

Emergency Management for Higher Education

**May 2, 2008
1:30 PM ET**

Operator: Good day, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the OSDFS Emergency Management for Higher Education Conference Call. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later, we will conduct a question and answer session and instructions will follow at that time. If anyone requires assistance during the conference, please press star, then zero on your touchtone telephone. As a reminder, the conference is being recorded. Now, ladies and gentlemen, your host for today's conference, Deb Rudy and Tara Hill.

Tara Hill: Thank you, Tyrone. Hello, everyone. My name is Tara Hill. I work with the Emergency Management for Higher Education grant program in the office of Safe and Drug-free Schools. And I am joined by –

Debbie Rudy: By her colleague, Debbie Rudy.

Tara Hill: And we are delighted to have you on the phone today. Thank you for calling in for the Emergency Management for Higher Education grant competition technical assistance call line. Hopefully that's why you're all here. As I mentioned, I work at the office of Safe and Drug-free Schools and I'm currently serving as a competition manager for the EMHE grant competition in 2008. On today's call Debbie and I will provide an overview of the EMHE grant program and then we're going to open it up for any questions you may have. Instructions on how to pose a question will be provided by Tyrone once I've broken from the introduction.

As I think you probably all know, the EMHE grant application package was released on April 24, 2008 and the deadline is May 27, 2008. Applications may be submitted electronically via grants dot gov or in hard copy via US Mail or commercial carrier. Detailed instructions on submitting the applications for this competition can be found in the EMHE application package directly. And if any of you haven't found that yet, you can let us know during the question and answer period and we'll provide you with a link to access that.

The EMHE grant competition limits eligibility to higher education institutions and consortia thereof. For the purposes of this competition, the term "higher education institution" includes those institutions described in sections 101A, 101B, and 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, except the institutions included section 102 of the HEA are eligible only to the extent that they are located within the United States. Non-profit organizations, private K-12 schools, and K-12 local educational agencies are not eligible to apply for

EMHE; however, OSDFS does administer a similar grant program for local educational agencies called the Readiness and Emergency Management For Schools or REMS grant competition. If you have questions about the REMS grant competition, we can certainly answer those during the QA period as well.

The EMHE grant program itself is designed to fund higher education institutions that meet the absolute priority as follows. Higher education institution projects to develop or review and improve and fully integrate campus-based all-hazards Emergency Management planning efforts, a program funded under this absolute priority must use the framework of the four phases of Emergency Management which we can talk about more later, prevention mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, to do a series of things. There's a long list of seven requirements here that I will read briefly. Again, obviously, we'll take questions on those if you have any.

Number one, develop or review and improve and fully integrated a campus-wide, all hazards Emergency Management plan that takes into account threats that may be unique to each campus. Two, train campus staff, faculty, and students in Emergency Management procedures. Three, ensure coordination of planning and communication across all relevant components, offices, and departments of the campus. Four, coordinate with local and state government emergency management efforts. Five, develop a written plan with emergency protocols that include the medical, mental health, communication, and transportation needs of persons with disabilities, temporary special needs of individuals, and other unique needs of individuals. Six, develop or update a written plan that prepares the campus for infectious disease outbreaks with both short-term implications for planning and long-term implications for planning, and finally, seven, develop or enhance a written plan for preventing violence on campus by assessing and addressing the mental health needs of students who may be at risk of causing campus violence by harming themselves or others.

So those are the seven primary requirements under the grant. In addition to that absolute priority and those requirements, the EMHE grant competition has also established the following applications requirements. First, to be considered for a grant award, an applicant must include in its application an agreement that it details coordination with and participation of a representative of the appropriate level of local or state government for the locality in which the higher education institution is located and two, a representative from a local or state Emergency Management coordinating body such as a local emergency planning council. Those agreements must include descriptions of both partners' roles and responsibilities in supporting and strengthening the Emergency Management plan for the campus as well as descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the higher education institution in grant implementation and partner coordination.

There are example forms included in the application package that you can use for that purpose. And all signatures must be included on the forms, both from the partners and the authorized representative of the higher education institution submitting the application. Consortia applications need to submit complete set up partner agreements for all participating campuses in the application.

The second addition requirement is coordination with local or state Homeland Security plans. All emergency management plans must be coordinated with the Homeland Security plan of the state or locality in which the applicant campus is

located. To ensure that those emergency services are coordinated, applicants must include in their application a signed assurance that the higher education institution will coordinate with and follow the requirements of their state or local Homeland Security plan.

And finally, applicants must agree to support the implementation of the National Incident Management System. The NIMS provides a consistent approach for federal, state, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, and respond to and recover from domestic incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity. And so, applicants must include in their application an assurance that they have met or will complete all current NIMS requirements by the end of the grant period.

A list of the other required forms and materials need to complete the application are included in the grant application package. As I mentioned at the beginning of the call, all applications are due on May 27, 2008. The transcript from this call will post on ed.gov in approximately one week to ten days. And if you have any questions that we did not answer on the call today, you may certainly contact me at any time between now and May 27. My phone number is 202-708-9431 and because this is a high volume call time, I would recommend actually e-mailing me instead at Tara dot Hill at ed dot gov – that's Tara dot Hill at ed dot gov. Because that way, if I get your question after hours, I can still be responsive in as timely a manner as possible whether or not you're still working or I'm still working, I can respond as quickly as possible.

Before I open up for questions, I want to see if Debbie has anything else to add to our intro?

- Debbie Rudy: No, Tara. I think that sounds like a really good summary and judging by the number of participants on the line, we should probably cut to the chase and see if we can start taking questions and answer.
- Tara Hill: Perfect. All right, Tyrone. You may open it up for questions.
- Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. If your question has been answered and you wish to remove yourself from the queue, you may do so by pressing the pound key. Again, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Our first question is from Caller 1. Your line's open.
- Caller 1: Hi. Can you hear me okay?
- Tara Hill: Sure can.
- Caller 1: Okay. Thanks. I just wanted to clarify the requirement. I thought I heard you say that private institutions of higher education were not eligible under this?
- Debbie Rudy: I think, Caller 1, she said private schools. But we were thinking private elementary, secondary schools.
- Caller 1: Oh. Okay. Good. Thank you very much.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 2. Your line is open.

Caller 2: Yes. My question is I believe you stated that a transcript of this conference call would be available in a week to ten days?

Tara Hill: Yes.

Caller 2: How do we obtain that?

Tara Hill: It will be on our Emergency Management For Higher Education website which is off of the office for Safe and Drug-free Schools website. It's pretty long. Let me give you – you know what? Let me give you another site. I'm going to give you the Readiness and Emergency Management For Schools technical assistance center website because it's really short and we'll post it there as well. It is <http://www.rems.ed.gov>. <http://www.rem.ed.gov>. And again, it's also going to be on our OSDFS website but the link to that is much longer and at the risk of somebody copying it down wrong, I wanted to give you [REMS dot ed dot gov](http://www.rems.ed.gov).

Caller 2: Okay. I have another question.

Tara Hill: Yes?

Caller 2: The REMS grant program is different from this program?

Tara Hill: That's correct. The REMS grant program is for K-12 institutions. It's for local educational agencies and the EMHE grant program is for higher education institutions. They're very similar in terms of what they intend to do which is provide support for institution to improve and strengthen their emergency plans and they're both based on the model of the four phases of Emergency Management. But the eligible applicants are different and the requirements are different.

Caller 2: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 3. Your line is open.

Caller 3: Hi. My question was basically private colleges if we were included. And I think that was addressed with the first person asking a question. So we're eligible, correct?

Tara Hill: That's correct. Yes. Sorry if I was confusing about that. Yes. As Debbie said, it's only private K-12 schools, local education school districts that are not eligible. Private colleges are fine. Sorry if I was confusing about that.

Caller 3: Great. That's okay. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. And again, ladies and gentlemen, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Our next question is from Caller 4. Your line is open, sir.

Caller 4: Good morning. A question regarding eligibility. My institution is a health science center and we have very few baccalaureate degrees and are mostly awarding post-baccalaureate degrees. Does that still meet the requirements for post-secondary education?

Debbie Rudy: Caller 4, I think we're going to – don't like to do this very much. But we're going to have to punch back to you. The definition information is reproduced in the application package. It's on page nine of that. And we're going to generally be asking applicants to review that information and apply those elements to their particular situation or facts. We generally don't have enough information in order to be able to make a call about whether or not somebody is eligible or not. So if you'll do that analysis, I think it will be fairly easy for you all to determine.

Caller 4: Okay. I have one other question. Regarding the NIMS training, the application asks if I – did I understand correctly it wants to know the number of people who are currently NIMS trained as of the time of the application as well as our proposal to train people during the period of the award?

Tara Hill: You understand exactly.

Caller 4: Okay. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 5. Your line is open, sir.

Caller 5: Yes. Tara, I have a quick question, just a point of clarification. We're one college, Miami Day College, and we have eight campuses within – and we're run by the district and we're eight and we're in separate jurisdictions. Do we need authorization letters internally from each of the campuses and then our district, our college president? Or just one from the college president? And then, also, regarding the other jurisdictions, do we need everything – we're in one county. Do we need it from the county or do we need it from some of the city jurisdictions that we're in as well?

Tara Hill: Thanks for the question. Basically, any application that's submitting on behalf of multiple campuses needs to be able to ensure they're providing the appropriate signatures for each participating campus. If yours are in multiple jurisdictions, that would likely mean partners from multiple jurisdictions as well as authorized reps from multiple jurisdictions. Debbie, do you have anything to add to that?

Debbie Rudy: Again, a lot's going to depend on your governing structure or you organizational structure. They're incredibly varied across the country and across institutions. So if you have an authorized – the person who is the authorized representative is the authorized representative for eight campuses, that person can sign as the authorized rep but we're really going to need you to get down to that individual campus level in terms of working with your individual community level partners for that campus and also, for developing a needs or all hazards assessment that is specific to each of the individual campuses.

Caller 5: Okay. Thank you.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 6. Your line is open.

Caller 6: Hello. How are you today?

Tara Hill: Great. Thanks. Hi, Caller 6.

- Caller 6: More specific information on NIMS. When you mean by NIMS, the NIMS requirement for training, are you talking about taking the ICS100, 200 , 300 series?
- Tara Hill: That's a great question. I'm going to – I'll answer but I also want to refer for everyone's reference to the FAQ section, the Frequently Asked Questions section of the application procedures because I think they have some helpful written information for you too. I know sometimes it's hard to hear verbally. And you can find information particularly connected to that around pages 39 and 40 of the application package. But in short , yes, you're completely right. The 300, 400 are two of the examples of the courses that campuses might propose taking as a part of ensuring their NIMS compliance. Basically, the Department of Homeland Security has outlined a series of courses that entities need to take each year to be considered to be in compliance with that fiscal year. For this application, entities need to be able to ensure that they're compliant through fiscal year 2007 requirements. And to do that, they've outline a series of courses that many folks at a higher education institution might be likely to take if they're involved with Emergency Management at any level in the school and those include ICS100 and 200 and IF700 and 800. And then there are some additional classes and those are the two that we just mentioned – ICS300 and 400 – that might be relevant for those that are intimately involved in a response action that might happen on a campus. For example, those individuals that might be likely to command or manage an incident. So if you have a Director of Security, he might be likely to be a person who would go into a joint command situation with your local first responders in the case of an emergency and it may be relevant for him or her to take ICS300 and 400. But your general school institution staff would not need to take those courses. Does that answer that question?
- Caller 6: I have a follow on for that. How many people need to take the courses? We follow the NIMS model here. But no one has been specifically trained on, say, ICS100. So does that training need to be complete prior to the grant submission or by a certain time period?
- Tara Hill: I'm glad you said that. Actually, that's part of why this is one of the requirements for the grant. For one thing, the Department of Homeland Security, we're required that any entity that receives federal preparedness funds has to be able to demonstrate NIMS compliance. That's why one of the reasons it's a requirement. A second reason is that we're very aware that many campuses have a familiarity with ICS and NIMS structure because they're often using it but perhaps not that terminology of it but have not often taken the formal training classes that NIMS and the Department of Homeland Security recommend. So, in short, there's requirement that you have a prerequisite of level of training before you apply but there is a requirement that you're able to demonstrate support and compliance with NIMS by the conclusion of the grant period which would be 18 months later. We do not at the Department of Education provide a number of people, a prescriptive number of people that would mean have to be trained. We leave it up to the institution with some guidance that we'll provide for grantees once it's available to determine how many it's appropriate to take each of the various levels of courses.
- Caller 6: Great. Thank you very much.
- Debbie Rudy: Lynn, one other quick add on.– once you read through the application, you'll come across the government performance and results act measures. That's one of

the ways we'll be assessing program effectiveness. The measure for that, for this competition is about NIMS. One thing we'll be asking folks to do is to collect some baseline data about where they stand in terms of NIMS training. Tara made the point, it doesn't matter if you haven't done any or have done some. What we'll be asking you to do is just determine where you stand at the start and then at the end of the grant that you've complied with the requirements. Really, the only thing that you have to look at either as you're writing the application or before you begin implementation would be to assess where you are in terms of existing training that's been completed.

Caller 6: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 7. Your line is open, sir.

Caller 7: Good afternoon. My question was regarding the changes in the budget if the grant was awarded to an individual institution and then prices came in cheaper or more expensive. Is there flexibility in the submitted budget once it's been awarded?

Tara Hill: That's a great question,. Obviously we know that institutions need to follow appropriate procurement and contracting procedures once a grant is made. That may mean that the bids that they submitted for various services or products, as you said, would have some flux up or down. And that's something you would work out with your federal project officer once a grant was made. The primary thing would be to make sure that whatever you're proposing transfer or move stay within the general bribe project scope that you've outline in your application. That's largely because these applications are funded and reviewed through a peer review process and to maintain integrity to process, we have to at the federal level be able to verify that what an applicant is actually – grantee is actually doing is consistent in theory with what they proposed to do and were therefore funded to do. The easy answer is "yes" there is definitely flexibility on our end, understand that needs shift and exact amounts may change. As long as it's staying within the general project scope that you've outline. That's something you would work out individually with your federal project officer after an award was made.

Caller 7: Thank you.

Tara Hill: Thanks, Caller 7.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 8. Your line is open.

Caller 8: Thank you, sir. Just one quick question. You answer the NIMS. Is equipment allowed in this grant, the purchasing of various types of equipment to help implement the plans?

Tara Hill: That's a great question. Certainly we understand that equipment and technology is something that many institutions need and therefore we would expect that portions of the budget would provide or include funding for those elements. What we advise applicants, Todd, is that it would be our expectation that that would not be a large percentage of the grant and would rather be a portion of a broader, large, comprehensive approach to Emergency Management. I will mention that the peer reviewers themselves, the external readers of the grant do not score in any way on the budget information you submit. That's something

that ultimately – allowability, reasonableness is determined by the Department of Education staff if the applicant makes it into the funding range. But a reader will be looking in your narrative to see that the proposal that you're submitting responds to all the selection criteria broadly and our experience has shown that applications that rely heavily on just equipment or technology solutions may not respond comprehensively to a selection criteria and ergo may not read or be scored as highly.

- Caller 8: Thank you.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 9. Your line is open.
- Caller 9: Hello. Thanks for taking my question.
- Tara Hill: Gladly! We're happy to.
- Caller 9: I'm wondering if you can provide some clarification on what constitutes significant need?
- Tara Hill: That's a great question a very good question actually. Not one I've received before. I would say that need, first of all, can vary from institution from institution. I know that one way to demonstrate need would be to outline the specific vulnerabilities and hazards that you're aware within your community and campus. Perhaps one way to justify that would be by providing evidence in your application of a recent vulnerability or needs assessment that you've conducted in your community or on your campus about threats that are in the community. Another way to demonstrate need would be providing information about recent occurrences that may have happened in or around your community, arguing - I think that's not the way to justify need generally speaking. I think you can also make an argument for need based on specific weaknesses your campus may have that you're aware of in terms of the activities that need to be completed. So, perhaps there's a major gap in your current emergency management planning efforts that really is the bulk of the need behind your desire to submit this application. So it's kind of a two-fold approach, really to what your needs are. Debbie, do you have anything to add to that?
- Debbie Rudy: No. Tara brought in the second piece that I was going to bring in. It's sort of what your needs assessment or risk assessment results would show. But also sort of assessing where you are in doing that comprehensive plan and establishing relationships with first responders and emergency managers. And so it can work on kind of those parallel tracks that you have significant risks and that your level of preparedness in planning is not where you'd like it to be and those are some of the gaps that you hope to close via this planning process and this grant.
- Caller 9: That's very helpful. And I do have another more specific question about the NIMS. Did I hear you say that NIMS training needed to be repeated annually?
- Tara Hill: No. I did not say that.
- Caller 9: Okay. For some of us at this community college, we've received NIMS training at another venue. For example, I'm part of my local LEPC. When we make our assessment does training like that count for individuals on a volunteer basis?
- Tara Hill: Certainly.

Caller 9: It does? Okay. For the baseline assessment?

Tara Hill: Yes. It certainly does. Doesn't matter where you received the training as long as they're the appropriate courses. That's great. We're happy to hear that actually.

Caller 9: That's all. Thank you.

Tara Hill: You're welcome. Good luck, Caller 9.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 10 . Your line is open

Caller 10: Thank you very much. My question regards the requirements that were listed. You mentioned under the NIMS that it does not all have to be completed. We're pretty much all done with NIMS. But I want to take that to a different – one of the requirements – the pandemic planning piece that's required? Does that have to be completed before the application is submitted or – ? We're still in the process of finishing that program as part of our emergency procedures.

Tara Hill: Great question. Again, actually, this competition is really designed to help campuses wherever they're at. So, no, there are no prerequisites in terms of where your written plan as it relates to pandemic or NIMS or mental health needs or addressing those is right now. The requirement is simply that you commit to by receiving the grant, developing a written plan for those various pieces by the end of the grant period. And we're happy to hear that you're already underway with that progress and project but, no, you do not have to have a completed plan before you begin.

Caller 10: Okay. That was my question. Thank you.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 11. Your line is open

Caller 11: Thanks for taking my question. My first question is do all applications need to address – and I think the answer is that do - points one through seven?

Tara Hill: Yes. You're correct. They do.

Caller 11: Okay. And then second, are there any other measures of success or evaluations for effectiveness besides the NIMS participation?

Tara Hill: That's a great question too. That is the only, what we call GPRA, Government Performance and Results Act measure for this particular program. GPRA is a program that we all have for our federal programs to help us assess and report back to Congress on the effectiveness of the various programs we administer. But in addition to the required federal GPRA measure, each grantee is required to establish their own project specific measures to determine hopefully that what they're doing is effective and making progress towards the individual goals and activities that they've outlined for their own applications. I'll let Debbie – see if she has anything she wants to weigh in on this. She's kind of our performance measure expert in the office as well.

Debbie Rudy: I think Tara made the key point that the GPRA measure is the one that's common to all of the grantees in the cohort and that in addition to that, we expect grantees to establish project level measures that will guide their implementation and help them assess how well they're doing in terms of implementing their project and at the end of the day how effective they found the project effort to be over all. But those are going to be specific and tailored to individual grant applications.

Caller 11: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 12. Your line is open

Caller 12: Good afternoon. Hi. The question is concerning the use of the term "campus". Are you referring to numerous organizations or numerous sites within one college or university?

Tara Hill: This is sort of similar to the question we got earlier in that - this is a tough one for us to answer because each institution across the country varies so largely. It's a hard one for us to answer for you. From our perspective what we mean when we say "campus" is a distinct entity that is its own body. It has its own sort of structure and administration. For example, just to throw this out as an example; University of California has, for example, UC Berkley and UC Irvine and multiple campuses within that statewide system. And that's something that because the way those campuses are set up across the country vary so much, we have to leave a lot of it up to the applicants to tell us what is the logical way for you to apply as a campus or a consortium as an individual or as a multisite.

Debbie Rudy: I think the difficulty comes – you mentioned multiple sites. To the extent that, again, where our focus and we're hoping the grantee's focus is going to be on, that development of a comprehensive plan in conjunction with your local emergency management folks and local governmental entities. So if you've got sites that are in multiple local jurisdictions and then I think you're sort of are getting into a situation where you're going to need that involvement of multiple local partners just because of the sort of geography that your situation might present.

Caller 12: Okay. Thank you very much.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 13. Your line is open.

Caller 13: Thank you. And good morning, considering we're in California.

Tara Hill: Good morning, Caller 13!

Caller 13: I have a question about the way we interpret facilities. If you have a campus with some off-campus sites but it's all under one administrative unit, would that be considered as well as on-campus sites?

Tara Hill: If it's part of your campus and it happens to be located on a different site? Is that what you're saying, Pamela?

Caller 13: Yes. But it's the same - ?

Tara Hill: Yes. Those would count towards your count of facilities.

Caller 13: Okay. And then I have a follow-up on the peer reviewers. How are those folks selected?

Tara Hill: That's a great question. The peer reviewers are all external folks to the Department of Education and they are all required to submit a current copy of their resume as well as to fill out a form that allows them to check off, basically their various areas of expertise. We do our best to select reviewers who have expertise in the areas that are most relevant to each competition. For this competition we'll be looking for reviewers who have experience at either the higher education level and or the emergency management field, mental health, public health, first responder, law enforcement fields, or program evaluation fields. We do our best to ensure that each panel has a representative of – as diverse of a group of those items I just listed as possible and that it includes some new reviewers and some experienced reviewers so there's a balance in that capacity as well. You also will not have a reviewer that is located within the state from which your application is coming and no reviewers can be selected who are involved in an institution who's applying for this particular grant.

Caller 13: Thank you very much. That's very helpful.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 14. Your line is open.

Caller 14: Thank you. Can you hear me?

Tara Hill: I sure can. Hi, Caller 14.

Caller 14: Hi. How are you?

Tara Hill: Fine, thanks.

Caller 14: First of all, my first question was on project need but you answered Caller 13's question quite well. So thank you.

Tara Hill: Great. You're welcome.

Caller 14: The question I have is on evaluation. Oftentimes in your competitions, you require a certain percentage of your total budget to be applied towards evaluation and also, are you looking for an independent, outside evaluator of individual college projects?

Tara Hill: That's a great question. We do not have a requirement for a percentage to be allocated to evaluation for this grant. There's no requirement for that. And I would say in terms of – we don't require that there be an outside evaluator. I think our guidance or advice to grantees and applicants would be that in the spirit of getting the most unbiased review possible, we'd recommend that the person or people who are selected to be the evaluators not be the same people that are the implementers. So not the project director. But there's not a requirement or mandate in the application to that effect.

Caller 14: Thank you. And one other question. Since this is a new competition to higher ed, I was curious if there are proposals that were funded for the K-12

competition in 2006 that will be posted on REMS site for us to take a look at as resources?

Tara Hill: That's a great question. We do not make the REMS applications available like that. I'll explain why in a second. Those applications are available through our Freedom of Information Act through a request process but I'll be honest with everyone and say you wouldn't be able to submit a FOIA request at this point and get a response before the applications are due for EMHE. Just as an FYI, the reason we don't post those applications as they do for some of the other competitions and we might go that road eventually but the reason we don't now is that a lot of the information that tends to be submitted, particularly in the needs section for the REMS and anticipating for the EMHE applications as well tends to be fairly proprietary and confidential and information that the institutions who are submitting applications want to protect and have a desire to protect. So we have not elected to post that as of yet. We may down the road move to a place where we redact some off the information applications and post some generic ones. But thus far, we have not done so and that is why.

Caller 14: Thank you.

Tara Hill: Debbie has something to add.

Debbie Rudy: I was just going to say to some extent what they're including is a compilation of vulnerabilities and risks and hazards and so we have some concerns about making that information generally available to the public.

Caller 14: Okay. Thank you so much.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 15. Your line is open.

Caller 15: Thank you. I have a question about the mitigation component of the four phases. Our university has a mitigation plan in place already and regularly meets to talk about the projects that were identified in there. And we've identified a few pretty small non-structural earthquake retrofit projects. I'm wondering if because we've already done the planning we might be able to include a small pilot project to do those non-structural retrofits as part of this grant.

Tara Hill: I think that sounds like that would be a very reasonable approach to – obviously not going into details about what you're proposing or costs or anything – in general, the idea of identifying a need within one of the four phases and proposing a way to address that need would be very reasonable and within the scope of the project.

Caller 15: Great. Thanks.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 16. Your line is open.

Caller 16: Thank you. My question or actually two questions related to a consortia submission – we have six schools that are closely located. Five are private. One is part of the state system. However, they sit very closely in geographic locations so there's a lot of collaborative planning and training together. For this submission, although I know you have to identify individual campus needs, have

individual commitments, partner agreements, can you submit for projects that would benefit the whole or collaborative projects?

- Tara Hill: Certainly. Yes. One of the allowable ways to submit is through a consortia. As you very eloquently already pointed out, we would ask that you identify any specific needs that relate to those six participating campuses and specific ways that those needs would be addresses. We would also ask that the partner agreements you submit reflect the partners that would actually be responding to or involved in a response to those individual campuses. It's possible that the locality, at least the government would be the same in case it might be one signatures and different authorized representatives. Exactly. On each of those forms. Does that answer your question?
- Caller 16: Yes. I believe so. So for the partner agreement you might only need one to cover all six, did you say?
- Debbie Rudy: You would need an authorized rep from each of the member institutions in the consortium but if you're close enough geographically where you're local emergency planning body and your local government or county government for example would be the same for all of you, I think that's – as a matter of fact, your situation is one that we envisioned in trying to think through things that might make applicants apply in consortium and your idea of geographically compact and sharing common risks and working together and working with your central Emergency Management folks is exactly one of the ways in which we thought a consortium application could be done and could be effectively.
- Caller 16: That helps. Thank you.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 17. Your line is open.
- Caller 17: Hello. I have actually three questions. We have police and I'm in the police department in our Emergency Management program. Our police have an MOU with our local police officers for any need and assistance for any response. Would I need to develop a formal MOU with the city or could a letter from their office of Emergency Management stating that I was cooperating with them and planning with them or do I need to actually develop a – would a letter just do?
- Tara Hill: That's an excellent question actually. We would actually not accept just the generic MOU or generic letter that did not specifically outline how the partners would support this particular project. We would want – it could be a letter. It doesn't need to be our actual form. The physical piece of a letter would be okay. But it would need to be rather than be generic statement of partnership, it would need to specifically outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the implementation of the specific grant. I'm going to let Debbie weigh in on this too.
- Debbie Rudy: You just raised a good point, one that's come up often in the REMS competition, the issue of preexisting agreement. It's certainly fine to use that prior work as a good beginning point and a basis for an agreement for this competition. But we're looking for it to be, as Tara said, specific to this project and so sending in kind of a – for example, we've gotten five year old interagency agreements in before that we sort of couldn't link at all to the current project proposal. So, I think it's a fine basis and it probably means you're going to have a good

partnership and a good collaboration because you've done that work and you're there. But the agreement needs to be about the new project.

- Caller 17: Great. That's wonderful. And my next question is do we need to have a drill or an exercise or a full scale during our 18 months of the grant itself?
- Tara Hill: That's an excellent question. No. There is not a specific requirement that you have a drill or an exercise. There's a requirement that you train and often – at least in our K-12 competition, folks respond to that requirement by incorporating drills or tabletops or full scales. But there's no specific requirement for a full-scale exercise or a community wide in this requirement or RSP.
- Debbie Rudy: But I think we do encourage your consideration of taking those steps to test the plans and strategies that you're putting in place.
- Caller 17: And the last question is is there a percentage that's limited for the grant – I don't know what they're called. I'm sorry. I'm kind of ignorant on that. But like a project manager who normally gets a cut of the grant. Is there a limit to that?
- Tara Hill: That's a good question too. We don't typically see it as a percentage or a cut of the grant. We don't have a cap or a requirement or a max or anything in terms of budget. What we do is we refer you to your local and state – or in this case institution really hiring policies to determine what the appropriate salary or reimbursement would be for that individual. We do allow - to broaden your answer in case other folks are wondering about this too. We do allow grant funds to be used for hiring staff to implement or manage the actually grant activity. So that's something that you can certainly include in your budget proposals. And again, the salary for that, there's not a maximum percentage or anything in our guidelines. Rather we would just refer you to what's sort of standard and reasonable within your community and your living area and your institution's salary procedures.
- Caller 17: Okay. Can I ask one more question even though I didn't already count that?
- Tara Hill: Sure.
- Caller 17: As we – because we're such a new entity on campus, we have sort of an old plan that's in place and I am revamping it to state standards. I guess because I'm starting from almost scratch, certainly can I include that as far as the grant application goes? In its full scope of all four phases of Emergency Management?
- Tara Hill: The proposal to upgrade it, you mean?
- Caller 17: Yes, ma'am.
- Tara Hill: Yes. Certainly. That's exactly what we want to hear. That's exactly what we want. Debbie and I are sitting here, nodding at each other. That's exactly what we're hoping for. We're hoping for campuses to take what they have and say, "Listen, this is how we're going to take it off the shelf, dust it off, and broaden it, improve it, review it, enhance it, make it four phases. Make it campus wide and all hazards.
- Caller 17: Okay. Thank you so much.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 18 . Your line is open.

Caller 18: Good afternoon. Two questions. First of all, the definition of size for a university or institution? How do you all determine size?

Tara Hill: I'm going to refer you to page 44 of the application package. It's the Frequently Asked Question section there. The way we're defining it is a small sized institution would be the one defined as having between one and 10 campus facilities. Medium sized, between 11 and 40 campus facilities. And large sized, 41 or more campus facilities. We're defining campus facility as any building or structure utilized to operate or support the institution. So that could include but is not limited to education buildings, residential buildings, research facilities,, transportation or food centers, hospitals, or counseling centers, administrative offices, stadiums, arenas, facilities, buildings, et cetera.

Caller 18: Okay. Thanks for that clarification on the facility definition. Now, next question I guess is in the competition itself, having programs in place and outlining those programs and how you would move forward to advance those programs, is that weighted any differently against not having programs in place?

Tara Hill: That's always a tricky question for me. We get that with our REMS competition with folks that are applying for a second grant who want to know if they're better off if they don't say that they've already gotten a g rant and done x, y, or z things. The way I answer this, and I'll turn it over to Debbie in case she has a different way to answer it, the way I answer is that what's important for the reviewers is to understand what you're going to do from where you are now. So certainly defining that you've done something is not a problem but what you really want to focus on is what is it that you need to do to move forward. Have you identified what those needs are? And how are you actually going to implement them through the implementation of this project? I don't think it would hurt you in any way to say, "Look, this is important to us. We've already done x, y, or z, but we've really got a, b, c, d, e, f, and g to go. And this is how we want to implement them through the use of these funds." Debbie?

Debbie Rudy: I think that's exactly right. The one thing we would ask you to do for the sake of the reviewers but also for the sake of staff who are going to be reviewing budgets is to be as clear as you can about what is the work you have already done and what is the work you plan to do with project funds. We sometimes find that we struggle with applications where we see things in the application, we don't have them in budget, we don't know if they're not in budget because what was being described in the application is work that's already done and activities that are already completed. We would ask you to be pretty clear about that. I think Tara's absolutely right. The reviewers are going to review the information that you submit against the individual selection criteria and I think – we hope we've crafted those in a way that, again, meets applicants where they are in terms of whether they have a long history of emergency planning and are pretty up to speed and want to use this to close a notable gap or tool in their project or whether it's an institution that's basically starting pretty much from scratch.

Caller 18: Okay. Thank you very much.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 19. Your line is open.

Caller 19: Good afternoon. Thank you. I actually have two questions. My first relates to the consortia definition and it's similar to the question asked by the gentlemen from Findlay (ph) earlier. I represent the University system of Ohio which is a – it's a guidance entity over a number of state institutions, both two year and four year. Can I apply as the University system of Ohio or do I have to partner with one or more institutions of higher education.

Debbie Rudy: We're going to have to send you back to that definition in the application package. If the Ohio Board of Regents meets the requirements, the elements of that definition from those sections of the higher education act, then you're an eligible applicant. If you're not, then if your organization, your entity does not meet that definition, then the applicant is going to need to be, in order to be eligible, is going to need to be an institution or and entity that does meet that definition.

Caller 19: But there's not problem with partnering with a specific University as well as they retain – what I think I said, fiscal and oversight control. Is that correct?

Debbie Rudy: Whoever our grantee is is who we will work with – in order to maintain oversight role of grant. They can certainly contract for services or seek help with implementation and administering the project from any number of sources. But if anything goes awry or if there are any problems, we won't be looking to the contracted service provider or to another service provider. We'll be looking to the recipient, the actual grant recipient who needs to be an entity that meets this definition that's in the competition announcement.

Caller 19: Okay. And my last question has to do with the average award based on the size of the institution. If we apply as a consortia, does the size of the institution – do you add those together in terms of the number of institutions in the consortia or is each institution rated separately?

Tara Hill: That's a great question. It's all the participating campuses within the consortia. So, if there's, for example, six facilities in one of your institutions and ten in another and eight in another, you add all three of those together to determine whether or not we consider you small size, medium sized, or large sized applicants.

Caller 19: Okay. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 20. Your line is open.

Tara Hill: Hi, Caller 20.

Caller 20: Hi, Tara. How are you?

Tara Hill: Great. Thanks. Good to talk to you.

Caller 20: Great. Hi, Debbie.

Debbie Rudy: Hello.

- Caller 20: I wanted to follow on an earlier question, relative to this evaluator issue and what I'm looking at is whether or not in an opinion here – if we put enough metrics in place that will in essence fulfill the concern about being unbiased or too close to the project, do you think that will work rather than us going out and budgeting, hiring an evaluator, the concern being that I want to put as much of the money toward – to the effort rather than someone else.
- Debbie Rudy: I think that's a good question and hard to judge. I think if you want to take the approach of using an internal evaluator, I would sure make it clear in your application what processes you have in place to try to develop some independence between the core project team and the person who's collecting data and analyzing data. I think it's a concern that peer reviewers could have about independence of data. But, again, we don't require a minimum amount of money to be devoted to evaluation or an external evaluator. We suspect in the case of universities, often they're going to be large enough that there's going to be some independence. You could get some help in these areas with a different group of people on your campus than the ones who are directly involved with the project.
- Caller 20: That's great. Okay. We should just then identify those and almost clarify the separation part.
- Debbie Rudy: Again, if I were responding to a selection criteria about evaluation and I was reviewing an internal one, I'd sure talk about the steps or the processes you're going to have in place because if – I'm not a peer reviewer but if I were to be one and looked at an evaluation, that's one thing I'd probably think about is it doesn't have to be external. If it's going to be internal there should be some clear separations and just sort of a – as close as you can get to independence.
- Caller 20: Great. Thanks a lot.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 21. Your line is open.
- Caller 21: Thank you. My question relates to the size of the institution and the award. For example, if I'm categorized as a small institution and I'm interested in submitting a grant that's going to cost us \$75,000, would you disqualify my application?
- Tara Hill: That's a very good question. No. Applications will not be disqualified if the budget requests are for higher or lower than our recommended amounts. Those amounts are based on our estimates and they're not binding. We would recommend, definitely, that if you go outside of those estimates that you strongly justify your need for those additional funds and how you would use those to directly support your application and why you feel you need more than the amount that was estimated by us.
- Caller 21: Thank you very much.
- Tara Hill: You're welcome.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 22. Your line is open, sir.
- Caller 22: Hello, Tara. I've got another consortium question. We'll be applying as a consortium with at least seven universities as members. And you've got a travel requirement to go to several meetings. For the consortium, would that involve

sending one person from the consortium for each of those three trips, or one from each university, or one or more from each university?

Tara Hill: That's an excellent question. The requirements as it relates to travel are per applicant. So per grantee. One for the entire consortium. And typically we would require that that be the project director and one additional person. Perhaps you might choose somebody from one institution to come one time as the second person and another one to come the other time as the second person.

Caller 22: And also, too, I've looked through the application packet. I didn't see budget forms. I'm just wondering, for the consortium, should the budgets roll up into an entire consortium budget or do you want individual campus budgets or both?

Tara Hill: One 18 month budget for the entire application with as much detail as you can provide as to how that money will break down in the budget narrative section which there is not a form for in the budget narrative. You create your own for us and provide us as much detail as you can. But one budget for the entire application.

Caller 22: Thank you very much.

Debbie Rudy: I think it will be really helpful to us, again, as we review – a little self interest here. As we review budgets, in that narrative section, if you're purchasing seven of something which seems to us an institution should need one of - if you help us understand that it's one per campus that will go a long way in terms of stopping us from sending you e-mails saying, "Can you please explain your budget?"

Caller 22: Okay. Also, kind of related to that, one of our goals for doing this is instead of buying seven where we can buy one and then share it across the universities as an economy or synergy. So when you say in the plan description, you talk about it being campus centered, I'm interpreting that to mean that if we have a collaborative effort that spreads across all of the campuses, as long as those benefits accrue to the campus, then that would be okay.

Tara Hill: I'm not sure we followed your question there, Caller 22.

Caller 22: Okay. I'll tell you what. I'll send it to you in e-mail later.

Tara Hill: That's great. You're more than welcome to do that.

Caller 22: Thanks.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question or comment is from Caller 23. Your line is open.

Caller 23: Hello.

Tara Hill: Hi, Caller 23.

Caller 23: I'm calling to see if you have a preference on submitting the grants via grants dot gov or hardcopy, something like FedEx? Do you have a preference for that?

Tara Hill: Nope. No preference at all. Totally up to you.

Caller 23: Okay. Thanks.

Debbie Rudy: Caller 23, that being said, the one piece of advice or counsel that would give you is that if you plan to submit electronically via grants dot gov, it's optional for this competition. It's not mandatory. We encourage you to start early, make sure that things are going well. And if anybody is going to be submitting electronically using the grants dot gov platform, if you hit a snag, if you have a storm and you lose your internet connection on the last day – first, we hope you're not submitting on the last day. But if you are, please don't get bogged down with the electronic submission. If you're stuck and you can't get it to work, go to the FedEx or follow the directions for hardcopy submission. We have too many folks who hit a technical snag and then don't take that option of doing a hardcopy submission and the one thing, the absolute one problem we can't do anything about is a late application, a late submission. If it's late we won't be able to consider it.

Caller 23: Thank you. I'm curious, how many applications do you anticipate? Do you have any idea?

Tara Hill: Our estimate had been 150. But I'll be honest, we're getting a pretty big amount of interest. We have over 75 people on this call and we capped it at 75 or estimated 75. I'll be curious to see. Our original estimate had been 150.

Caller 23: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 24. Your line is open.

Caller 24: Yes. Good afternoon. I'm relatively new to this field and I was wondering, is this something you're planning on offering again, next year?

Tara Hill: We're dependent upon Congressional funding every year for this program. It's in our fiscal year 2009 request. But we can't ever say whether it will be offered until Congress has approved a budget. So it's our hope and expectation that we'll be able to offer a similar competition in fiscal year 2009 but we cannot guarantee it.

Caller 24: Thank you. I have another question. We've started an Emergency Management plan if you will, or emergency response plan. But I've been charged with putting together a comprehensive plan that has to do with business continuity, disaster recovery, and then, kind of reconstituting ourselves afterwards. Is that the kind of proposal you would consider in this?

Tara Hill: I would say from our perspective, that's a great question. When we're talking about this planning effort, we're talking about all of those pieces and how they fit together under one comprehensive campus wide, all hazards plan. So from our perspective, a coop plan or a BCP plan is a portion of the broader, overall, all hazards Emergency Management plan that an institution would need to have and be coordinating across its various departments. So I would say that would certainly, in all likelihood, be a component of the overall plan but would not be it in its entirety.

Caller 24: Right. Is there anything that should not be included in the proposal? Is there anything that you can advise us not to include in a budget?

Tara Hill: Refreshments. Like coffee and snacks, things like that are not allowable. We do not provide funding for direct services such as direct counseling provision cannot be included for funding. We can't provide funding for actual hiring of regular campus staff -- It's not a hiring grant in that you can't provide funding for a school police officer or counselor, for example. It would be okay to include funding for somebody, as I mentioned earlier, to implement the grant, however. But not someone to actually be security staff within a campus. Debbie, are there any other unallowables we should share?

Debbie Rudy: Probably not incentives, refreshments, or entertainment. You can't have any fun under this. Fun is not funded. But generally speaking, the standard, when we go to review a budget, we're looking for the costs to be clearly tied to this grant proposal and to be necessary to implement the grant and for the costs to be reasonable. Those are sort of the -- when we go to do a budget analysis, we roll up our sleeves and turn to the budget page, that's what we're hoping to see.

Caller 24: So, various kinds of communication, brochures, mailings -- that's okay?

Tara Hill: Certainly. Yes.

Caller 24: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. We have a follow up question from Caller 25. Your line is open

Caller 25: Thank you. My question is in regards to the implementation of NIMS. I already have an IELP but I know there was an implementation that was due last year in September. Would I have to change my plan to be compliant with the new format of the NIMS?

Tara Hill: Are you talking about the switch from the national response plans to the national response framework?

Caller 25: I believe so. It's the NIMS implementation plan that was due in September of 2007.

Tara Hill: I'm not actually sure if you're talking about a state change or a federal change. I can speak to the federal level. We just rolled out in the past couple of months, a change from what I mentioned, the national response plan to the national response framework that has resulted in some changes trickling down throughout the states and localities, specifically as it relates to our competition. This results in a change from the IS800-NRP course -- National Response Plan course to the IS800B-NRF -- National Response Framework course. As it relates to that specific change, the guidance we've received from DHS is that if you and your staff have taken IS800-NRP, the previous course, you're not required to take the new one, IS800.B-NRF. You're encouraged to do so to be aware of the changes and updates, but you're not required to be able to certify compliance. I can't speak about a specific change that may have happened and it sounds like to me what you're talking about is more of a state or a local implementation plan.

Caller 25: Can I talk to you more about the emergency operations plan? I'm talking more about your manual, not the NIMS course that you take but the actual plan, the paper for how your protocols and things are written. Can that remain as what I

have or do you need to comply with something else and would that be part of the review and do I need to send monthly reports to the states or anything like that?

- Tara Hill: We're not going to, at the federal level, review your plan to ensure that it's compliant. We would ask that you coordinate with your state and local emergency management folks to ensure that you're compliant and consistent with whatever they're doing. It sounds to me like they have some state or local EOP that pertains to you. You would need to talk with them about whether or not your changes are consistent with theirs.
- Caller 25: One more little question. I believe I heard already that you can include the salary for a person to help you implement these. So if I need someone to revise what I have in place, I could build into the budget a salary for a temporary person?
- Tara Hill: That's correct. You just want to be able to track the hours the person spends towards grant implementation activities. But yes, that's certainly acceptable and allowable.
- Caller 25: Thank you so much.
- Tara Hill: Sure.
- Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 26. Your line is open.
- Caller 26: We would like some clarification. We received notice from a company called Emtel in the state of Florida. Can you tell us what their role is in this grant?
- Tara Hill: Yes, I can tell you. This grant program as well as the REMS grant program is a program that has a lot of components in it that various companies and agencies and vendors and service providers across the country are aware of and so often may want to share that information with entities or agencies that may be able to apply within their own jurisdictions or states that they may know of. From our perspective, their role is sharing information. Those entities may eventually be interested in providing services to grantees. But that's something that would have to happen after the grant application is awarded to any individual entity or district so that that district, or in this case higher education institution, would follow their own procurement procedures to determine whom they could work with. And that may be somebody like a company or a vendor that has shared information initially. But as far as the application itself, we're the primary point of contact for any questions you may have about the grant submission. Debbie, do you have anything you want to add to this one?
- Debbie Rudy: I just think there's a little language in the application about the procurement requirements that applicants have to follow. And certainly we would encourage folks to look at that and understand fully what those requirements are so that if an applicant is fortunate enough and receives a grant, that it will be implemented in a way that's consistent with those requirements. That's generally in favor of full and open competition. Again, there's a little language that explains where those requirements are in our regs and just as you're developing, just important to know that that's what's going to be coming down the path in terms of requirements if you receive an award and would procure goods and services commercially from vendors.

Tara Hill: And that language Debbie was referring to is on page 14 of the application package for your reference.

Caller 26: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 27. Your line is open.

Caller 27: Here again. I must tell you, this is my first grant application. I'm very new to this. Just have a couple of quick questions. Related to the coordination with the local Emergency Management body. We have a relationship with our emergency operations manager here in the county but we also work with the department of health emergency planner for pandemic. Does that count as two?

Tara Hill: As an additional one? Sure. You could certainly submit an additional one. You still need your local government, the second required partner agreement but if you want to submit additional, we'd be happy to have additional. I think the more you demonstrate partnership, the stronger your application is going to be.

Caller 27: Okay. So partnerships with the local fire department, the county sheriff, the county EOM, all that stuff?

Tara Hill: I think that just strengthens your application.

Caller 27: Okay. The next question is regarding hiring someone to implement the grant. Can that be a student on co-op?

Tara Hill: I would say that hiring decisions are totally up to the individual institution.

Caller 27: Okay. That's good. And for budget, for example, as part of our plan we've done a lot of planning so far and we need to do some formal ICS training. Can we count let's say if we have 50 people in a class, their salaries for being in a class as part of the budget, like lost time to work?

Tara Hill: Is that something they would be paid for normally? Would you need to provide substitutes for their classes?

Caller 27: Substitutes for their work. Meaning, if they're in a class and not able to perform a function, someone else may have to do that. Can we include that in the budget?

Tara Hill: We're debating here.

Debbie Rudy: You can't see us looking at each other.

Caller 27: Just wondering.

Caller 27: It's a fairly common practice in elementary and secondary schools, for example, in these kinds of proposals where we know teachers are going to be out of the classroom, that they would hire a substitute teacher. Those costs are ones that we routinely cover.

Caller 27: If we have our safety officers in a class, doing ICS100, we may have to hire contract security to fill in for them while they're taking the class.

Tara Hill: Yes. That would be reasonable.

Caller 27: Okay. The third thing and then I'll get off the line. We've done an analysis of our emergency response and one of the areas that we fall short on right now are those immediate emergency communications. We've already purchased some equipment to fill the gaps but we have some other things that we need to do. I'm not sure if it's going to take up too much of the budget because we have a deaf population here. So we need to purchase specific equipment so we can communicate with them during emergencies. Would that be a detractor or an enhancer?

Tara Hill: That's a good question, a fair question. I would refer back to my earlier answer about it would be our hope and expectation that technology and equipment would not be a large percentage of budget request. But with that said, we certainly do recognize that it's an important component in many planning efforts. I would say that anything you can do like you just did to connect your purchase to a specific requirement and need is really important. So, for example, what you just said about communication with special needs individuals directly responds to requirement number five.

Caller 27: Yes. We have NTID here. It's a deaf and hard of hearing school. So therefore we have a very large deaf and hard of hearing population.

Tara Hill: I think that's very responsive to our requirements as well as the selection criteria. As long as you outline it in that way.

Caller 27: Thanks.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 28. Your line is open, sir.

Caller 28: Actually, I have a colleague of mine Caller 29, that's going to ask the question.

Caller 29: Good afternoon. I just have a couple technical questions about the proposal itself. In the appendices, the guidelines mention resumes, letters of commitment, and sample evaluation measures. What other types of attachments would you consider to be part of the appendices?

Tara Hill: I would say if – the woman earlier had mentioned having additional partner agreements that would be above and beyond what we require – those might be a suitable additional appendices to include. Maybe lists of partners or plans that you hope to undertake is something you could include.

Debbie Rudy: I think pretty much we're not looking for a lot of padding. Every now and again we get an application in that is like four and a half inches thick and we're always kind of curious as to what folks included. And it will be their prior emergency plan and the plan before that because they want to show us movement. I think if you think judiciously about the selection criteria, things that are directly supporting the points that you're trying to make in terms of responding to the selection criteria but sort of not a lot of meeting minutes or kind of miscellaneous things that folks do sometimes include. But I think they really probably don't get a lot of careful consideration and really don't add a lot to the application.

Tara Hill: I would add to what Debbie just said which is why we tell our reviewers to read everything that's provided. But I think definitely the largest amount of their attention goes to the narrative. So anything that you think is critical, I would try and convey in those primary 25 pages.

Caller 29: I was thinking of maybe site plans of our different campuses and a map showing their locations within our county.

Tara Hill: I think a map showing locations can be very beneficial to reviewers. .And something like that, if you can make it small enough, I think often is even included in the narrative itself as a little pictorial image. That's fine. Actual campus plans themselves I would sort of lean towards what Debbie's saying which is those may not be as helpful as you might hope because they're kind of large and dense. You kind of get lost in them. But that's my opinion.

Caller 29: I don't see in the guidelines any page limitation on the budget narrative. Is that correct? There's no page limit on that.

Tara Hill: That's correct. No page limit on the budget narrative.

Caller 29: And also on the resumes. No page limit is cited for those either.

Tara Hill: That's correct.

Caller 29: Okay. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 30. Your line is open.

Caller 30: Sorry about that. I had a fumble with the mute. First, thanks for taking my call and for hosting these calls and answering questions. One of the questions that I have is regarding evacuation plans and things of that nature. Are those also included in the whole scope of things that you're considering under that list of items? Would that fall into that as well?

Tara Hill: You mean the list of requirements.

Caller 30: Yes.

Tara Hill: Yes. I think an evacuation plan for us would be a part of the broad, all hazards comprehensive plan. Did you have another question, Bob?

Caller 30: I did. I'm just looking for it in my notes. They're a bit messy. I'll pass right now and if I find it I'll come back to you.

Tara Hill: Okay.

Operator: Thank you. And again, ladies and gentlemen, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Again, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Our next question is from Caller 31. Your line is open.

Caller 31: Hi. How are you doing?

Tara Hill: Great. Thanks.

Caller 31: We were looking at the aspect of building existing partnerships with our regional providers and first responders, including other schools in the region. A big component of that is professional development. That's not only for our students, faculty, and staff, but also providing that same professional development services for emergency management and planning for all those regional and state planners we've been talking about. Taking that approach, would that fit into what you feel might be a good build up of the emergency planning process that we're doing here?

Tara Hill: Yes. I think certainly we think that collaboration with those local partners is key to the success of this effort at any institution, particularly when you're talking about a regional effort. I would say providing support or offering support to those partners through your project proposal would be very reasonable.

Caller 31: Now, is it a good idea to go ahead and we've already started broaching with them about providing letters of support about what we're doing, not necessarily a financial aspect, but at least they're aware of what we'd like to do. They're working with us on what we want to do. Are those letter of support appropriate for what we're doing here?

Tara Hill: I think that would be a very good example of what would be a useful appendices that might provide further insight into how the program is developing.

Caller 31: That's great. I appreciate your help. Thank you.

Tara Hill: You're welcome.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 32. Your line is open.

Caller 32: Can you hear me okay?

Tara Hill: Sure can.

Caller 32: I have a question about contractors or consultants. Our university already has a health center which is coordinating our higher education and public health program in emergency preparedness. We are thinking cooperating with them. Can we write or assume that – we already know we're going to contract with them. Can we address that in the application that they're going to be our contractor?

Tara Hill: It sounds to me like it's an existing part of your university?

Caller 32: Yes. It is.

Tara Hill: Then I think when we're talking about contracting for services, we're thinking really more in the sense of using external or commercial or outside vendors as opposed to how you all may chose to use your existing internal resources to support the plan and the project that you're talking about. I think that if you have an existing entity that's already part of your university, you're going to want to use your law enforcement, your campus law enforcement folks are going to need to be involved. Probably a variety of different departments and other entities on your campus. When we're talking about procuring resources, it's more in the

sense of outside or external vendors and how you would decide among those interested parties who would be the recipient of a contract to do work.

Caller 32: Okay. If – I think that clarifies then. Then we can address who will be involved in the project as internal partners?

Tara Hill: Yes. Again, my premise – I'm responding with an eye towards thinking this counseling center is already a part of your campus, it's a department on your campus or an integral part of your existing structure.

Caller 32: Yes. They all are. And we're also thinking of – we have internally experience. We're going to implement a program through this health center and also hiring staff to help through this center and we don't need to address that. That's going to be outside contractors. Anything like that. Right?

Debbie Rudy: It's difficult for us to provide an authoritative answer because I don't think we're totally clear on the facts that you're presenting. If you have some clear idea of what you're thinking about, if you might send Tara an e-mail or a phone call, we'd be happy to talk with you more in more detail one on one.

Caller 32: Okay. I will do that. Thanks so much.

Tara Hill: Thanks so much.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 33. Your line is open.

Caller 33: Hi. I have a follow up question on the appendices. And I know this is the voluntary section or part of it is. In terms of the letters of commitment, what would strengthen the proposal? It says each person's awareness. Are you looking at something institution wide, say from the president or a vice president who oversees the areas that are working on this project or from the project director or the individual staff that would be involved?

Tara Hill: Sure. I actually had a question similar to that offline the other day. I would say that in terms of demonstrating leadership support, certainly a letter from the president or a provost of an institution would go a long way towards demonstrating that you have buy in for this initiative at the top level which, at least speaking to the K-12 level and our initial experience with the higher ed level, we've found is absolutely critical to the success of this type of work. I would say including demonstration of support at that level would be a great idea.

Caller 33: Great. And then the question on the relevant prior experience. Would that be from the institution's experience or the individuals managing this particular project?

Tara Hill: Can I ask what page you're referencing there?

Caller 33: I'm sorry. Its on page 80.

Tara Hill: Thank you very much.

Caller 33: I should've said that in the first place. It's under the list of optional appendices under voluntary letters of commitment and then relevant prior grant experience.

Tara Hill: Got it. Yes. You could do either the implementers or the institution itself. Institutional capacity you could demonstrate or the person who is managing it. Either or would be fine.

Caller 33: Basically something like "This person has managed X federal grants valued at this much". Something that basically contributes to the idea that there's a successful track record.

Caller 33: Great. Thank you very much.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 34. Your line is open.

Caller 34: Thank you so much. Just a question to go back to equipment needs. Is there a particular amount of money that you would say, "We don't want you to go about X amount of dollars in your request for equipment as related to the overall need for emergency preparedness on campus?"

Tara Hill: No. Thus far we've really shied away from providing absolute caps just because we are aware that the needs vary. And the needs in the current capacity vary so greatly from entity to entity that we don't feel that it would be fair to provide a cap at this point given that the baseline can be so different.

Caller 34: Got you. Okay. Great. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 35. Your line is open, sir.

Caller 34: Hi. Thanks. I found my question. Obviously with a lot of this information that you're asking us to respond to within the context of this grant potentially exposes some area of weakness and there's potentially some information that you may not want being put out there in the public forum. How does this grant protect that information? Or is this information considered discoverable through the Freedom of Information Act? What type of steps can be taken to safeguard this information?

Tara Hill: We're happy to answer that question. Should an application become funded and a grantee, those applications are, as you said, subject to the Freedom of Information, FOIA Act which for those who don't know, basically allows anybody in the public to request access to the document as a part of the public record. As I answer in response to a question earlier, we do not post our applications for the REMS K-12 grant competition online for the very reason you just mentioned, Bob, which is that some of these application do contain proprietary confidential information that folks would not want shared. We have taken steps internally to protect those applications that have become grantees under REMS and will do so, I presume, with EMHE as well. It's yet to be a competition so it hasn't happened yet. But I presume we'll do so with EMHE grants as well in that we have an exemption under Department of Homeland Security FOIA rules for – basically, what it allows us to do is it allows us to write to the grantee who's been the recipient of a FOIA request and say, "Is there anything in this application that you think is confidential or would be hurtful that could be released?" and they can request that it be redacted. They don't have final say. We at the department of education get to determine whether or not we actually will redact that or not. But I would say that nothing – I've never had a grantee request be redacted which basically means removed before it's sent out, not redacted. It's always been – the request has always been approved.

Caller 34: Okay. So just to summarize, it sounds like the same protections that Homeland Security has given healthcare and other entities that have applied for similar grants will be afforded to applicants under this process as well?

Debbie Rudy: I think that's right. The standard is not just what you don't want disclosed but that there's a rationale that falls within a particular exemption for the Freedom of Information Act. So you could not want the project director's salary disclosed because it's a lot of money. That's not going to come under the exemption. But risk assessment information or some other things like that are the kind of data that exemption is designed to protect.

Caller 34: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is Caller 35. Your line is open.

Caller 35: Hey, Tara. I think this was answered a minute ago. When someone had said adding resumes, I had to look through this thing until you mentioned it was on page 80 and then I found it. I'm all set. Thanks a lot.

Tara Hill: No problem.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 36. Your line is open.

Caller 36: Hi, Tara. I'm sorry. I had a follow up question. If our university has actually allocated a lot of money to the technical infrastructure already and we're really building on expanding the actually emergency plan professional development I mentioned earlier, is it good to have that in the foundational part of this is what we have already done, this is where we would like to go?

Tara Hill: I think certainly that arguing that your institution has made efforts on its own to support these efforts, but what you're really lacking in is what this grant is aimed at, which is training and planning development and collaboration, is where you want to go -- which are actually things that tend to cost less money than the technical aspect would be fine.

Caller 36: Exactly. I think that's -- it's almost like you get the equipment in and then you want to learn how to apply it, how to use it, and disseminate that out to the rest of the institutions in the state.

Tara Hill: Sure. That would be a fine approach.

Caller 36: Alright. I appreciate your help. Thank you.

Tara Hill: Debbie has something to add to that too.

Debbie Rudy: I was just going to say I think that's a fairly common thing where folks sort of meet some of their hardware needs and then find that in fact the problems are so much more complex than that and that additional planning and staff development and other things are really very necessary in order for the technical assessments that you've made to really productive and to be used in a good way. So, that kind of work is exactly what we're looking to support.

Caller 36: I think what we wanted to try to do is make this something that anybody could use, especially our local and regional people. But my State is very big on preparedness to begin with and we all talk about this stuff anyway. If we can disseminate this to anybody that wants to use it, I think would be a good idea. Or would hope it would be a good idea. Let's put it that way.

Tara Hill: Sure.

Caller 36: Thank you.

Tara Hill: No problem.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 37. Your line is open.

Caller 37: Hi. It's Caller 37.

Tara Hill: Hi, Caller 37.

Caller 37: Tara, I have a question because we haven't asked enough questions about equipment. Are there restrictions within the construct of the grant process? Are there restrictions on type of equipment that we could request as part of the grant application?

Tara Hill: We typically wouldn't fund something like – and this may not be what you're asking at all but I've actually seen this request and that's why I mention it. We typically wouldn't fund anything that was in the firearm category. We're not in the habit of – or would not fund anything like that at all. Beyond that, I'm looking at Debbie and I can't think of anything else.

Debbie Rudy: I think, again, we're looking for you to make a strong connection between your needs assessment and your plan and your equipment requests or equipment needs. We struggle a little bit with budgets between sort of what is reasonable maintenance, for example, that an institution ought to be doing and we're not in the business of helping catch-up maintenance or some sort of thing that an institution reasonably ought to have been providing. So we're looking for that strong connection between your plan and the equipment you're requesting and how it would be used to implement the plan.

Caller 37: I mean, in particular, there are some training aids and visualization aids that can be very expensive. Models, I'm think in particular is one. I think that's easy to justify. Another is an upgrade to a communication system to be more intraoperable with our local OEM or the FD if need be.

Tara Hill: Those would typically be allowable as long as it's justified and connected to need, as Debbie said.

Caller 37: I think that answers my questions.

Tara Hill: And part of a broad, comprehensive approach.

Caller 37: Yes.

Debbie Rudy: Get that in there.

Caller 37: Thank you very much.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Caller 38. Your line is open.

Caller 38: Just a follow up on the equipment and training issue. For example, if we wanted to have additional HazMat training and suits for more people in say our public safety as well as our facilities, to give us a broader capability to respond when our normal first responders are not available. Is that something that would be acceptable?

Tara Hill: Yes. That typically, as long as, again, it was connected to the need and justified and not an unreasonable cost. That's probably something that we would typically fund, yes.

Caller 38: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. And again, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Again, ladies and gentlemen, if you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone. Our next question is from Caller 39. Your line is open.

Caller 39: Thank you. My question is about the portage form. If you go through grants dot gov and under the attachments, they have optional attachments where we would put our state single point of contact letter and if we did indirect cost rate, the federal negotiated cost rate and I think we would put the program specific assurance in the partner agreements there. Does it allow for multiple attachments?

Tara Hill: The directions do say in the application package but Debbie and I both think that it allows up to ten off the top of our heads.

Caller 39: Okay. And then would you like to see them as single PDFs or as one PDF?

Tara Hill: Doesn't matter to us.

Caller 39: Okay. Just as long as they're labeled, right?

Tara Hill: Yes. And as long as you use the appropriate format.

Caller 39: Okay. Thanks.

Operator: Thank you. If you have a question or comment at this time, please press the number one key on your touchtone telephone.

Tara Hill: Alright. Sounds like that's it. Operator, first of all, thank you very much.

Operator: You're welcome.

Tara Hill: Everyone, Debbie and I both want to thank you very much for your time today and your interest. We're delighted that there is so many folks out there interested in the EMHE grant program. As I mentioned, you are certainly free to call me or e-mail me if you have any further questions and we'll be happy to get back to you. Again, my e-mail address is Tara dot Hill at ed dot gov and as we

mentioned at the beginning of the call, we'll be posting the transcript from this call online within about a week to ten days. Again, you can access that at <http://colon-forward-slash-forward-slash-REMS-dot-ed-dot-gov>. Alright. Thank you very much.

Debbie Rudy: Thank you. We appreciate your calls and taking some time from your schedule today to spend with us.

Tara Hill: Best of luck with your applications. Bye, everyone.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your participation in today's conference. This does conclude the program. You may now disconnect and everybody have a wonderful day.