Answers to Questions received about NCGVR’s Request for Proposals
January 30, 2020

(Questions 1-41, posted January 10 and January 17, 2020, start on p. 3, below)

NOTE: An edit has been made to the post-doctoral section of the RFP. Please ignore the statement on page 16, column 2, first paragraph, “Describe how the award will facilitate completion of your dissertation.” This statement does not apply to post-doctoral awards.

42. Q: Can two universities be Co-PI?
   A: Yes, researchers from 2 different organizations can act as PIs.

43. Q: Is $350 - $400K ask range applicable for the priority 2 category? Is priority 2 policy analysis funded less or what percentage of funding goes to priority 2 versus priority 1 submissions?
   A: The $9.5m that NCGVR plans to award for this RFP will cover all awards, including research awards under any priority area, dissertation awards, and post-doctoral awards. There is no pre-determined percentage of the budget set aside for priority areas listed in the RFP.

44. Q: Is priority 2 following the same rigorous research methods as priority 1?
   A: The applicant should choose whatever methods they feel are most appropriate for the proposed work. NCGVR does expect proposers with projects on any topic to apply rigorous research methods.

45. Q: Can someone can be listed as a mentor for a postdoctoral award on one LOI, and as the PI on another LOI?
   A: Yes, someone can submit a research award LOI as a PI and be listed as a mentor on one or more post-doctoral or dissertation awards.

46. Q: Is a researcher with a study funded under the first NCGVR RFP eligible to submit an LOI in response to the second RFP?
   A: Yes, current awardees are allowed to submit additional LOIs to subsequent RFPs.

47. Q: I am postdoctoral fellow and I am interested in submitting a letter of intent for the postdoctoral award RFP. Who is considered the PI on the project I am interested in conducting? Should I list myself as the PI or my mentor who is an associate professor?
   A: Post-doctoral applicants should list themselves as the PI. There is a place later in the form for listing your mentor.
Q & A Posted on January 10, 2020:

1. **Q:** Per page 9 of the Year 2 RFP, Allowable Direct and Indirect Costs, NCGVR limits the indirect cost rate to no more than 40 percent of total direct project costs. If an organization has a federally approved indirect cost rate that exceeds that limit, are they eligible for NCGVR funding?

   **A:** NCGVR will not consider federally negotiated/approved indirect rates that exceed 40%; however, total indirect costs resulting in 40% or less of total direct project costs will be considered as stated in the RFP. Please be sure to explain your method of calculation particularly if it differs from any methodology disclosed to your cognizant federal government agency.

2. **Q:** Is there a mechanism for revised proposals this round (that were submitted to NCGVR’s 2019 RFP), or should they all go in as “new” proposals?

   **A:** In the online submission form, there is a question about whether the LOI is a resubmission. If you answer “yes,” you will be asked to summarize how you have revised the proposal.

3. **Q:** I am interested in the dissertation award. My research involves fieldwork that may require more than a year of grassroots or on-the-ground research followed by another year of dissertation writing. If I plan to conduct research and complete the dissertation by the NCGVR required date of September 30, 2021 but once in the field, I require additional time to complete the fieldwork, would this be a breach of the award?

   **A:** You may apply and the RAC will consider your LOI based on your proposed timeline but may suggest you apply again next year. Any extension of an award that you have been granted would need to be negotiated with the RAC and NCGVR, as needed, during the project period.

4. **Q:** Is there any flexibility on the timeline for dissertation awards; does the dissertation have to be completed by June 2021?

   **A:** The most important thing is that applicants for a dissertation award have passed the tests required for a degree and have an approved dissertation prospectus by June 1, 2020. If this deadline can be met, the student will be considered eligible for funding. If the dissertation will not be completed within a year’s time, please describe and explain the expected timeline.

5. **Q:** I am a professor with current doctoral candidate who expects to earn her Ph.D. in 2020. Is she eligible to submit a LOI for a post-doctoral award?

   **A:** The student will be eligible for a post-doctoral award if she has a post-doctoral position lined up and will be ready to start in that position by July 1, 2020.

6. **Q:** Are international students and post-doctoral researchers eligible for NCGVR funding?

   **A:** Yes, international students are eligible for NCGVR funding.

7. **Q:** For this RFP can you please clarify whether it would be allowable to have two PIs (i.e., multi-PIs) versus a single PI?

   **A:** You are allowed to have more than one PI on your project. The submission form will allow you to designate 2 PIs and up to 5 key staff. You may identify any of the key staff as co-PIs for the project, but only the first 2 will be considered the primary points of contact for NCGVR.

8. **Q:** The RFP contains the following statement: “Individual researchers may be included in multiple LOIs but may only be listed as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on a single research award LOI.” Does this mean the same individual could submit two different LOIs, and then if both are
approved, the individual (or NCGVR) would decide which one to submit for a full proposal? Or, would you automatically eliminate both LOIs because the same individual is a PI or Co-PI on both?

A: NCGVR asks that at the LOI phase, individuals are only listed once as a PI or co-PI. PIs/co-PIs who appear on more than one LOI will be asked to choose one LOI on which they would like to remain as PI prior to the evaluation of the LOI. The only exception would be that an individual listed as a PI on a research proposal could also serve as PI on a dissertation award for one of their students, if their university requires dissertation chairs to be PI’s of student dissertation awards.

9. Q: Are police departments eligible to apply or is this specifically for non-profits? Are there any exceptions?

A: All public agencies are eligible to apply, including, for instance, public police departments, public universities, health departments, and County Attorney’s offices.

10. Q: We are a public agency. For research requirements, would utilizing an existing partnership with a local state university satisfy this requirement?

A: Public agencies are eligible to receive funding. Building on established partnerships with researchers is encouraged. The application will need to demonstrate that the project addresses an important research topic and does so using a scientifically valid approach likely to produce generalizable findings.

11. Q: Can current postdocs apply for research awards?

A: Yes, current postdocs are eligible to apply for research awards; all applicants need to demonstrate the experience of the PI and project team and their ability to successfully conduct the research.

12. Q: Can you provide guidance on whether my specific topic or project fits within the scope of the RFP, or if it is of interest to NCGVR and its Research Advisory Committee?

A: We cannot give guidance on specific research projects or topics. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate persuasively that their proposed project fits within the scope of research the RFP describes as fundable.

13. Q: My organization is interested in responding to this RFP. The budget template and narrative requirements in the RFP will result in confidential business information (CBI) (e.g., fringe benefits and indirect costs) to be provided to an entity that is a known competitor (RAND). Can a mechanism be provided to allow entities to submit the confidential business information as a sealed package directly to the funder that contains the CBI so that information is protected from existing competitors?

A: RAND and the NCGVR research advisory committee (RAC) are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of proposal information, and to ensuring that the information applicants provide is used for no purpose other than the evaluation of the proposal for possible funding. The RAC requires all RAND staff and outside reviewers to enter into a confidentiality agreement that explicitly forbids sharing or disclosure of any information about NCGVR applications that is confidential. These agreements explicitly forbid NCGVR staff from sharing confidential information with RAND employees who are not directly responsible for managing the proposal reviews.

As is true for NIH or NSF reviews, it is not possible to conduct reviews without reviewers gaining access to the confidential business information of potential business competitors. Like NIH and NSF, however, we oblige all reviewers and staff to hold this information in the strictest confidence, limiting the harm to applicants to only that required to evaluate their application.
Answers to Questions received about
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14. Q: Can one organization/university submit multiple letters of interest (LOIs), as long as each has a different principal investigator (PI)?
   A: Organizations/universities can submit multiple LOIs with different PIs. Individual researchers can be listed as a PI or Co-PI on at most one LOI across all NCGVR submissions. The only exception would be that an individual listed as a PI on a research proposal could also serve as PI on a dissertation award for one of their students, if their university requires dissertation chairs to be PI’s of student dissertation awards.

15. Q: Are there any requirements for principal investigators? For example, are PIs required to have a PhD?
   A: There are no requirements for the qualifications of PI except to demonstrate the experience of the PI and project team and their ability to successfully conduct the research.

16. Q: What duration do you expect of the project period?
   A: NCGVR will provide up to three years of funding, but preference will be given to projects of two years or less. Three-year awards will be restricted to projects that persuasively demonstrate that the risk of needing a no-cost extension is very low. Dissertation awards can be a maximum of 1 year. There is no minimum project period.

17. Q: I have completed my qualifying exams but will not have an approved dissertation topic by June 1, 2020. May I still apply for a dissertation award?
   A: Unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply for funding this year. However, we do plan to submit RFPs each of the next 2 years and encourage you to apply when you meet the eligibility criteria.

18. Q: Can students receive funding on a research project?
   A: Yes, students can be paid with grant funds for labor they devote to project performance.

19. Q: May individuals be co-investigators or advisors on multiple submissions?
   A: Individuals can be a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on only one submission but can be a named researcher on multiple submissions.

20. Q: Are proposers allowed to use citations/footnotes? And, if so, do these count toward the three-page limit?
   A: Citations are allowed in submissions and will not be counted towards the 3-page limit. Footnotes are allowed in the letter of intent but will count towards the 3-page limit.

21. Q: Can RAND Corporation employees or students receive funding as a principal investigator, researcher or consultant on NCGVR awards?
   A: No. Individuals who are RAND employees, adjuncts, or Pardee RAND Graduate School fellows at the time award decisions are made are not eligible for NCGVR funding.

22. Q: May an applicant propose a Co-Principal Investigator who resides in another organization but will be partnering with the applicant as a subawardee?
   A: Yes, a co-PI can be at another organization, but one organization should be designated as the prime awardee.

23. Q: I plan to submit a LOI jointly with a colleague from another university; if selected for a full proposal, one institution will be a subcontractor. In the administrative information section of the LOI, do we need
to provide all the necessary information (Tax ID no, representative name, indirect rate, etc.,) for both institutions?
A: Tax information is only needed for the institution that will be the prime grant recipient, not the subcontractor.

24. Q: Will NCGVR accept a LOI from a for-profit small business, if the organization waives any profit?
A: Unfortunately, no. This issue is with your organization’s legal tax status rather than what it does with its fee or profit.

25. Q: I am a graduate student applying for a research award. Is it acceptable that this research is not part of my dissertation?
A: Yes.

26. Q: Is my faculty adviser able to draw some salary support for their oversight of research conducted with a dissertation award?
A: Dissertation awards are designed to cover student costs. That said, for both dissertation and research awards, you can construct your budget and project team in the way you feel is best for successfully completing the work.

Q & A Posted on January 17, 2020:

27. Q: Can you tell me if [my idea] is within scope?
A: NCGVR staff cannot advise on specific research projects, as we will not be evaluating proposals. The reviewers will weigh in on that, and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) will be making decisions about what is in scope. Applicants need to make a strong case that their project is within scope, and to explain how it fits with different RFP emphases.

28. Q: I note that the page limit for LOIs is 3 pages, but that the LOI may in addition include a list of references as a supplement. Can an LOI also include a graph as a supplement (not part of the 3-page limit)?
A: Graphs and supplements ARE subject to the 3-page limit.

29. Q: Is a business/company allowed to be a partner? If yes, does the company have to waive profits? If yes, can the business/company—or a person from the company—be a Co-PI? If not, then under what category can they be included?
A: You may have a for-profit subcontractor as a research partner (we consider research partners as those firms who are involved in the research design, approach, and/or implementation, as opposed to those providing services that support or are ancillary to the project, e.g., data provider). If you are contemplating this for-profit organization as a research partner, yes, it would have to waive fee. If the for-profit subcontractor is merely supplying a service needed to complete the research, no fee waiver is required.

30. Q: I am interested in submitting a LOI to continue analysis for a research project for which data has already been collected. Is NCGVR accepting proposals for currently existing projects?
A: NCGVR funds can be used to fund additional work on existing projects as long as the submission is persuasive that NCGVR funds will only be used to cover new tasks, not to cover tasks that have otherwise been funded.
31. **Q:** I see that we can only list 5 key personnel on the LOI. If invited to submit a full proposal, will I be able to list more than 5 key personnel?

   **A:** Yes, you may list as many key personnel as you like on the full proposal.

32. **Q:** Does journalistic research refer to research carried out by journalists and/or journalism entities about their own coverage of gun violence? Or does it refer to social scientists who conduct academic research on public opinion that includes the role of media in shaping attitudes about gun violence? Our project idea involves examining how media narratives affect different outcomes. Is this within the parameters of the grant?

   **A:** It will be up to applicants to demonstrate that their idea is a meritorious research project that will produce generalizable results. The fact that it involves the examination of media framing does not by itself disqualify the project.

33. **Q:** Section 1g of the RFP states the start date for projects should be between June 15, 2020, and October 1, 2020, but in the first set of responses to questions (Question 5) it states that a student should be ready to start a post-doctoral position on July 1, 2020. Which is the appropriate start date?

   **A:** July 1 is NCGVR’s preferred date, but if an applicant has a post-doctoral position lined up to start no later than September 15, the RAC may make an exception. The applicant must make a strong rationale for not being ready to start a post-doctoral position on July 1.

34. **Q:** Can a postdoctoral mentor write letters of support for more than one student?

   **A:** Yes, mentors can support more than one student’s application for postdoctoral or dissertation awards.

35. **Q:** Are post-doctoral scholars required/encouraged to be at the same institution as their mentor?

   **A:** NCGVR prefers post-doctoral scholars to be at the same institution as their mentor, but if an applicant can make a strong rationale for being at a different institution, the RAC will consider the application.

36. **Q:** If the proposed mentor is currently at a different university from the applicant, should the applicant work with the mentor’s university or with their current host institution?

   **A:** If the applicant will be moving institutions to be at the same institution as their mentor, the applicant should apply through their mentor’s institution.

37. **Q:** As a non-U.S. organization, we do not have a federally negotiated/approved indirect cost rate. Please can you clarify what is allowable in terms of indirect costs/overhead for our institution?

   **A:** In the absence of a federally negotiated/approved indirect cost rate, please disclose the indirect rate your organization uses, and how it calculates indirect costs (that is, provide the base of cost against which the rate(s) is applied). Also, please note that regardless of the indirect cost rate that your organization usually applies, it cannot exceed 40% of total direct project costs for NCGVR awards.

38. **Q:** How do you define urban in Missouri? Is that just St. Louis and Kansas City, or would smaller towns/urban centers like Columbia be considered as urban too?

   **A:** The Missouri-relevant research does not have to focus on an urban area – but it must be relevant to an area served by the Missouri Foundation for Health: https://mffh.org/the-foundation/where-we-work/ St. Louis is in the focus area, but Kansas City is not. NCGVR does not have size standards or definitions for
what constitutes urban gun violence. It is up to the researcher to persuasively argue that the gun violence problem they are proposing to study is important and within the scope of the RFP.

39. Q: I am a doctoral candidate graduating in May 2020. I will be starting in a faculty role in July 2020. Can I apply for the grant under my current institution or should I apply through the institution where I’ll be a faculty member?
   A: If it is possible to apply through the institution where you will be employed starting in July, that is preferable. If that is not possible, let us know and we can determine how to address the issue.

40. Q: Are first-year faculty members eligible for post-doctoral fellowship?
   A: Post-doc awards require you to have an actual post-doc project that is overseen by a mentor. New faculty who are not working on a mentored project are not eligible for the post-doc awards.

41. Q: Is there any restriction regarding methodologies being considered under research category n.2 “applied or policy research studies”? And, would a participatory action research proposal be considered?
   A: There is no restriction on what methods will be funded under NCGVR. In LOIs, proposers should be persuasive about the appropriateness of their selected methods, the generalizability of their findings, and the relevance of their topic and research questions to the goals of NCGVR.