

1/31/19 Answers to Questions received about First Request for Proposals
[Newly added Q&A begin with number 40 on page 5]

1. 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 on at most one LOI across all organizational 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 public police departments and public universities.
4. What duration do you expect of the project period?
A: The project period can be a maximum of 3 years. Dissertation awards can be a maximum of 1 year. There is no minimum project period.
5. The RFP states that the negotiated indirect rate agreement should be used in the calculation of the indirect costs. Which rate should be used, federal or non-federal?
A: Organizations with a negotiated indirect rate with a federal agency should submit that rate. If the organization has no federally negotiated indirect rate, state or other negotiated rates can be provided along with explanation of how they were negotiated.
6. How big can the research grants be?
A: We expect to fund a mix of small and large awards. We have not specified a maximum possible award size, other than to say we “expect to issue ten to twenty-five research grant awards, including three or more \$25,000 dissertation awards, for a total of up to \$10 million in research funding through this first ... RFP” (from RFP p. 5-6).
7. I have not taken my qualifying exams and I'm still fulfilling my course requirements. Can I still apply for grant funding to pursue my research?
A: Unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply for funding this year. However, we do plan to submit RFPs each of the next 3 years and encourage you to apply when you meet the eligibility criteria.
8. Can students receive funding on a research project?
A: Yes, students can be paid with grant funds for labor they devote to project performance.
9. Are ethnographic studies eligible for funding?
A: We have no policy excluding ethnographic research. Ethnographic research would be evaluated using the same criteria used for all other research proposals.
10. How long is the letter of interest?
A: Please refer to the RFP for information on the LOI length and format.

11. Would NCGVR be willing to share any rubric used to evaluate grant proposals?
A: Please refer to the RFP for information on the evaluation criteria that will be used. We do not have additional information we can share on grant evaluation factors.
12. Are NCGVR projects required to be cross-sectoral (e.g., involve firearm safety promotion in health systems and another sector like gun shop owners or local shooting ranges)?
A: NCGVR projects are not required to be cross-sectoral.
13. For projects in Category 7 (Collection of state-level prosecution and enforcement data) is the objective to produce analyses on that data or to produce a public dataset? What if some of the collected data cannot be publicly released?
A: At a minimum, Category 7 projects should produce a public dataset. If portions of the collected data cannot be made public, it will be important to explain what data will be released publicly, and the potential value of that publicly releasable data.
14. Would a study evaluating firearm victim mortality rates as a function of first responder policies/actions be in scope? The RFP appears to exclude studies involving the treatment or rehabilitation of victims.
A: NCGVR is chiefly interested in funding the types of firearms projects for which there has been little federal funding for the last two decades. We believe federal funding is available for medical research on the treatment or rehabilitation of gunshot victims. That said, other research designed to reduce firearms mortality could be within the scope of the RFP.
15. Will awards made in this first round of funding have a value of \$10 million per year, or \$10 million over the projects' periods of performance?
A: NCGVR plans to make awards in this first round of funding with a value of up to \$10 million over the entire duration of the projects.
16. What evidence will you accept demonstrating that we will be able to access non-public data?
A: We don't have explicit criteria for what would demonstrate persuasively that data are accessible. Letters of support from data sources would make a good case for access. Prior success obtaining and using the data might also be persuasive.
17. Is there a conference call to address questions about the RFP?
A: There is not a planned conference call.
18. 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.
19. 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.

20. We are interested in evaluating media narratives from around the country. Would news coverage that we evaluate as part of this study fit the parameters of the RFP, or would it be considered "journalistic research" (which is listed on page 5 as one of the categories of research that will not be funded except in special circumstances)?
A: Evaluating media coverage is not considered journalistic research.
21. Do you have an indirect rate you use?
A: Proposers must use their own federal negotiated indirect rate, or other negotiated indirect rate if they do not have one with the federal government. There is no maximum indirect rate limit. Proposals will be evaluated in part on the reasonableness of their total cost (direct and indirect).
22. Are there recommendations for research designs? Are full-scale randomized clinical trials acceptable?
A: We do not recommend any specific research designs. Proposers should identify the most appropriate methods for their study. Randomized clinical trials are acceptable.
23. Can we propose a 2-phase study, one phase that addresses one priority area, and one phase that addresses another priority area?
A: Proposers are encouraged to identify the approach that best fits their study. Proposers should explain the approach they have selected and why it is appropriate to the research objectives.
24. To whom should the letter of interest (LOI) be addressed to?
A: The letter is not required to have an addressee.
25. Regarding the "statement acknowledging that the student meets the dissertation award eligibility criteria listed above", who should write this statement? Should it be the applicant or their advisor?
A: This statement should be written by the applicant's advisor.
26. If we are invited to submit a full proposal, will we be obligated to stay at or near the budget included in the LOI, or will we have an opportunity to adjust if needed?
A: Proposers will be able to adjust the budget at the full proposal stage.
27. 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.
28. Would a study of the mental or physical health consequences of exposure to gun violence fall within the scope of the RFP?
A: You could make the case that such a study falls within the RFP's objective to better characterize firearm violence.
29. Would simulation studies designed to inform violence prevention strategies fall within the scope of the RFP?
A: You could make the case that such a study falls within the RFP's "Community, Law Enforcement, and Service System Interventions to Reduce Gun Violence."
30. Does each LOI need to be submitted under a specific priority area?
A: No, LOIs do not need to be submitted under specific priority areas.

31. Are resumes required as part of the LOI?
A: No, resumes are not required with the LOI.
32. 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.
33. Can a researcher submit more than one proposed project for funding, or should they combine different projects into a single proposal?
A: Individuals can be a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on only one submission, but can be a named researcher on multiple submissions. An LOI can describe multiple tasks contributing to achieving its research objective, but it seems unlikely that multiple, independent projects in a single LOI would be reviewed well.
34. 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.
35. I am interested in conducting data collection and research pertaining to legal firearms manufacturing. This research has implications for gun policies in general but is not directly related to gun violence reduction. Is this idea appropriate for the NCGVR?
A: If you plan to develop publicly accessible data on firearms manufacturing and can make the case that the data are important for understanding or shaping firearms policy in the U.S., this project might be considered for funding under the new data collection priority. Depending on how you intend to analyze the data, it might also fit within “Effects of Gun Regulations Within and Across States” or possibly “Characterizing Firearms Use, Violence and Crime.”
36. 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.
37. I’m a first year PhD student and would conduct work as an RA over the summer full time and during coursework in the fall. Does this bar me from serving as a co-PI on a research award?
A: If you are considering applying for a research award, there are no requirements for the qualifications of PIs other than to persuasively demonstrate the experience of the PI and project team and their ability to successfully conduct the research.
38. I am a graduate student applying for a research award. Is it acceptable that this research is not part of my dissertation?
A: Yes.
39. 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.

40. Can we have 200 words for the description of *each* investigator or does the 200-word limit apply to the descriptions of all investigators?

A: The 200 word-limit applies to the description of all investigators total, not per investigator.

41. We are an institute that is part of a not-for-profit public/state-controlled institution of higher education. Though not technically a 501c3 organization, we are tax exempt; are we eligible for this grant?

A: Please see the answer to Q42 below.

42. Several inquiries came in this week about whether public universities are eligible to apply for this funding. (The answer to this question is the same as for Q41.)

A: Yes. Some public universities have associated foundations through which all grants are received, others accept grants directly. A public or private university may apply in its own right if it is tax exempt pursuant to 25 U.S. Code, Section 4966. You should check with your university's business office regarding this. If not, then you have the option to apply through an associated university foundation, if one exists.

43. Data collection, analyses and the general research process often takes longer than we anticipate. Is it possible to request funds for two years; and if we find we need additional funds, then we can request funds for the third year?

A: We suggest doing your best to estimate the time and budget that it will take to conduct the full research project and persuasively describe your decisions. No add-on funding is planned for these awards.

44. Our project includes multiple people at different organizations. Could we have one organization submit the LOI with subgrants to the remaining colleagues' organizations?

A: You can submit an LOI with multiple PIs or co-investigators, however you choose to set it up. You should designate one institution as prime. The organizational information requested in the Administrative Information section of the LOI should be provided for the prime organization; it does not need to be provided for each organization. Note that individuals can only serve as PI or co-PI on one submission.

45. Can we include an individual on our project as a consultant?

A: Please check with your organization/university on its policies regarding contracting with individuals. If your organization allows for such an arrangement (assuming your organization is the prime and would issue a consulting agreement to this individual) then NCGVR will consider the arrangement.

46. Does the PI or the PI's university submit the LOI?

A: Awards will be made to the university or other eligible institution. As such, the university is the applicant. It does not matter who physically sends the LOI, but you should ensure you are following your organizations' grant application processes.

47. For the dissertation award, the RFP indicates that the university should submit a letter indicating that it is prepared to accept an NCGVR dissertation grant award on which it will forgo overhead charges and all other fees for managing the award. Are you considering indirect costs as overhead fees and therefore no indirect costs are allowed to be charged to the dissertation award?

A: Yes, we consider indirect costs as overhead costs and therefore no indirect costs can be charged on dissertation awards.

48. I want to ensure that the kind of work that I'm doing for my dissertation aligns with the goals of the funding announcement before I move forward with submitting an application. Can I speak with someone about my work? My project focuses on the social determinants of gun ownership and gun policy preferences.

A: Unfortunately, we are not able to give guidance on specific research ideas or have phone calls with potential proposers, beyond suggesting that your work may fit into a specific research category listed in the RFP. That said, it does sound like your topic might be considered under the Characterizing Firearms Use category.

49. Can you clarify the LOI instructions: "level of effort by the proposed investigator(s) on the project (days per year)?" Are we able to provide days in calendar months and/or effort %, or do you specifically want "x days in year 1, x days in year 2, etc"?

A: You may report the level of effort in whatever format is standard for your organization. The options you mentioned—using calendar months, percentage of effort, or specific days allotted—are acceptable.