

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-ORD-NHEERL-IO-001

Title: Cooperative Training in Environmental Sciences Research

Project Officer: Barry Howard

This amendment addresses all questions submitted through January 3, 2006.

1) Question: Under Eligibility Information, it says that state and local governments are eligible to apply. However, under Special Requirements, it says that there needs to be a demonstration of ability to perform the work at EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, NC. Is there any way for a state or local government department outside of North Carolina to participate in this program?

Answer: This is a full and open competition. Eligibility requirements are stated under Section III: Eligibility Information. Organizations meeting the eligibility requirements stated in the announcement are eligible to apply. The work must be performed at EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park, NC and Chapel Hill, NC.

2) Question: While reviewing the section entitled Special Requirements, it states "Close collaboration with EPA preceptors is essential to these training agreements; Therefore, demonstrated ability to perform the work at EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, North Carolina is required." We were wondering if this requirement is for the entire duration of the program or for a set amount of time? We specifically wanted to inquire about whether our out-of-state institution could apply in order to further train Environmental Scientists here at our facility.

Answer: The work must be performed at EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, North Carolina for the entire duration of the cooperative agreement.

3) Question: The special requirements section indicates that there must be demonstrated ability to perform the work at EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, NC. Does this statement mean that specific EPA preceptors with areas of research congruent with those at the university be identified in the proposal (with letters of collaboration for instance), or that research programs at the EPA facilities be congruent with the research programs of faculty members at the university, or that faculty at the university should already be collaborating with EPA scientists and have preliminary data?

Answer: The program synopsis section on page 1 states that "The purpose of these assistance agreements is to identify and provide training for candidates in the environmental health sciences curriculum whose areas of interest coincide with the areas of ongoing research at NHEERL . . ." The training for the candidates must take place in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, NC. This means that research programs at these EPA facilities should be congruent with the research

programs and interests of the offering organization.

4) Question: Our Health Science Center is not an undergraduate serving institution. Faculty in the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences in the School of Public Health (SPH) are interested in developing a training agreement proposal. Our division offers Masters of Public Health, PhD, and Doctorate of Public Health (DrPH) degrees. However, we are interested in developing undergraduate internship programs. If we propose an undergraduate internship program as part of our training package, what sort of training does the EPA expect for undergraduates course work, research experience, or some of each? Would some research experience and training at SPH before sending the students to RTP be of interest to EPA or is the university simply expected to develop a recruiting program that sends students directly to RTP or Chapel Hill?

Answer: The educational and research experience requirements are stated in the announcement, as well as the evaluation criteria.

5) Question: Is this the first time that this program has been solicited? If not, during which fiscal year was it last solicited, how much funding was available, and how many awards were made?

Answer: This is not the first time that this program has been solicited. It was last solicited in fiscal year 2001. To date, the solicitation has been awarded for approximately 11.6 million. Four awards were made.

6) Question: I understand from the program announcement that matching funds and cost sharing are not required for this program. However, would there be any competitive advantage for an applicant who provided matching funds and/or cost sharing?

Answer: No, there would be no competitive advantage by providing funding for this program.

7) Question: Is it still estimated that approximately \$12 million will be available for five awards in response to this solicitation?

Answer: Yes, depending on the availability of funds at the time of award, the number of trainees, and when they begin their training program, as stated in Section II of the solicitation.

8) Question: Do trainees need to be US citizens or permanent residents?

Answer: Trainees must be US citizens or possess green cards.

9) Question: Can there be faculty salary offset in the budget? Specifically, can there be salary for our faculty and scientists to recruit, mentor, and evaluate trainees before they are sent to EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park and Chapel Hill, North Carolina?

Answer: Applicants are responsible for submitting their budget proposal as part of the application. The applicant may include any costs deemed necessary in their budget proposal in order to carry out the work.

10) Question: Is there a preferred investigator organizational structure -- i.e., can there be a PI and two co-PIs?

Answer: There is no preferred or recommended structure. This is left entirely up to the offeror, as part of their application.

11) Question: Are there guidelines for the indirect cost rate? Is it the institution's federally negotiated rate or is there an agency special limit?

Answer: The indirect cost rate is 8% of direct costs, less tuition and fees.