address gaps within the Consortium.

The following requirements are to be addressed in an application for the technical management and oversight of the Consortium<sup>9</sup>:

- **Cooperative Agreement Manager (CAM):** Overall technical management and fiscal responsibility for the DSEC COA will reside with the CAM, designated under the cooperative agreement. The CAM will work closely with the Grants Officer at the U.S. Army Contracting Command, APG-RTP Division, and the U.S. Army DEVCOM Army Research Office. The CAM is the Government lead for this effort and therefore, all executables must be approved by the CAM, to include programmatic and budgetary changes.
- **Consortium Chair (CC):** The CC of DSEC is the technical representative charged with the responsibility to manage and provide guidance to DSEC. The CC will be designated by, and must be a part of, the Lead Organization (LO).
- **Individual Program Administrator (IPA):** The IPA is the primary point of contact designated by the Consortium for each Fundamental Element and should regularly communicate with the CC and CAM. It is acceptable for a Consortium Member to be responsible for more than one Fundamental Element, depending on how the Consortium is formed and program responsibility is divided. The IPA will also serve as the representative on the CMC.
- **Cooperative Management Committee (CMC):** DSEC will have a CMC that at minimum includes the IPA of each Fundamental Element of the Consortium. The CMC may also include any additional members whose eligibility must be clearly outlined in the Articles of Collaboration. The CAM participates as an ex officio member in all discussions except those that deal with purely internal Consortium matters. The CMC will be chaired by the CC. Each CMC Member will have one vote on the CMC to support programmatic and management-related activities and decisions. In the event of a tie, the Recipient will cast the deciding vote. The CMC will be responsible for the management and integration of the Consortium's efforts under the DSEC COA, to include programmatic, technical, reporting, financial, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Note that a summary of the recommended Consortium management approaches (to include the CAM, CC, IPAs, and CMC) can be found in the 2021-2022 DSEC APR posted on the DoD STEM website at <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/APROY2Final.pdf>

administrative matters. The CMC may make recommendations to the CAM and CC that concern the membership of the Consortium, the definition of the tasks, and goals of the Consortium. Regular meetings (twice annually, at minimum) will be conducted by the CMC.

- **Articles of Collaboration (AOC):** AOC will be established by the Consortium and submitted with the application. A sample is attached (Appendix). *Articles of Collaboration* define the operational structure within the Consortium. Applicants are free to modify this document as appropriate to address and achieve the objectives outlined in support of the COA priorities, however any changes must be clearly identified in an application and these changes must be acceptable to the Government for the applicant to be eligible for the award. Applications must include a copy of the proposed Articles of Collaboration, signed by a duly authorized representative for each CMC. The Articles of Collaboration will be evaluated under the Management Evaluation Factor.
- **Biennial Program Plan (BPP):** As part of the application, applicants will submit an **initial program plan (IPP)** for the base period of the DSEC COA and a BPP template. The IPP for the base period should provide a detailed description of how the recipient and its Consortium members plan to execute the first two years of the DSEC COA. The IPP will also include a 10-year roadmap which describes the 10-year plan to be accomplished by the Consortium. The roadmap should provide a detailed description of a well-coordinated plan of program execution, focused on DoD STEM priorities and objectives as outlined in this FOA. It should provide approximate timelines, to the best possible extent for the various components and activities. The BPP template will be proposed by the applicant and reviewed as a part of the evaluation criteria.

Towards the end of the base period and every option period exercised thereafter, the Consortium will work with the Government, through the CAM, in developing a BPP prior to the start of the next option period. The CAM will approve the BPP and formally submit to the Grants Officer for incorporation into the cooperative agreement. This process will continue through the life of the cooperative agreement. Each BPP will cover a two-year timeframe, but may be altered, with the approval of the Grants Officer if work requirements change. Information to consider for the BPP is execution planning, projected 3-year targets, etc. Funding will not be released until an approved BPP is in place. Additionally, annual funding is contingent upon Congressional approval of the Federal budget.

The Consortium, as an entity, will not solicit or accept funding from outside sources without the approval of the CAM and the Grants Officer. However, if funding from outside sources is approved, it will be considered a cost share. During the period of performance of the COA, the Grants Officer, in coordination with the CAM, will have approval authority for certain changes to the IPP/BPP including but not limited to:

1. Changes in the scope or the objective of the program or IPP/BPP.
2. Change in the key personnel of the Consortium.
3. The need for additional Federal funding.

4. Any sub-recipient, transfer, or contracting out of program performance under an award, unless described in the IPP/BPP.

During the period of performance of the COA, the Grants Officer, in coordination with the CAM, will have approval authority for certain specific changes to the cooperative agreement including, but not limited to:

1. Changes to the Articles of Collaboration, if such changes substantially alter the relationship of the parties as originally agreed upon.
  2. Solicitation or acceptance of funding under the agreement from sources other than the DoD.
  3. Changes in CMC membership.
- **Biennial Program Review (BPR):** With CAM approval, the Consortium will be responsible for coordinating and participating in a end of base/option period BPR to the DoD to present the results and achievements of the previous program cycle and to propose plans for the following option period. The program review will foster interactions and collaborations among all consortium members and the Government. A proposed BPR format/template will be included in each application to be reviewed and included in the evaluation of the application. For reference, please see the 2021-2022 DSEC Annual Program Review (APR) posted on the DoD STEM website at <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/APROY2Final.pdf>.
  - **Interim Program Review (IPR):** In the years a BPR is not submitted, an IPR will be provided to the CAM. The IPR format/template may be distinct from that of the BPR, and is expected to be more brief, while providing essential reported program metrics, such as number of student and educator participants served in a given year. The recipient will work with the CAM to develop the IPR template.
  - **Biannual Reviews:** In coordination with the CAM, the Consortium will establish, at minimum, biannual consortium meetings with a minimum of one in-person meeting (preferably year-end program reviews). The biannual meetings will provide the Consortium and the CAM the opportunity to share best practices, address programmatic issues/updates, and synchronize DoD STEM outreach and communications efforts.
  - **Insurance:** The Recipient will carry an insurance policy to cover all student participants participating in COA efforts for each year of performance. Cost of the insurance policy will be included as a specific line item in the budget for the COA. This policy must cover accidental death, accidental dismemberment, and medical expense benefits for participants or survivors of participants. A copy of the most up to date policy will be provided to the CAM.

- **Compliance:**

***Child and Data Protection***

The Recipient will assure compliance with all applicable federal and state child protection and labor laws; the protection and management of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data, which will need to be properly safeguarded per the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) as codified in 5 U.S.C. §552a and DoD Regulation 5400.11-R.; 15 U.S. Code 6501 – Children Online Privacy Protection; data management and security; and relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB) compliance with regards to all DSEC Fundamental Elements.

The applicant will provide a Data Management Plan which will describe the data that is collected through the course of the proposed research and information on how the data will be shared, organized, and preserved. In instances where this is not possible, The Data Management Plan must explain why it is not possible or scientifically appropriate. The Data Management Plan should not exceed two pages and be included under the generic “Other Attachments.” Information on the Data Management Plan can be found in DoDI 3200.12, Section 3.c. of Enclosure 3.

(<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/320012p.pdf?ver=2019-04-30-073122-220> ).

Even if selected, awards are not final until these documents are received and approved: Evidence of compliance with DoD Instruction 3216.02, “Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD- Conducted and -Supported Research.”

***Intellectual Property***

The Recipient must comply with Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 252.227-7020 Rights in Special Works.

The Recipient must comply with the Governmentwide patent rights award clause at 37 CFR 401.14, with the modifications as described in the DoD R&D Terms and Conditions (September 2023). DoD adopts this Governmentwide clause for the following entities, thereby broadening the applicability beyond types of entities included in the definition of “contractor” in 37 CFR part 401: any institution of higher education, non-profit organization, State, local government, Indian tribe, for-profit entity, foreign organization, or foreign public entity receiving a DoD award or subaward for the performance of experimental, research, or developmental work.

The Recipient must recognize the Federal Government’s right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award; and authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award for Federal Government purposes.

- **Program Promotion:** The Recipient will develop a plan for cross program promotion to strategically reach audiences to increase students’ and educators’ participation through the

DoD's PreK-20 continuum of opportunities. The Recipient, within the scope of the proposed 10-year program plan and in collaboration with the Government, will provide innovative ideas and facilitate proposals of new Consortium Members or strategic initiatives to further the initiatives of the DoD STEM mission and goals as outlined in this FOA.

- **Metrics:** Performance metrics are to be provided to measure the COA's accomplishments against its overall priorities and objectives, such as successful integration of goals into all programs, partnerships, and processes; effective integration and use of website and branding; collaboration of all organizations; effectiveness of evaluations, common metrics, and data collection; and management of the COA.
- **Financial Tracking:** The Recipient is responsible for Consortium financial tracking and ensuring compliance with funding allocation requirements and reporting. The Applicant should address what approaches will be used to monitor Consortium finances, anticipated financial challenges, and how those will be addressed. As noted in the "Deliverables" section, the Recipient is responsible for submitting monthly financial reports describing funds execution to date and status of current funding allocation balance across the Fundamental Elements.

It should be noted that in addition to these Fundamental Element 1 responsibilities, the LO is also responsible for ensuring that Fundamental Elements 2-5 tasks and expectations are adequately addressed by the Consortium Member overseeing each Fundamental Element, including those the LO does not independently lead. References to the "Recipient" or "Applicant" when describing Fundamental Element specific expectations below are used to refer to the shared responsibility of the LO and the Consortium Member leading each Fundamental Element.

## **FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT 2: PROGRAM EVALUATIONS – COMPREHENSIVE NEAR-, MID-, AND LONGITUDINAL DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTS**

**Overview:** Aligned with the Federal Strategic Plan and the DoD STEM Strategic Plan, the Government requires the evaluation of all DoD STEM programs based on specific metrics and evidence-based approaches to achieve key objectives of DoD outreach; increased efficiency and coherence; ability to share and leverage best practices; as well as focus on DoD STEM priorities and core objectives. DoD strives to make programmatic decisions driven by data and analysis through its evaluation efforts. The Recipient is responsible for executing and enhancing current evaluation efforts through documenting activities and outputs, as well as near-, mid-, and long-term outcomes through annual evaluations of STEM programs<sup>8</sup>. To meet Federal expectations of STEM education programmatic reporting, mid- to long-term impact evaluation efforts (i.e. Alumni Studies, detailed below) should be incorporated into the DSEC evaluation strategy.

The Recipient is responsible for ensuring a cohesive and coordinated evaluation strategy across the Fundamental Elements. A centralized evaluation is required to satisfy key Federal guidelines for rigorous evaluation, in that it:

- Is conducted by capable professionals who are external to Consortium Member programming and their institutions, to assure confidence in the objectivity of the evaluation.
- Strives to (1) assess whether programs are making satisfactory progress toward STEM program objectives; (2) recommend reasonable, evidence-based adjustments to programming; and (3) provide indications of potential program effects.
- Employs research-backed methods that are appropriate, aligned to the evaluation objectives and data assessment tools, and account for the varying developmental stages of STEM programs and objectives.
- May assess the health and effectiveness of DSEC as a strategic collaboration across various stakeholders. This may include a plan for evaluating factors critical to successful collaborative efforts, and for evaluating the corresponding effectiveness or impact of such collaborations.

The following requirements are to be addressed in an application for this Fundamental Element:

**Program Evaluations:** The Consortium will be responsible for developing and managing program evaluations including design and instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and the generation of annual reports (BPRs and IPRs, described earlier). Overall evaluations are a DSEC-wide effort, and the Government envisions each Consortium member to be an integral part of the process and execution. The DoD STEM website, and proposed application and/or survey tools will be used as the primary method to collect data from STEM program participants (students, educators, and other primary participant groups, as relevant). The Consortium is responsible for assuring that complete and accurate participant data are reflected in the data collection and program evaluations. In addition to the participant information collected and evaluation surveys, the Consortium should include in their application the types of quantitative and qualitative data from students, teachers, mentors, and other participants in their individual program(s) it plans to collect. As the subject matter expert and lead on evaluations and data collection, the Recipient is responsible for guiding evaluation efforts, including collection, synthesis, interpretation, reporting of data, and overall development of the evaluation strategy.

In collaboration with the Government, the Recipient will develop and publish a Biennial evaluation report which captures evaluation outcomes for the current period of performance to include instruments used in the evaluations. For current DSEC evaluation reports, please see the DSEC Annual Program Evaluation 2021-2022 Data Chapter at <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DSEC-EvalDataChptr-21-22.pdf>.

Information to consider should be a clear execution strategy for evaluation of individual programs (i.e. executed by Consortium Members responsible for direct programming) and for all of DSEC, proposed assessment tools for each program as well as common metrics across DSEC, and a timeline of execution to include data collection, analysis, and report writing.

The application should detail a sufficient number of personnel with the appropriate skills and expertise to meet program evaluation requirements. The application should also address the

following near-, mid-, and long-term outcomes and impacts (for reference, please see DoD STEM logic model at <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DoDSTEM-LogicModel.pdf>):

Near Term Outcomes	Mid and Long-term Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased student interest and engagement in STEM (formal and informal)</li> <li>• Increased participant STEM competencies (STEM skills, knowledge, abilities, and confidence)</li> <li>• Increased participant awareness of, and interest in, DSEC opportunities</li> <li>• Increased participant awareness of, and interest in, STEM research and careers</li> <li>• Increased participant awareness of, and interest in, DoD STEM research and careers</li> <li>• Scientist and Engineer (S&amp;E) Mentors’ impact on DSEC participants</li> <li>• Changes in teacher approaches to teaching about STEM concepts, practices, and careers in their classrooms</li> <li>• Implementation of evidence-based recommendations to improve programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained student appreciation of STEM and DoD STEM</li> <li>• Increased student pursuit of DSEC opportunities and DoD workforce development programs</li> <li>• Increased student pursuit of STEM coursework in secondary and post-secondary schooling</li> <li>• Increased student pursuit and achievement of STEM degrees</li> <li>• Increased student pursuit and achievement of STEM careers</li> <li>• Increased student pursuit and achievement of DoD STEM careers</li> <li>• Continuous improvement and sustainability of DSEC</li> </ul>

For applicable COA efforts, the Recipient will ensure demographic and other program application information is made available to Consortium Members and the Government. Program application data may include information that affects an individual’s privacy, to include Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data, which will need to be properly safeguarded per the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93- 579) as codified in 5 U.S.C. §552a and DoD Regulation 5400.11-R.

**DoD STEM GIS Map:** The Applicant will collaborate with the Government to maintain the GIS mapping of DSEC and other DoD STEM activities which illustrates to the general public the breadth and depth of the Department’s investment in building the Nation’s technical workforce of the future. The Applicant will continuously identify ways to enhance the GIS map. The current DoD STEM GIS map can be found at <https://azusearcgis1.air.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=9f83d504c4f548d0ae>

[a4dee7b1911cb6&extent=-127.0772,23.9599,-62.17,50.3971.](#)

**STEM Alumni Study:** The application should include a proposed longitudinal alumni study to ascertain the status, achievement, attitudes, and future aspirations of STEM program alumni, and assess the extent to which alumni perceive their participation in a STEM program as contributing to these factors (herein referred to as alumni study). The alumni study would evaluate the extent to which STEM is successful in achieving its longer-term objectives through assessing mid- and long-term outcomes. The infrastructure developed for this study could then be used (as resources are available) to support longitudinal tracking and study of these same alumni over the next 8-10 years. Because such a small proportion of alumni are (historically) retained in the DoD STEM pipeline, the infrastructure established for the alumni study could provide a new mechanism for tracking alumni and studying changes in outcomes over time after they leave the DoD STEM pipeline or do not otherwise participate in DoD STEM annual evaluation studies.

The Applicant will develop a strategic implementation plan with timelines and processes, proposed work with target outcomes for the base period, and subsequent option periods.

### **FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT 3: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND ALUMNI MANAGEMENT**

**Overview:** A comprehensive and coordinated overarching outreach strategy is essential to the successful management, execution and measurement of the DoD STEM programs. The primary objective of the outreach strategy is to promote DoD STEM as a coordinated and cohesive effort offering students and teachers a pipeline of STEM educational opportunities, sparking an early interest in STEM subjects by providing hands-on learning, and maintaining that interest through STEM competitions, summer enrichment activities, and competitive apprenticeships. In order to meet DoD STEM goals, and in consideration of the broader NDEP portfolio, outreach strategies and tactics should be designed to influence and educate PreK-16 students, educators and other key stakeholders about the STEM educational opportunities available across the DoD STEM continuum, including DoD STEM career opportunities, while increasing participation among historically underserved/and underrepresented populations (Goal 4.0, DoD STEM Strategic Plan).

The following requirements are to be addressed in an application for this Fundamental Element:

- **Outreach and Communications Strategy:** The application should define a sufficient number of personnel with the appropriate skills and expertise to ensure the proactive and successful execution of the overall outreach communications plan. This plan should detail how the applicant intends to synchronize and coordinate with IPAs to ensure the successful implementation of the outreach and communications strategy; manage and execute internal communications through collaboration tools, regular messages to Consortium members, newsletter, etc.; develop and implement coordinated outreach/communications campaigns that leverage IPAs and their networks to increase awareness of as well as engagement and participation (e.g. through webinars, social

media strategies and tactics, etc.); and manage and maintain the DoD public-facing website, <https://dodstem.us/>, while ensuring program information, DSEC News, and other website content are accurate and up-to-date. The Applicant will also need to detail how it plans on communicating DSEC milestones and successes through the development and dissemination of program press releases on a regular basis; conduct media relations and outreach, increasing visibility and awareness of DoD STEM programs and identifying relevant media engagements for DSEC personnel; establish and maintain a blog that allows DSEC stakeholders (*e.g.*, DoD leadership, past STEM participants) to voice their opinions and share their experiences; plan, manage, and execute DSEC's social media presence and strategy; and develop, implement, and maintain a comprehensive calendar of DoD STEM events and posted on the website.

In close collaboration with the Government, the Recipient will develop a plan for the overall strategic outreach and communications campaign in support of DoD STEM priorities and goals. The Recipient will coordinate with the CAM to develop, manage, and execute the annual strategic communications plan and vision (in coordination with the DoD and IPAs; in alignment with DoD STEM objectives and priorities); develop, manage, and execute an annual communications schedule/editorial calendar (in coordination with DoD and IPAs; based on program year); plan, manage, and execute an integrated Social Media Strategy; and establish a communication infrastructure that is efficient and scalable to strengthen DoD STEM's engagement with target audiences across multiple platforms integrating the website, and traditional social media channels.

- **DoD STEM Technical Exchange:** In collaboration with the Government, the Recipient will plan and coordinate for the biennial DoD STEM Technical Exchange to bring together experts from STEM education and workforce development to share innovative practices for inspiring the next generation of STEM leaders. The DoD STEM Technical Exchange should prioritize engagement of DoD STEM education and workforce development practitioners, external partners, and other key stakeholders. For information on the inaugural DoD STEM Technical Exchange held on February 2023, please visit <https://dodstem.us/stem-exchange-23/>.
- **Purchases and contracting:** The Applicant should detail the process in which the purchase and contracting of services, items, and collateral required to support the outreach and communications plan. All such purchases must follow federal fiscal laws and will be approved by the CAM. These purchases can include, but are not limited to:
  - Graphic Design Services
  - Web Design Services
  - Print/Press Production
  - Promotional Materials/Informational Items
  - Outreach Suite/Memberships
  - Video Production Services
  - Web Domain Fee and Maintenance

The Recipient will work with the Government to ensure that all of the STEM's strategic initiatives are advertised through the centralized DoD STEM website, <https://dodstem.us/>. This website is a government-owned website which DSEC will be responsible for maintaining for the duration of the COA. This website will enable the DoD and the Consortium to ensure all partnership and program information is managed, stored and accessible in a centralized location for efficient and effective dissemination of information. The Recipient will ensure adequate personnel are in place to manage the entire DoD STEM website.

- **Alumni Engagement:** Over time, DSEC programs and partnerships will generate a large pool of talented, highly skilled STEM alumni who have benefitted from participating in DoD-sponsored STEM programs. STEM alumni engagement efforts will capitalize on the outcomes and successes of its programs, which can most effectively be accessed and shared through its alumni network. The best testimonial to the value of DoD STEM programs are previous and current program participants, their educational and professional pathways, and the experiences they can share with the greater STEM network. The Government believes that previous and current program participants are best suited to serve as role models and ambassadors for the DoD STEM programs, they participated in. Therefore, STEM alumni engagement efforts will provide the Government a way to access, connect, exchange, and share information that is relevant to current and future DoD STEM generations.

The Recipient will work with the Government to develop a strategy and tactics that will establish and grow STEM alumni engagement. The Applicant should consider innovative ways to accomplish the development of a STEM alumni network that allows DSEC and the Government to engage in a mutually beneficial connection to each other and DoD STEM programs, to support and advance DoD STEM eminence for future generations, and to stimulate continued interest in DoD STEM programs and share how they benefitted from engagements such as hands-on STEM experiences, and competitions.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT 4: REGIONAL HUBS AND ECOSYSTEMS**

**Overview:** DoD STEM aims to broaden reach and impact by engaging, partnering, and collaborating with an established network of like-minded organizations in strategic regional locations to increase program awareness and impact, and increase participation from diverse populations. The Federal STEM Strategic Plan<sup>5</sup> encourages Federal agencies to establish new or strengthen existing regional and national partnerships as it pertains to developing the nation's technical talent. In fact, the Federal government established a definition for a STEM education ecosystem, and it states that STEM education ecosystems consist of multi-sector partners united by a collective vision of supporting participation in STEM through the creation of accessible, inclusive STEM learning opportunities spanning all education stages and career pathways.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it states that an effective STEM education ecosystem must

---

<sup>10</sup> Progress Report on the Implementation of the Federal STEM Education Strategic Plan, December 2020. Federal definition for STEM Education Ecosystems (p.6). <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/Progress-Report-Federal-Implementation-STEM-Education-Strategic-Plan-Dec-2020.pdf>

continuously evaluate its activities and adapts as needed for the long-term and communicates its work to build broad support and advance best-practices.

**DSEC Regional Hubs:** The Applicant will consider the effectiveness of existing DSEC regional hubs (located in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area; Dayton, OH; San Diego, CA; and San Antonio, TX) and determine if these hub locations will be captured in their application, and continue to support effective practices. The Applicant should use DSEC regional hubs to leverage regional DoD assets, to include an emphasis in regions that can best support underserved and underrepresented populations in STEM, to include military connected students. In collaboration with the Government and DSEC partners, the Applicant is also responsible for enhancing these efforts and where appropriate, expand regional hubs to further strengthen collaborations with regional stakeholders from local education agencies, institutes of higher education, not-for-profit or community partners, and industry. DSEC regional hubs are regionally focused efforts which engages DSEC and other local stakeholders to address unique regional STEM education and workforce needs. The Applicant will work collaboratively with Fundamental Element 5 to implement new, and/or strengthen existing DSEC partner collaborations and initiatives within each regional hub, as well as with Element 2 for any evaluation of DSEC Regional Hub efforts. For more information on current DSEC Regional Hub efforts, see the 2021-2022 DSEC Annual Program Review<sup>11</sup> (p. 109), or the 2021-2022 DSEC Evaluation Data Chapter.<sup>12</sup>

## **FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT 5: STRATEGIC STEM INITIATIVES**

**Overview:** DoD STEM aims to grow its strategic outreach initiatives to expand its reach of its programs, to increase program awareness and impact as well as participation from diverse populations. The Government seeks to examine and adapt innovative ways to form mutually beneficial relationships with likeminded organizations that have similar STEM goals, specifically serving students from underserved and underrepresented populations<sup>13</sup>, including military dependents. In collaboration with Consortium Members and by sharing information, leveraging strong STEM networks, and building on existing relationships, the Government intends to promote its DoD STEM opportunities to better meet objectives, maximize impact, and provide more enriching STEM opportunities for students.

**DSEC Consortium Members and Programs:** The Applicant should consider a Consortium to be composed of like-minded organizations, such as partners from States, local governments, Indian tribes, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations or other partners in STEM, that align with the current DoD STEM Strategic Plan goals and objectives. The Consortium should be comprised of organizations to accomplish the following goals:

- Collaborate with STEM partners and leverage strong STEM networks. This could include, but is not limited to, internships/hands on research experiences at colleges or

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/APROY2Final.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://rise.articulate.com/share/Fp\\_94K-qHLx9MK4GplbVqikzONqnbh3W#/](https://rise.articulate.com/share/Fp_94K-qHLx9MK4GplbVqikzONqnbh3W#/)

<sup>13</sup> DoD STEM's definition of traditionally or historically underserved and underrepresented populations in STEM is in the Strategic Plan: [https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DoD\\_STEM\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2021.pdf](https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/DoD_STEM_Strategic_Plan_2021.pdf)

universities, partnerships with local/regional/national science and engineering expositions or festivals, etc.

- Promote and integrate a portfolio of STEM opportunities within the framework of Consortium Members' existing STEM programming.
- In accordance with 10 U.S.C. Sec. 2192b and in alignment to Goal 3.0 of the DoD STEM Strategic Plan, enhance the educational experiences of underrepresented and underserved (to include military dependent) PreK-12 students, their parents, and teachers. These programs may include teacher professional development and student-focused programs in the formal and informal learning environments.
- Coordinate with the Government to leverage existing and new partnerships to execute STEM activities such as virtual competitions and challenges across the PreK-12 levels. These competitions and challenges should include areas of, but are not limited to, robotics, mathematics, artificial intelligence, etc.

**DoD STEM Ambassador Program:** The Applicant will collaborate with the Government to continue the execution of the DoD STEM Ambassador Program<sup>14</sup> to annually engage a cohort of educators (predominantly classroom teachers) who will partner with DSEC Consortium Members and other stakeholders in the DoD STEM ecosystem (e.g. STEM leadership offices across the DoD Components) to advance STEM outreach throughout the program period and beyond. Program objectives include:

- Providing resources to teachers who specifically serve underserved and underrepresented student populations to include military-connected students
- Enhancing exposure to DoD STEM resources and programs
- Recognizing outstanding educators and promote deep STEM learning across the nation
- Collaborate and strengthen relations across the DoD STEM ecosystem.

DSEC Consortium Members will be responsible for the recruitment of prospective program participants, management of the application and selection process, coordination of cohort meetings and/or professional development, and other activities to promote DoD STEM opportunities and careers nationally. For information on current DoD STEM Ambassador Program, please review DSEC Annual Program Review 2021-2022 (p. 40).

**Expositions/Symposia/Events:** The Applicant should explain how it proposes to encourage STEM program participants to engage in scientific meetings/technical symposia to showcase their STEM achievements and receive recognition. Participation in scientific meetings/technical symposia can expand and enrich educational experiences of STEM students and educators by interacting and networking with STEM professionals in the field, exploring a variety of STEM disciplines and careers, gaining experience in communicating their research accomplishments, and serving as STEM ambassadors. This could be accomplished in the following ways; however, the Applicant is also expected to propose other technique(s) to accomplish this:

- Partner with technical associations and organizations that are willing to support STEM

---

<sup>14</sup> DSEC Annual Program Review 2021-2022, DoD Ambassadors Program (p.40). <https://dodstem-assets.dodstem.us/files/APROY2Final.pdf>

program participants and offer them a platform to present their research.

- Develop a fair and equitable process that identifies STEM students and educators who are invited to attend technical symposia to present their research accomplishments.
- Ensure that STEM students and educators who benefit from this opportunity provide an executive summary of their experience.
- Highlight STEM student and educator presenters through internal and external communications efforts.

**STEM Education and Outreach Activities:** The Applicant is encouraged to review existing DSEC efforts by reviewing the latest DSEC Annual Program Review published on the “Our Impact” page of the DoD STEM website <https://dodstem.us/about/impact/>. Applicants should determine the appropriate balance of student and teacher/educator-centered activities. Applicants are encouraged to assemble Consortium Members that provide proven and meaningful STEM learning experiences such as (but not limited to):

- Competitions (robotics, science, mathematics, or other research and/or engineering-based)
- Programs that empower and enable teachers and educators to effectively teach STEM disciplines
- Programs that prepare students for the rigor of college STEM courses (e.g. encouragement of underserved and underrepresented populations to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses in STEM and Research)
- Programs supporting transdisciplinary STEM learning and teaching<sup>15</sup>
- Programs that promote invention education
- Programs that directly or indirectly aligns with the DoD Critical Technology Areas<sup>16</sup> such as biotechnology, Cyber Security, Space Technologies, etc.
- Career Technical Education and/or manufacturing education
- Outreach programs that effectively engages students’ parents/legal guardians
- Programs that would foster/develop targeted career pathways and support placement in work-based learning

**Underserved and Underrepresented Populations:** In close collaboration with the Government, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. Sec. 2192b, and in alignment to Goal 3.0 of the DoD STEM Strategic Plan, develop a strategy and tactics to capture participation rates of women, underrepresented minorities, and persons in rural areas.<sup>17</sup> Per 10 U.S. Code 2192b, DoD STEM underserved populations include dependents of members of armed forces. To ensure execution of efforts in accordance with 10 U.S.C. Sec. 2192b, the Applicant will collaborate with the CAM to establish a line of communication with DoDEA and other key stakeholders to reach DoD military-dependent students and their teachers, and to make them aware of DoD STEM opportunities and careers.

---

<sup>15</sup> Federal definition of Convergence Education. A Guide to Transdisciplinary STEM Learning and Teaching. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Convergence\\_Public-Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Convergence_Public-Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense – Critical Technology Areas: <https://www.cto.mil/usdre-strat-vision-critical-tech-areas/>

<sup>17</sup> America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-358 – January 4, 2011, SEC 101, (b)(6). <https://www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ358/PLAW-111publ358.pdf>

Additionally, the DSEC consortium will continually evaluate current and prospective Consortium Members to enhance reach to underserved communities.

Develop a plan with established objectives and recommend measurable impacts in support of engaging and retaining interest of students from underserved and underrepresented populations.

**B. Federal Award Information**

An award made as a result of this FOA will provide potential funding for a period of up to ten (10) years. This award will be structured with a base period 24-month duration, with four 24-month option periods to be exercised based upon recipient performance and availability of funding. The Government will review the COA biennially to assess the degree to which the recipient is making progress towards meeting the objectives of the agreement.

The projected scope of the cooperative agreement is up to \$190 million over the course of ten (10) years. The Basic Research Office within the OUSD(R&E) will execute the DoD’s strategy to take a coordinated and cohesive approach to its STEM investments. Table 1 presents the estimated annual funding for the DSEC COA over the potential ten-year period of performance. The projected funding includes all costs associated with the COA. This information should be used as a guide by applicants when developing an application.

Table 1. Estimated Annual Funding over the Period of Performance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Base Period	Up to \$37,000,000
Option Period 1	Up to \$37,500,000
Option Period 2	Up to \$38,000,000
Option Period 3	Up to \$38,500,000
Option Period 4	Up to \$39,000,000
<b>TOTAL AWARD</b>	<b>Up to \$190,000,000</b>

At least 75% of funding allocation should fund the above-mentioned Fundamental Element 5, due to the fact that all direct STEM education and outreach programming efforts fall under this Fundamental Element. The budget should clearly show this allocation. The Recipient shall detail in their application how it will maintain this funding allocation balance, including potential challenges and how those will be addressed. Although there are no set minimums for Fundamental Elements 1-4, the application must clearly articulate the level of effort and costs associated with these Fundamental Elements, and the total funding

allocation for these Fundamental Elements should be no more than 25%. The Government encourages applicants to maximize budget allocations for the benefit of program participants (students and teachers).

The Recipient will invoice the DoD for approved program funds of each of the Fundamental Elements and then distribute funds to all Consortium members accordingly.

Prior to award, the Recipient and all consortium members will establish and maintain an approved accounting system in accordance with 2 CFR 200.302. This system will include comprehensive documentation for audit purposes to justify allocation of costs for each Fundamental Element and tasks performed, and for operation of the administrative program management office(s).

The Recipient will provide a Federal Financial Report (SF 425) every year.

The Recipient will provide a compiled annual financial report to the CAM electronically. The report will summarize (a) by cost element the total funds programmed and expended during the program year for the administrative management offices, (b) the funded and expended costs for each Fundamental Element, (c) by cost element the total funds programmed and expended during the year for any subprograms within the components, including cost share (additional/supplemental) funding received from other sources. This report will be submitted annually and will be due no later than 45 calendar days after the completion of each year of programming.

Below is a brief description of a cooperative agreement:

Cooperative Agreement. A legal instrument which, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6305, 10 U.S.C. 2192, 2192b, and 2193a, is used to enter into the same kind of relationship as a grant (see definition “grant”), except that substantial involvement is expected between the Federal Government and the Recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The cooperative agreement will be awarded to a “non-federal entity,” defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as a State, local government, Indian tribe, Institution of Higher Education (IHE), or nonprofit organization or a for-profit organization per 32 CFR 34. The term does not include “cooperative research and development agreements” as defined in 15 U.S.C. 3710a. No fee or profit is allowed.

The Consortium must be led by a Lead Organization (LO), meeting the non-federal entity definition above, and responsible for managing the Consortium. The LO will be charged with providing leadership to the Consortium as well as coordinating and synchronizing overarching efforts across all Fundamental Elements under this COA. Each Fundamental Element must be led by a Consortium Management Committee (CMC) Member. The diverseness required to cover the Fundamental Elements is expected to result in the need for more than one organization to be involved in meeting the program objectives. Performance under the cooperative agreement may also include additional Consortium

Members, particularly as STEM education and outreach program providers, but the number of Consortium Members should be balanced to ensure the streamlined implementation and administration of a well-focused portfolio and to maximize efficiency and minimize the duplication of efforts.

Cooperative agreements for institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are primarily governed by the following:

- a) Federal statutes
- b) Federal regulations
- c) 2 CFR Part 200
- d) 2 CFR part 1104
- e) 32 CFR Parts 21, 22, 26, and 28
- f) DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions
- g) Agency-specific Research Terms and Conditions

Cooperative agreements for for-profit and nonprofit organizations exempted from Subpart E—Cost Principles of 2 CFR Part 200, are primarily governed by the following:

- a) Federal statutes
- b) Federal regulations
- c) 32 CFR Part 34 – Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with For-Profit Organizations
- d) 32 CFR Parts 21, 22, 26, and 28
- e) DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions
- f) Agency-specific Research Terms and Conditions

Substantial Government involvement is expected under the DSEC COA and essential to the performance and successful execution of DSEC programs. The cooperative agreement enables and encourages Consortium members to synchronize and coordinate the program planning and execution of individual DSEC components with the Government's primary representative, the DSEC Cooperative Agreement Manager (CAM). It is the CAM's responsibility to provide technical and fiscal oversight over the DSEC Cooperative Agreement.

On behalf of the Office of the Office Under Secretary of the Defense for Research and Engineering [OUSD(R&E)], the CAM must ensure that DSEC programs and partnerships are planned and executed in alignment with the COA priorities and goals as implemented annually in the approved program plans and funding levels. In addition, it is the CAM's responsibility to integrate STEM assets/resources effectively and efficiently across the DoD's Science and Technology (S&T) Enterprise into DSEC programs and partnerships, to ensure STEM participants are exposed to and learn about STEM opportunities and careers across the DoD.

The CAM's role is also to ensure that individual DSEC programs and partnerships under the COA take a centralized approach in registration/application, evaluations and

outreach/communications. Lastly, the CAM facilitates/synchronizes between the funding and policy office at OUSD(R&E), the Grants Officer, Consortium members and DoD laboratories and engineering centers to ensure program intent and objectives are met. To grow DoD STEM under the DSEC COA into a more robust and dynamic program, the CAM will make informed decisions on which efforts to adjust, which practices sustaining and expand, and to make real-time adjustments to funding, planning, implementation, and processes, if required.

**Deliverables:**

<b>Fundamental Element #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description / Type of Format</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Reviewer / Acceptor</b>
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Monthly Status Report describing work performed during the month, anticipated future work, problems and/or delays	Microsoft Word, Excel, or PDF	15 <sup>th</sup> of each month	CAM
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Monthly financial reports describing funds execution to date and status of current funding allocation balance across Elements	Microsoft Word, Excel, or PDF	15 <sup>th</sup> of each month	CAM
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Biennial Program Plan describing goals/objectives and budget for the upcoming option period	Reports, lists, tables, charts, forms as required in Microsoft Office format	30 days prior to start of option period	CAM
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Biennial Program Report describing outcomes of prior option/base period, challenges, and program highlights	Reports, lists, tables, charts, forms as required in Microsoft Office or PDF format	45 days after the conclusion of the option / base period	CAM
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Interim Program Review describing outcomes mid-way through base/option period.	Reports, lists, tables, charts, forms as required in Microsoft Office or PDF format	45 days after the conclusion of the option / base period	CAM
All Fundamental Elements (1-5)	Annual Financial Report and SF425. The AFR will provide cost breakdown by Element and by Consortium Member.	Reports, lists, tables, charts, forms as required in Microsoft Office or PDF format	45 days after the conclusion of the option / base period	
Fundamental Element 1	Quarterly Consortium meeting's agenda and presentations	Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and/or PDF	At least five (5) business days prior to meeting date	CAM
Fundamental Element 1	Conduct periodic Consortium	Virtual, in-person or hybrid	TBD	

	Management Committee (CMC) meetings			
Fundamental Element 2	Biennial Evaluation Report:	Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and/or PDF	90 days after the conclusion of the option / base period	CAM
Fundamental Element 2	Execute an annual update of the DSEC GIS Map to captures program reach and other pertinent program features to illustrate the depth and breadth of DoD STEM programs	Arc GIS or other similar type of software	Annually	CAM
Fundamental Element 3	Execute quarterly web maintenance and hosting service updates to include built-in database portals within the DoD STEM website for DoD STEM Robotics Grant, Annual Program Data Calls, etc.	The recipient will host and provide web maintenance services on a routine continuous basis throughout agreement's period of performance	Quarterly	CAM
Fundamental Element 3	Promotional Materials	Print materials, electronic correspondence, journal articles, advertisements, announcements, and social media posts in either print or digital form where appropriate	Government shall have five (5) calendar days to approve material. Published/reprinted materials shall be available within 10 calendar days of each print or correspondence.	CAM
Fundamental Element 3	DoD STEM Technical Exchange execution plan for 2025 and 2027	Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and/or PDF	Fall of 2025 and 2027 (Exact dates TBD)	CAM
Fundamental Element 5	Quarterly Program Activity Schedule describing upcoming 90 days and beyond notable DSEC events	Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and/or PDF	Fifteen days prior to start of quarter	CAM

## **PROGRAM TRANSITION**

The current COA will conclude 31 August 2024. The DoD intends to make a single award to the DSEC COA on or about 1 July 2024 to allow a transitional period between the Recipient of the current cooperative agreement and the new consortium formed by the Recipient of this award. Upon award, the Recipient will work immediately with the CAM to develop a transition plan with the existing agreement Recipient to include transfer of any intellectual and physical properties, and plans for continuation/phase out of ongoing programs and partnerships.

Specific items, but not all inclusive, to be transitioned to the Recipient are listed below:

1. Domain management of <https://dodstem.us/>.
2. Social media accounts administrative rights.
3. Transfer of any physical or electronic outreach or promotional materials
4. Transfer ownership and maintenance of the DoD STEM-on-the-Go Van
5. Ongoing programs that have not concluded and will need to be continued to completion under this award
6. Communication strategy of transition to the public, partners, DoD, and other stakeholders
7. All historical documentation regarding program reviews, strategic documents, financial documents, and other historical documentation

The Recipient will develop and implement a plan to identify the tasks and activities required to efficiently transfer all documentation, processes to recipient hardware and software systems to ensure seamless program operation upon agreement award. The plan should identify resources required with responsibilities, define schedules and resource estimates, and address plans to minimize operation risks. The Recipient will participate in person or via electronic participation in a government-scheduled, Kick-Off Meeting after award. The Recipient and any sub-recipient(s) shall participate in the Kick-Off Meeting. The purpose of this Kick-Off Meeting is to (1) aid both the Government and recipient personnel in achieving a clear and mutual understanding of all requirements, and (2) identify and resolve potential problems.

### **C. Eligibility Information**

The cooperative agreement will be awarded to a Lead Organization which meets the qualifications of a “non-federal entity,” defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as a State, local government, Indian tribe, Institution of Higher Education (IHE), or nonprofit organization or a for-profit organization per 32 CFR 34. Applicants are reminded that formation of a Consortium is a requirement in order to be responsive to this FOA, and the Consortium may be either already existing or newly formed. All Consortium Members are expected to have significant involvement and input into the overall DSEC effort.

The DoD envisions the Government will work with Consortium Members to collaboratively advance STEM education and outreach programs conducted across the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, or other U.S. Territories, as well as DoDEA locations across the

world.<sup>6</sup>Current and past awardees from previous NDEP funding opportunities are eligible to submit an application to this FOA.

The Recipient will be charged with spearheading the efforts to meet previously identified goals and in managing overall efforts in program evaluations, communications, and outreach. Additionally, Applicants are expected to carefully consider the construct of their proposed Consortium to ensure clarity of each CMC Member's area(s) of responsibility and in providing flexibility when and where necessary, to efficiently achieve the goals in support of program priorities.

To prevent the existence of bias and unfair competitive advantage resulting from conflicting rules, Applicants must identify in their application any organizational conflict of interests (OCI) which may exist. If an Applicant has an actual or potential OCI, their application must identify the OCI and the mitigation plan to address it. Silence on this topic in an application will be understood to mean there is no OCI with the Applicant.

**Subawardees:**

The Consortium will be augmented with subawardees (i.e. Consortium Members, excluding the Lead Organization) to meet the objectives of this effort, especially for the efforts for which they are particularly qualified.

To be qualified, Consortium Members must have the following:

- Management capability and adequate financial and technical resources to administer the program of activities envisioned under the DSEC effort.
- A satisfactory record of administering such programs or activities (if a prior recipient of an award).
- A satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- Be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under applicable laws and regulation.

In deciding whether a Recipient is otherwise qualified, the Grants Officer shall ensure that the potential Applicant is registered and in good standing in the System for Award Management (SAM).

The Recipient must comply with Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 252.227-7020 Rights in Special Works.

The Recipient must comply with the Governmentwide patent rights award clause at 37 CFR 401.14, with the modifications as described in the DoD R&D Terms and Conditions (September 2023). DoD adopts this Governmentwide clause for the following entities, thereby broadening the applicability beyond types of entities included in the definition of "contractor" in 37 CFR part 401: any institution of higher education, non-profit organization, State, local government, Indian tribe, for-profit entity, foreign organization, or foreign public entity receiving a DoD award or subaward for the performance of experimental, research, or

developmental work.

The Recipient must recognize the Federal Government's right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award; and authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award for Federal Government purposes.

## **D. Application and Submission Information**

### **1. Address to View Funding Opportunity Announcement**

This FOA may be accessed via the following websites:

- a) Grants.gov ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov))
- b) ARL website (<https://arl.devcom.army.mil/collaborate-with-us/>)

Amendments to this FOA, if any, will be posted to these websites when they occur. Interested parties are encouraged to periodically check these websites for updates and amendments.

The following information is for those wishing to respond to the FOA:

### **2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Application forms and instructions will be available at Grants.gov. To access these materials, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, select "Apply for Grants", and then select "Download an application Package." Enter the funding opportunity number, W911NF24S0003.

NOTE: For compatible versions of Adobe Reader, please see the following link: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

Applicants must complete the mandatory forms and any optional forms (e.g., SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. The required fields should be completed in accordance with the "pop-up" instructions on the forms. To activate the instructions, turn on the "Help Mode" (icon with the pointer and question mark at the top of the form). Files that are attached to the forms must be in Adobe Portable Document Form (PDF) unless otherwise specified in this announcement.

The following formatting rules apply for the file attachments:

- Paper size when printed – 8.5 x 11-inch paper
- Margins – 1 inch on all sides of paper
- Spacing – single
- Font – No smaller than Times New Roman, 11 point
- Form: SF 424 (R&R) (Mandatory) – Complete this form first to populate data in other forms.

- Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) usernames and passwords serve as “electronic signatures” when your organization submits applications through Grants.gov. By using the SF 424 (R&R), applicants are providing the certification required by 32 CFR Part 28 regarding lobbying.

Form: Research & Related Other Project Information - Complete questions 1 through 6 and attach files.

**NOTE: Pages in excess of the noted page limits in each of the application requirement below will be removed from the application packet and will not be evaluated.**

- Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7 on the form) - The Project Summary should be a brief abstract that summarizes the content of the application. The project summary must not exceed 5 pages.
- Project Narrative (Field 8 on the form) - Chapters and Numbers of pages – Field 8 is to contain the chapters set forth below and may not exceed the stipulated page counts for those chapters.
- Chapter 1- Technical Plan. The pages included in Chapter 1 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 1 must not exceed 20 pages, utilizing one side of the page. This chapter should clearly address the requirements defined in Fundamental Elements 2-5, as well as any Fundamental Element 1 roles and activities not otherwise captured in Chapter 2.
- Chapter 2 - Management. The pages included in Chapter 2 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 2 of the application must not exceed 10 pages, utilizing one side of the page. This chapter should clearly address management of all efforts defined in Fundamental Elements 1-5 to include overall Consortium Management, Articles of Collaboration, management of program evaluations, strategic communications and alumni engagement, management of regional DSEC HUBs/Ecosystems, and management of Strategic STEM Initiatives.
- Chapter 3 - Past Performance Information - The pages included in Chapter 3 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 3 of the application must not exceed 10 pages, utilizing one side of the page. This does not include past performance questionnaires.
- Chapter 4 - Credentials - Credentials are limited to 20 pages total to include the resumes or biographical sketches of individuals.

Bibliography and References Cited (Field 9 on the form) - Attach a listing of applicable publications cited in above sections.

Facilities and Other Resources (Field 10 on the form) - The applicant is to include a listing of facilities and other resources available to support the application. Any Government resources necessary for performance are to be clearly identified. Attach this information at Field 10.

Equipment (Field 11 on the form) - The applicant is to include a listing of equipment available to support the application. Any Government equipment necessary for performance is to be clearly identified. Attach this information at Field 11.

Other Attachments (Field 12 on the form) are as follows:

ATTACHMENT 1. Attach the Cost Proposal and narrative. The cost portion of the application shall contain cost estimates sufficiently detailed for meaningful evaluation. For all applications, the elements of the budget should include:

- Direct Labor - Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates.
- Indirect Costs - Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, insurance, etc. (must show base amount and rate).
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify and include basis for costs.
- Subaward - A cost proposal, as detailed as the Applicant's cost proposal, will be required to be submitted by each proposed sub-recipient.
- Consultant - Provide consultant agreement or another document that verifies the proposed loaded daily/hourly rate. Include a description of the nature of and the need for any consultant's participation. Provide budget justification.
- Materials - Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify.
- Other Directs Costs - Particularly any proposed items of equipment or facilities. Equipment and facilities generally must be furnished by the recipient (justifications must be provided when Government funding for such items is sought). Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market research, etc.). Justify.

ATTACHMENT 2. SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

If applicable, attach a complete SF- LLL. Applicability: If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the grant/collaborative agreement, you must complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."

ATTACHMENT 3. Complete the following (see F.2.b.i below) Representations under DoD Assistance Agreements: Appropriations Provisions on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions.

ATTACHMENT 4. A Data Management Plan which will describe the data that is collected

through the course of the proposed research and information on how the data will be shared, organized, and preserved. In instances where this is not possible, The Data Management Plan must explain why it is not possible or scientifically appropriate. The Data Management Plan should not exceed two pages. Information on the Data Management Plan can be found in DoDI 3200.12, Section 3.c. of Enclosure 3. (<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/320012p.pdf?ver=2019-04-30-073122-220>).

ATTACHMENT 5. A copy of the proposed Articles of Collaboration, signed by a duly authorized representative for each Consortium Management Committee (CMC) member. For proposal purposes, Consortium members may provide signed memorandums stating they will abide by the terms of the proposed AOC, which may be included as part of Attachment 5. The selected Awardee will be required to provide a final AOC signed by all Consortium members at the time of award.

### **3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exemption approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d) is required to:

- a) Be registered in SAM prior to submitting its application;
- b) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (formerly DUNS) in its application; and
- c) Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

### **4. Submission Dates and Times**

- a) Applications: Electronic submission of applications through grants.gov are due by **3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on 11 March 2024**. Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered or evaluated by the Government.
- b) Application Receipt Notices: After a application is submitted to Grants.gov, the AOR will receive a series of three emails from Grants.gov. The first two emails will be received within 24 to 48 hours after submission. The first email will confirm time of receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. A third email

will be received once the grantor agency has confirmed receipt of the application. Reference the Grants.gov User Guide at Grants.gov Online Help for information on how to track your application package.

For the purposes of this FOA, an application is not considered received by ARO until the AOR receives email #3.

#### **5. Intergovernmental Review**

Not Applicable

#### **6. Funding Restrictions**

Per 2 CFR § 200.216, funds may not be used to procure telecommunications equipment or video surveillance services or equipment produced by:

- Huawei Technologies Company,
- ZTE Corporation Hytera Communications Corporation,
- Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company,
- Dahua Technology Company
- any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities

Funds from an award may not be used to attain fee or profit.

Funds are subject to Section 1062 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, which prohibits the Department from providing funding to any U.S. institution of higher education hosting a Confucius Institute unless that institution receives a waiver from the Secretary of Defense. This prohibition does not apply to direct funding to students attending U.S. institutions of higher education. International institutions that host Confucius Institutes are not subject to the prohibition in section 1062 of the NDAA for FY 2021 and thus do not require waivers to receive Department of Defense (DoD) funding. The prohibition on funding goes into effect on October 1, 2023.

#### **7. Other Submission Requirements**

Information to Be Requested from Successful Applicants: Applicants whose applications are accepted for funding will be contacted before award to provide additional information required for award. The required information may include requests to clarifying budget explanations, representations, certifications, and some technical aspects.

### **E. Application Review Information**

**1. Criteria.** It is the intent of the FOA to solicit the most creative, innovative, and effective approach to the administration of the DSEC. The award decision will be based on an overall evaluation of each application in accordance with the factors set forth below. These factors in order of relative importance are:

- (1) Technical Plan to meet requirements of each Fundamental Element;

- (2) Management;
- (3) Past Performance; (4) Credentials; and
- (5) Cost.

All non-cost factors when combined are significantly more important than cost. The Factor 1 (Technical Plan) is the most important factor, the Factor 2 (Management) is the second most important factor, the Factors 3 (Past Performance) and 4 (Credentials) are equal in weight and are the third most important factors. Factor 5 (Cost) is the least important factor.

**Factor (1) Technical Plan** - The Technical Plan should include details on how the Consortium and its Members will collectively address the requirements described under the five (5) Fundamental Elements; focusing on how such plans will lead to achieving these requirements. Each of the Fundamental Elements should be addressed individually, and then an explanation of how the Applicant will bring all five of the Fundamental Elements together for successful execution of proposed programs. Applicants should provide evidence of the inclusion of appropriate technical expertise required to execute described efforts.

Towards the Technical Plan factor, Applicants and all proposed Consortium Members will be evaluated on their strength in showcasing their capacity to:

- Engage STEM program participants equitably and fairly;
- Increase awareness of and participation in the broader DoD STEM education opportunities;
- Increase awareness of DoD STEM careers;
- Leverage and integrate the DoD STEM website and resources across Consortium efforts;
- Develop and maintain a complex, multi-user database, and web-based front end;
- Facilitate transitioning from the current program to the resulting program once awarded;
- Select capable and appropriate sub-recipients as Consortium Members; and
- Ensure collaboration amongst Consortium Management and mitigate conflict between organizations.

These capabilities of all Consortium Members can be showcased in the form of technical expertise, ongoing projects for other contracts/agreements/grants, or a combination of other demonstrable capabilities. Note that under Factor 1 applicants should *clearly* articulate a detailed technical approach for the proposed duration of the COA, with supporting evidence of capabilities and relevance as needed. Factor 3 is designed to capture Past Performance in greater detail and therefore Factor 1 should not rely heavily on elements better captured in Factor 3.

All areas listed, as well as the scope of work listed in the Fundamental Elements, will be evaluated against all submitted documentation and the full application to develop an overall score for this factor.

**Factor (2) Management** – The management chapter should focus on the plan for managing the administration of recipient activities over the lifetime of the DSEC COA. The Applicant should demonstrate a viable management approach by providing a feasible, comprehensive management plan.

Towards the Management factor, Applicants will be evaluated on the strength of their proposed management strategy, to include:

- Detailed description of its overall management concept;
- Proposed Articles of Collaboration signed by each CMC Member (submitted as Attachment 5);
- Methodology and mechanisms for development of a comprehensive program plan;
- Sufficient description of the leadership roles and management to be provided by the Consortium Chair (CC) and Consortium Management Committee (CMC);
- Management procedures to oversee execution of the Fundamental Elements;
- Management concepts and approaches to foster collaboration and communication among Consortium Members to include clearly defined roles for each Consortium Member;
- Controls and strategies to ensure timely submission and tracking of Consortium invoices and funds execution; and
- Management, storage, and protection approaches to maintain and safeguard the vast amount of data that is to be collected and used in DSEC programs.
- Adherence to ensure the Federal Government’s right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award; and authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under this award for Federal Government purposes.
- Adherence to all applicable federal and state child protection and labor laws and the protection and management of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data per the Privacy Act of 1974.

These capabilities can be showcased in the form of in the form of technical expertise, ongoing projects for other contracts/agreements/grants, or a combination of other demonstrable capabilities. Note that under Factor 2 applicants should clearly articulate a detailed management plan for the proposed duration of the COA, with supporting evidence of capabilities and relevance as needed. Factor 3 is designed to capture Past Performance in greater detail and therefore Factor 2 should not rely heavily on elements better captured in Factor 3. All areas listed will be evaluated against all submitted documentation and the full application to develop an overall score for this factor.

**Factor (3) Past Performance** – The Past Performance factor should focus on previous or current efforts performed by the Applicant that demonstrates the ability to successfully perform requirements similar to those outlined in the FOA.

The Applicant shall include the following information in this section:

- Three (3) references that can verify and validate its ability to successfully perform the

requirements in the FOA.

- For each, provide: contact information (agency/company name, point of contact, telephone and facsimile numbers, email address, etc.) as well as the corresponding project/contract/grant/agreement name and number.
- A description of its ongoing and previous Government Agreements/contracts during the past three (3) years, which are relevant to the effort required in this FOA.
  - Identify in specific detail for each contract/grant/agreement listed why or how the effort is relevant or similar to the effort required in this FOA, particularly in areas where they will have administrative management control.

The Government will evaluate the Applicant’s record of past and current performance to ascertain the probability of successfully performing the requirements as outline in this FOA. The Government will evaluate this factor using all of the documentation submitted with the application. An applicant without any applicable past experience will receive a neutral rating, which will be factored neither favorably nor unfavorably.

Recency: For purposes of this evaluation, the Government will only consider awards that are currently active or that have been physically completed in the last thirty-six (36) months.

Relevancy: The first aspect of the past performance evaluation is to assess the Applicant’s past performance to determine how relevant a recent effort accomplished by the Applicant is to the effort to be acquired as described in the FOA. Relevancy is not separately rated; however, the following criteria will be used to establish what is relevant which shall include similarity of service/support, complexity, dollar value, contract type, and degree of subcontract/teaming.

*Past Performance Relevancy Ratings*

Adjectival Rating	Description
Very Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved essentially the same scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.
Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved similar scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this FOA requires.
Somewhat Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved some scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this FOA requires.
Not Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved little or none of the scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this FOA requires.

Quality Assessment: Assess the quality of the Applicant’s past performance on those recent efforts that were determined relevant by determining how well the contractor performed on the awards. Documented results from Past Performance Questionnaires, interviews, CPARS, and other sources form the support and basis for this assessment.

Performance Confidence Assessment: The final step is for the team to arrive at a single consensus performance confidence assessment for the Applicant, selecting the most appropriate rating from the chart below. This rating considers the assessed quality of the relevant/recent efforts gathered.

*Past Performance Confidence Assessments Ratings*

Adjectival Rating	Description
Substantial Confidence	Based on the Applicant’s recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a high expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.
Satisfactory Confidence	Based on the Applicant’s recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a reasonable expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.
Neutral Confidence	No recent/relevant performance record is available or the Applicant’s performance record is so sparse that no meaningful confidence assessment rating can be reasonably assigned. The Applicant may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on the factor of past performance.
Limited Confidence	Based on the Applicant’s recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a low expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.

**Factor (4) Credentials.** This factor will focus on the Applicant’s credentials as an organization (reputation or recognition in the area of STEM outreach or education) as well as the credentials of the specific individuals proposed to serve in essential Consortium management roles. This factor will reflect both existing and identified key personnel, as well as the Applicant’s ability to recruit qualified personnel. A sufficient description of the leadership and management roles necessary to adequately execute the application should be provided.

Applicants should include the following details for key personnel in this section, to include at minimum, the Consortium Chair (CC), Consortium Management Committee (CMC) Members, and Individual Program Administrators (IPAs), as well as any additional leadership, management, or essential personnel meaningfully engaged in the cooperative agreement:

- The Functional Elements and/or functions each of the named persons will be responsible for managing; and

- Names, brief biographies, and availability, noting degrees, certifications, publications, awards, products, or other relevant details highlighting the named persons' capacity to perform in their identified DSEC functional role.

Towards the Credentials factor, Applicants will be evaluated on the following:

- A demonstrated reputation or recognition of the Lead Organization in the area of STEM education and outreach;
- Key personnel identified with education, credentials, and/or experiences which clearly and sufficiently align with their identified Consortium role; and
- Collectively, the identified key personnel are able to address the core objectives of the cooperative agreement.

**Factor (5) Cost.** While the total cost of the efforts outlined within the proposal will not be used in evaluation, several factors related to cost and budgeting will be used in the final determination of a Recipient.

Evaluation of this area will consider the following criteria:

- Cost realism, reasonableness, and affordability within funding constraints; and
- Sufficient management, reporting, and risk-reduction strategies for anticipated cost and budget challenges.

All areas listed will be evaluated against all submitted documentation and the full application to develop an overall score for this factor

The Government may make adjustments to the cost of the total proposed effort as deemed necessary to reflect what the effort should cost. These adjustments shall consider the task undertaken and approach proposed. These adjustments may include upward or downward adjustments to proposed labor hours, labor rates, quantity of materials, price of materials, overhead rates and G&A, etc.

#### **RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FACTORS**

All information necessary for the review and evaluation of an application must be contained in the application. No other material will be provided to the panel. Applications should contain sufficient technical detail to allow for an in-depth technical assessment.

The factors outlined above will be prioritized in the following order of importance: The Factor 1 (Technical Plan) is the most important factor, the Factor 2 (Management) is the second most important factor, the Factors 3 (Past Performance) and 4 (Credentials) are equal in weight and are the third most important factors. Factor 5 (Cost) is the least important factor. The merit criteria that will be used to rate each Factor 1, Factor 2 and Factor 4 are described in Evaluation Merit Definitions table below.

### Evaluation Merit Definitions

Adjectival Rating	Description
Outstanding	Application meets and/or exceeds requirements and indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements. Strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is very low.
Good	Application meets requirements and indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements. Application contains strengths which outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is low.
Acceptable	Application meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. Strengths and weaknesses are offsetting or will have little or no impact on completing requirements in the FOA. Risk of unsuccessful performance is no worse than moderate.
Unacceptable	Application does not meet requirements of the FOA and contains one or more deficiencies. The application is un-awardable.

## 2. Review and Selection Process

All information necessary for the review and evaluation of an application must be contained within the application. No other material will be provided to those evaluating applications. An initial review of the applications will be conducted to ensure compliance with the requirements of this FOA.

**Failure to comply with the requirements of the FOA may result in an application receiving no further consideration for award.**

An initial review of the applications will be conducted to ensure compliance with the requirements of the FOA. Failure to comply with the requirements of the FOA may result in a application receiving no further consideration for award.

Applications that are in compliance with the requirements of the FOA will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation factors and priorities described above. Award will be based on an integrated assessment of each Applicant's ability to satisfy the FOA requirements.

The review panel will consist of representatives and subject matter experts from across the DoD and may also include other Federal agencies. The panel will not compare one application against another, but rather assess each application individually in regards to how it addresses the requirements defined in the Fundamental Elements as well as how well it addresses the evaluation criteria and factors published within the FOA.

## F. Award Administration Information

### 1. Award Notices

Applicants whose applications are recommended for award may be contacted by a Grants Officer or his/her representative. The notification email must not be regarded as an authorization to commit or expend funds. Award is not made until the cooperative agreement is signed by both the successful applicant and the Grants Officer.

The award document signed by the Grants Officer is the official and authorizing award instrument. The authorizing award instrument, signed by the Grants Officer, will be emailed to the PI and AOR.

### 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Each award under this announcement will be governed by the general award terms and conditions in effect at the time of the award that conform to DoD's implementation of OMB guidance applicable to financial assistance in 2 CFR part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." The DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions (latest version, September 2023 are located at <https://www.nre.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions>. These terms and conditions are incorporated by reference in this announcement.

b. Required Representations and Certifications:

i. Cooperative Agreement Proposals:

(1) Grant awards greater than \$100,000 require a certification of compliance with a national policy mandate concerning lobbying. Statutes and Government-wide regulations require the certification to be submitted prior to award. When submitting your grant through Grants.gov, by completing blocks 18 and 19 of the SF 424 ( R&R) Form, the grant applicant is providing the certification on lobbying required by 32 CFR Part 28; otherwise, a copy signed by the AOR must be provided. Below is the required certification:

\*\*\*\*\*

CERTIFICATION AT APPENDIX A TO 32 CFR PART 28 REGARDING LOBBYING:

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements the undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any

Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

\*\*\*\*\*

(2) In accordance with Section 743 of P.L. 113-235 , none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by that or any other Act may be made available for a grant or cooperative agreement with an entity that requires its employees or contractors seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees or contractors from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive the information.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH ENTITIES THAT REQUIRED CERTAIN INTERNAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS – REPRESENTATION

Agreement with the representation below will be affirmed by checking the "I agree" box in block 17 of the SF424 (R&R) as part of the electronic proposal submitted via Grants.gov. The representation reads as follows:

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does not require any of its employees, contractors, or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, subrecipients from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.

\*Note that: Section 743 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to SF 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3) Recipients are required to submit the following representation with the application package IAW the instructions of this FOA:

\*\*\*\*\*

#### PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH ENTITIES USING CERTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT

Section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 (Public Law 115-232) prohibits the head of an executive agency from obligating or expending loan or grant funds to procure or obtain, extend, or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract (or extend or 105 renew a contract) to procure or obtain the equipment, services, or systems prohibited systems as identified in section 889 of the NDAA for FY 2019. For more information on how this applies to all grant recipients and sub-recipients after August 13, 2020, please see DoD Research General Terms and Conditions (SEP 2021) NP Article IV. Other national policy requirements, paragraph 18.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

REPRESENTATIONS UNDER DOD ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS:  
APPROPRIATIONS PROVISIONS ON TAX DELINQUENCY AND FELONY CONVICTIONS

The applicant is  is not  a “Corporation” meaning any entity, including any institution of higher education, other nonprofit organization, or for-profit entity that has filed articles of incorporation.

If the applicant is a “Corporation” please complete the following representations:

(a) The applicant represents that it is  is not  a corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

(b) The applicant represents that it is  is not  a corporation that was convicted of a criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months.

NOTE: If an applicant responds in the affirmative to either of the above representations, the applicant is ineligible to receive an award unless the agency suspension and debarment official (SDO) has considered suspension or debarment and determined that further action is not required to protect the Government’s interests. The applicant therefore should provide information about its tax liability or conviction to the agency’s SDO as soon as it can do so, to facilitate completion of the required considerations before award decisions are made.

\*\*\*\*\*

c. Policy Requirements:

The following list provides notable national policy requirements that may be applicable to an award. NOTE: The following is not an all-inclusive list of policy requirements. For assistance awards, refer to the DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions at <https://www.nre.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions> for additional national policy requirements that may apply. For contract awards, appropriate clauses will be added to award documents.

i. PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

(1) The recipient must protect the rights and welfare of individuals who participate as human subjects in research under this award and comply fully with the requirements at 32 CFR part 219, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 3216.02, 10 U.S.C. 980, the National Policy Requirements Concerning Live Organisms Terms and Conditions (Section A.1., Human Subjects, at 81 Federal Register 78380, Appendix C to Part 1122), and when applicable, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policies and regulations.

(2) The recipient must not begin performance of research involving human subjects, also known as human subjects research (HSR), that is covered under 32 CFR part 219, or that meets exemption criteria under 32 CFR 219.101(b), or expends funding on such effort, until you receive a formal notification of approval from the cognizant DoD Human Research Protection Official (HRPO). Approval to perform HSR under this award is received after the HRPO has performed a review of the recipient's documentation of planned HSR activities and has officially furnished a concurrence with the recipient's determination as presented in the documentation.

(3) In order for the HRPO to accomplish this concurrence review, the recipient must provide sufficient documentation to enable his or her assessment as follows:

(a) If the HSR meets an exemption criteria under 32 CFR 219.101(b), the documentation must include a citation of the exemption category under 32 CFR 219.101(b) and a rationale statement.

(b) If the recipient's activity is determined as "non-exempt research involving human subjects", the documentation must include:

– Assurance of Compliance (a written assurance that an institution will comply with requirements of 32 CFR Part 219, as well as the terms of the assurance) appropriate for the scope of work or program plan; and

– Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, as well as all documentation reviewed by the IRB to make their determination.

(4) The HRPO retains final judgment on what activities constitute HSR, whether an exempt category applies, whether the risk determination is appropriate, and whether the planned HSR activities comply with the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section.

(5) The recipient must notify the Grants Officer/Agreements Officer immediately of any suspensions or terminations of the Assurance of Compliance.

(6) DoD staff, consultants, and advisory groups may independently review and inspect the recipient's research and research procedures involving human subjects and, based on such findings, DoD may prohibit research that presents unacceptable hazards or otherwise fails to comply with DoD requirements.

(7) Definitions for terms used in this section are found in DoDI 3216.02.

ii. ANIMAL USE:

(1) Prior to initiating any animal work under the award, the recipient must:

(a) Register the recipient's research, development, test, and evaluation or training facility with the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with 7 U.S.C. 2136 and 9 CFR section 2.30, unless otherwise exempt from this requirement by meeting the conditions in 7 U.S.C. 2136 and 9 CFR parts 1-4 for the duration of the activity.

(b) Have the recipient's proposed animal use approved in accordance with DoDI 3216.01, Use of Animals in DoD Programs by a DoD Component Headquarters Oversight Office.

(c) Furnish evidence of such registration and approval to the grants officer.

(2) The recipient must make the animals on which the research is being conducted, and all premises, facilities, vehicles, equipment, and records that support animal care and use available during business hours and at other times mutually agreeable to the recipient, the United States Department of Agriculture Office of Animal and

Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) representative, personnel representing the DoD component oversight offices, as well as the grants officer, to ascertain that the recipient is compliant with 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq., 9 CFR parts 1-4, and DoDI 3216.01.

(3) The recipient's care and use of animals must conform with the pertinent laws of the United States, regulations of the Department of Agriculture, and regulations, policies, and procedures of the DoD (see 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq., 9 CFR parts 1-4, and DoDI 3216.01).

(4) The recipient must acquire animals in accordance with DoDI 3216.01.

iii. BIOLOGICAL SAFETY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Assistance Instruments may be subject to biological safety program requirements IAW:

(a) Army Regulation (AR) 385-10, Chapter 20

[https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB\\_ID=1024611](https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1024611)

(b) Department of Army (DA) Pamphlet (PAM) 385-69 on safety standards for microbiological and biomedical laboratories. This pamphlet requires the mandatory use of the latest edition of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)

[https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/pdf/web/p385\\_69.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/p385_69.pdf)

(c) DoD Manual 6055.18-M, Enclosure 4, Section 13

<https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=24365>

iv. MILITARY RECRUITING:

(1) Assistance Instruments: This is to notify potential applicants that each grant or cooperative agreement awarded under this announcement to an institution of higher education must include the following term and condition:

(a) As a condition for receiving funds available to the DoD under this award, you agree that you are not an institution of higher education (as defined in 32 CFR part 216) that has a policy or practice that either prohibits, or in effect prevents:

(i) The Secretary of a Military Department from maintaining, establishing, or operating a unit of the Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC)—in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 654 and other applicable Federal laws—at that institution (or any sub-element of that institution);

(ii) Any student at that institution (or any sub-element of that institution) from enrolling in a unit of the Senior ROTC at another institution of higher education.

(iii) The Secretary of a Military Department or Secretary of Homeland Security from gaining access to campuses, or access to students (who are 17 years of age or older) on campuses, for purposes of military recruiting in a manner that is at least equal in quality and scope to the access to campuses and to students that is provided to any other employer; or

(iv) Access by military recruiters for purposes of military recruiting to the names of students (who are 17 years of age or older and enrolled at that institution or any sub-element of that institution); their addresses, telephone listings, dates and places of birth, levels of education, academic majors, and degrees received; and the most recent educational institutions in which they were enrolled.

(b) If you are determined, using the procedures in 32 CFR part 216, to be such an institution of higher education during the period of performance of this award, we:

(i) Will cease all payments to you of DoD funds under this award and all other DoD grants and cooperative agreements; and

(ii) May suspend or terminate those awards unilaterally for material failure to comply with the award terms and conditions.

v. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE:

(1) Assistance Instruments: The recipient must comply with drug-free workplace requirements in 32 CFR Part 26, which is the DoD implementation of 41 U.S.C. 701, “Drug-free workplace requirements for Federal contractors.”

vi. DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION:

(1) Assistance Instruments: The recipient must comply with requirements regarding debarment and suspension in Subpart C of 2 CFR part 180, as adopted by DoD at 2 CFR part 1125. This includes requirements concerning the recipient’s principals

under an award, as well as requirements concerning the recipient's procurement transactions and subawards that are implemented in DoD Research and Development General Terms and Conditions.

vii. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION:

(1) Assistance Instruments: The recipient must report information about subawards and executive compensation as specified in the award term in Appendix A to 2 CFR Part 170, "Reporting subaward and executive compensation information," modified as follows:

(a) To accommodate any future designation of a different Government wide Web site for reporting subaward information, the Web site "<http://www.fsrs.gov>" cited in paragraphs a.2.i. and a.3 of the award provision is replaced by the phrase "<http://www.fsrs.gov> or successor OMB- designated Web site for reporting subaward information";

(b) To accommodate any future designation of a different Government wide Web site for reporting executive compensation information, the Web site "<http://www.sam.gov>" cited in paragraph b.2.i. of the award provision is replaced by the phrase "<https://www.sam.gov> or successor OMB-designated Web site for reporting information on total compensation";

viii. CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CONFLICT OF COMMITMENT REVIEW:

This announcement requires all current and pending research support, as defined by Section 223 of the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, must be disclosed at the time of proposal submission, for all covered individuals. Such disclosure will be updated annually during the performance of any research project selected for funding, and whenever covered individuals are added or identified as performing under the funded project. Covered Individuals are those who are listed as key personnel on proposals, including but not restricted to, the principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

Any decision to accept a proposal for funding under this announcement will include full reliance on the applicant's statements. Failure to report fully and completely all sources of project support and outside positions and affiliations may be considered a materials statement within the meaning of the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729, and constitute a violation of Federal law.

OSD may conduct a pre-award conflict of interest/conflict of commitment review, as defined in the National Security Presidential Memorandum- 33, of any proposal selected for funding. Applicants are advised that any significant conflict of interest/conflict of commitment identified may be a basis for the rejection of an otherwise awardable proposal.

ix. CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

Section 1062 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 prohibits the Department from providing funding to any U.S. institution of higher education hosting a Confucius Institute unless that institution receives a waiver from the Secretary of Defense. This prohibition does not apply to direct funding to students attending U.S. institutions of higher education. International institutions that host are not subject to the prohibition in section 1062 of the NDAA for FY 2021 and thus do not require waivers to receive Department of Defense (DoD) funding. The prohibition on funding goes into effect on October 1, 2023.

**3. Additional Reporting**

Additional reports including number and types will be specified in the award document but will include as a minimum monthly financial status reports. The reports shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with the procedures contained in the award document and mutually agreed upon before award. Reports and briefing material will also be required as appropriate to document progress in accomplishing program metrics. A final report that summarizes the project and tasks will be required at the conclusion of the performance period for the award.

a. Monthly Performance and Cost Report

The report will account for all finances, accrued and disbursed, during the reporting period under the cooperative agreement. This report will include a summary of receipts and disbursements, travel, and other expenses. The report will also include costs by the categories of:

TRAVEL,  
ADVERTISING,  
OFFICE COSTS,  
SALARIES,  
OTHER  
Total

The "other" category will include all administrative expenses that do not apply to the Other administrative cost categories. All administrative expenses will be summed under the "Total" category.

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Monthly Performance and Cost

Report as follows:

Cooperative Agreement Manager - 1 original plus 1 copy;  
Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy, and the  
Grants Officer - 1 copy of the letter of transmittal only.

b. Joint Papers and Presentations

Periodic joint papers and presentations may be given. Copies of such shall be provided to the CAM.

c. Journal Articles

Journal articles in general and joint Recipient/Student journal articles are strongly encouraged as a reporting mechanism for the research effort.

d. Annual and Final Reports

The Recipient shall submit Annual Reports and a Final Report of all activity under the program. This report will summarize the monthly reports and highlight all activities under the cooperative agreement. The report will also provide an accounting of all Federal funds expended during the term of the Agreement. With the approval of the CAM, reprints of published articles may be attached to the Final Report. The Recipient shall also submit Annual Reports and a Final Report summarizing activities and an accounting of all Federal Funds expended during the term of the cooperative agreement.

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Annual Reports and Final Report as follows:

Cooperative Agreement Manager - 1 original plus 1 copy;  
Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy, and the  
Grants Officer - 1 copy of the letter of transmittal only.

One (1) copy of the Final Report shall be provided to:

Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)  
8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 0944  
Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6218.

e. Financial Reporting: Federal Financial Report (SF 425): Annual and Final Reports

Reporting period end dates fall on the end of the calendar year for annual reports (12/31) and the end date of the grant project or period for the final report. Annual reports are due 30 calendar days after the reporting period end date, and the final report is due 90 calendar days after the end date of the grant.

All financial reports shall be submitted to the Grant Administration Office. Copies of the forms and instructions may be found on the Internet at

<https://arl.devcom.army.mil/resources/baa-forms/> .

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Annual and Final (SF425) Reports as follows:

Cooperative Agreement Manager - 1 original plus 1 copy  
Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy

Note: The SF 425 is a single form that consolidates and replaces the Federal Cash Transaction Report (FACTOR or SF 272/SF 272A) and the Financial Status Report (FSR or SF 269/SF 269A).

## **Federal Awarding Agency Contacts**

Questions regarding program execution and administration must be submitted by February 12, 2024 no later than 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time and should be directed to both:

Mr. Louie R. Lopez  
Director, DoD STEM  
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense  
for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E))  
[louie.r.lopez.civ@mail.mil](mailto:louie.r.lopez.civ@mail.mil)

Dr. Emily D. Kuehn  
Deputy Director, DoD STEM  
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense  
for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E))  
[emily.d.kuehn.civ@mail.mil](mailto:emily.d.kuehn.civ@mail.mil)

Ms. Denisse Szmigiel  
Program Manager, Fundamental Basic Research  
DEVCOM ARL Army Research Office  
[denisse.r.szmigiel.civ@army.mil](mailto:denisse.r.szmigiel.civ@army.mil)

The DoD Grant Specialist is:

Mr. Matthew R. Lynch  
US Army Contracting Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground  
RTP Division  
[matthew.r.lynch.civ@army.mil](mailto:matthew.r.lynch.civ@army.mil)

The DoD Grants Officer is:

Mr. Christopher Justice  
US Army Contracting Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground  
RTP Division  
[christopher.d.justice4.civ@army.mil](mailto:christopher.d.justice4.civ@army.mil)

## **G. Other Information**

Applicants are advised that any data or supporting materials submitted to the Government in response to this announcement may be released to non-Government personnel for review and analysis. The participation of these non-government personnel will be limited to offering an opinion, which may be used as a guide by the government evaluators. The exclusive responsibility for merit assessment and application selection will reside solely with the Government. Proprietary information submitted in response to this announcement will be protected from unauthorized disclosure as required by 41 U.S.C §423. These individuals

will be authorized access only to those portions of the application data and discussions that are necessary to enable them to perform their respective duties. Such firms are expressly prohibited from competing on the subject acquisition.

If the applicant objects to disclosure of information, applicants shall provide the objection in writing to the Grants Officer. The objection shall include a detailed statement of the basis for the objection and identify specific portions of the application of which the applicant objects to disclosure to non-Government personnel.

**1. Incumbent Performer**

The effort is currently being performed under Agreement Number W911NF1920007. The current Recipient is Research Triangle Institute, RTI International, 3040 Cornwallis Road, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-0155.

**2. Cooperative Agreement Applications**

Before award it must be established that an approved accounting system and financial management system exist.

a. Direct Labor: Show the current and projected salary amounts in terms of man-hours, man- months, or annual salary to be charged by the PI(s), faculty, research associates, postdoctoral associates, graduate and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical, and other technical personnel either by personnel or position. State the number of man-hours used to calculate a man-month or man-year. For applications from universities, research during the academic term is deemed part of regular academic duties, not an extra function for which additional compensation or compensation at a higher rate is warranted. Consequently, academic term salaries shall not be augmented either in rate or in total amount for research performed during the academic term. Rates of compensation for research conducted during non-academic (summer) terms shall not exceed the rate for the academic terms. When part or all of a person's services are to be charged as project costs, it is expected that the person will be relieved of an equal part or all of his or her regular teaching or other obligations. For each person or position, provide the following information:

- i. The basis for the direct labor hours or percentage of effort (e.g., historical hours or estimates);
- ii. The basis for the direct labor rates or salaries. Labor costs should be predicted upon current labor rates or salaries. These rates may be adjusted upward for forecast salary or wage cost-of-living increases that will occur during the agreement period. The cost proposal should separately identify the rationale applied to base salary/wage for cost-of-living adjustments and merit increases. Each must be fully explained;
- iii. The portion of time to be devoted to the proposed research, divided between academic and non-academic (summer) terms, when applicable;

- iv. The total annual salary charged to the research project; and
- v. Any details that may affect the salary during the project, such as plans for leave and/or remuneration while on leave.

Note: There is no page limitation for budget proposals or budget justifications.

- b. Fringe Benefits and Indirect Costs (Overhead, G&A, and Other): The most recent rates, dates of negotiation, the base(s) and periods to which the rates apply must be disclosed and a statement included identifying whether the proposed rates are provisional or fixed. If the rates have been negotiated by a Government agency, state when and by which agency. A copy of the negotiation memorandum should be provided. If negotiated forecast rates do not exist, applicants must provide sufficient detail to enable a determination to be made that the costs included in the forecast rate are allocable according to applicable cost provisions. Applicants' disclosure should be sufficient to permit a full understanding of the content of the rate(s) and how it was established. As a minimum, the submission should identify:
  - i. All individual cost elements included in the forecast rate(s);
  - ii. Basis used to prorate indirect expenses to cost pools, if any;
  - iii. How the rate(s) was calculated;
  - iv. Distribution basis of the developed rate(s);
  - v. Basis on which the overhead rate is calculated, such as "salaries and wages" or "total costs;" and
  - vi. The period of the applicant's fiscal year.
- c. Permanent Equipment: If facilities or equipment are required, a justification why this property should be furnished by the Government must be submitted. State the organization's inability or unwillingness to furnish the facilities or equipment. Applicants must provide an itemized list of permanent equipment showing the cost for each item. Permanent equipment is any article or tangible nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. The basis for the cost of each item of permanent equipment included in the budget must be disclosed, such as:
  - i. Vendor Quote: Show name of vendor, number of quotes received and justification, if intended award is to other than lowest bidder.
  - ii. Historical Cost: Identify vendor, date of purchase, and whether or not cost represents lowest bid. Include reason(s) for not soliciting current quotes.
  - iii. Engineering Estimate: Include rationale for quote and reason for not soliciting current quotes.

If applicable, the following additional information shall be disclosed in the applicant's cost proposal:

- i. Special test equipment to be fabricated by the awardee for specific research purposes and its cost.
  - ii. Standard equipment to be acquired and modified to meet specific requirements, including acquisition and modification costs, listed separately.
  - iii. Existing equipment to be modified to meet specific research requirements, including modification costs. Do not include equipment the organization will purchase with its funds if the equipment will be capitalized for Federal income tax purposes. Proposed permanent equipment purchases during the final year of an award shall be limited and fully justified.
  - iv. Grants and cooperative agreements may convey title to an institution for equipment purchased with project funds. At the discretion of the Contracting/Grants Officer, the agreement may provide for retention of the title by the Government or may impose conditions governing the equipment conveyed to the organization per the governing laws and regulations.
- d. Travel: Forecasts of travel expenditures (domestic and foreign) that identify the destination and the various cost elements (airfare, mileage, per diem rates, etc.) must be submitted. The costs should be in sufficient detail to determine the reasonableness of such costs. Allowance for air travel normally will not exceed the cost of round-trip, economy air accommodations. Specify the type of travel and its relationship to the research project. Individuals other than the PI(s) are considered postdoctoral associates, research associates, graduate and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical, and other technical personnel. Additional travel may be requested for travel to Army laboratories and facilities to enhance agreement objectives and to achieve technology transfer.
- e. Participant Support Costs: This budget category refers to costs of transportation, per diem, stipends, and other related costs for participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities, and workshops (see the "Other Programs" section as described earlier in this BAA). Generally, indirect costs are not allowed on participant support costs. The number of participants to be supported should be entered in the parentheses on the budget form. These costs should also be justified in the budget justification page(s) attached to the cost proposal.
- f. Materials, Supplies, and Consumables: A general description and total estimated cost of expendable equipment and supplies are required. The basis for developing the cost estimate (vendor quotes, invoice prices, engineering estimate, purchase order history, etc.) must be included. If possible, provide a material list.
- g. Publication, Documentation, and Dissemination: The budget may request funds for the costs of preparing, publishing, or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under an agreement, including costs of reports, reprints, page charges, or other journal costs (except costs for prior or early

publication); necessary illustrations, cleanup, documentation, storage, and indexing of data and databases; and development, documentation, and debugging of software.

- h. Consultant Costs: Applicants normally are expected to utilize the services of their own staff to the maximum extent possible in managing and performing the project's effort. If the need for consultant services is anticipated, the nature of proposed consultant services should be justified and included in the technical application narrative. The cost proposal should include the names of consultant(s), primary organizational affiliation, each individual's expertise, daily compensation rate, number of days of expected service, and estimated travel and per diem costs.
- i. Computer Services: The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical, and educational information, may be requested. A justification/explanation based on the established computer service rates at the proposing organization should be included. The budget also may request costs, which must be shown to be reasonable, for leasing automatic data processing equipment. The purchase of computers or associated hardware and software should be requested as items of equipment.
- j. Subawards (Subcontracts or Subgrants): A precise description of services or materials that are to be awarded by a subaward must be provided. For subawards totaling \$10,000 or more, provide the following specific information:
  - i. A clear description of the work to be performed;
  - ii. If known, the identification of the proposed subawardee and an explanation of why and how the subawardee was selected or will be selected;
  - iii. The identification of the type of award to be used (cost reimbursement, fixed price, etc.);
  - iv. Whether or not the award will be competitive and, if noncompetitive, rationale to justify the absence of competition; and
  - v. A detailed cost summary.
- k. Other Direct Cost (OCDs): Itemize and provide the basis for proposed costs for other anticipated direct costs such as communications, transportation, insurance, and rental of equipment other than computer related items. Unusual or expensive items must be fully explained and justified.
- l. Profit/Fee: Profit/fee is not allowed for the recipient of or subaward to an assistance instrument, where the principal purpose of the activity to be carried out is to stimulate or support a public purpose (i.e., to provide assistance), rather than acquisition (i.e., to acquire goods and services for the direct benefit of the Government). A subaward is an award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, made under a DoD grant or cooperative agreement by

a recipient to an eligible subrecipient. The term includes financial assistance for substantive program performance by the subrecipient of a portion of the program for which the DoD grant or cooperative agreement was made. It does not include the recipient's procurement of goods and services needed to carry out the program.

m. Subcontracting Plan: Subcontracting plans do not apply to assistance instruments.

n. FCCM: If cost of money is proposed, a completed FCCM (DD Form 1861) is required.