

Q: How do you use the Office-wide BAA vs. a program-specific BAA?

A: The goal of the Office-wide BAA is to capture ideas that are not applicable to the much more targeted program-specific BAAs. A seedling project is one typical outcome from the Office-wide BAA.

Q: What are seedlings, and how do we pursue them?

A: Seedlings are intended to de-risk an idea or concept that could potentially lead to a future DARPA program and are typically 3-12 months in duration. Seedling proposals should be submitted to the Office-wide BAA, preferably after discussing the concept with a Program Manager, or going through the Executive Summary or Abstract process. Seedling proposals should explore unproven areas, not elaborate on already established research concepts. Preliminary data is always helpful to illustrate potential concepts, but not required. If submitting an Executive Summary or Abstract, please follow the formatting and submission instructions in Section IV of DARPA-BAA-16-46.

Q: Does the Office-wide BAA apply to seedlings? Is there another BAA for seedlings?

A: The current Office-wide BAA (DARPA-BAA-16-46) is the appropriate solicitation for submitting seedling proposals to DSO.

Q: What is the level of funding and timeline for a typical seeding? Is there a gap before award?

A: Seedling budgets vary, but seedlings are smaller efforts that may have just a few research personnel and short duration, 3-12 months. Proposers should anticipate at least a 90-day period for negotiation of award following notice that their proposal has been selected for negotiation.

Q: What happens at the end of a seedling?

A: Sometimes, the funding ends and there is no additional effort. Other times, a larger program is created based on seedling results, in which case a program-specific BAA may be released to solicit proposals.

Q: Do all programs have to start with a seedling?

A: No.

Q: If a proposer submits a proposal under the Office-wide BAA, can it be routed to the attention of a specific Program Manager?

A: Yes, but that is not required. Many respondents simply identify the relevant Program Manager in the proposal cover letter. Please keep in mind that regardless of the proposer's request, DARPA shall have sole discretion in determining the appropriate reviewer(s) for the proposal.

Q: If proposers are submitting a proposal to a program-specific BAA, does the Executive Summary process apply?

A: No. DSO program BAAs do not typically include an executive summary process. Proposers are, however, encouraged to submit abstracts under most DSO program BAAs. Please be sure to carefully read the instructions in the BAA to which you are applying.

Q: What is the level of funding for a typical program?

A: Program budgets vary based on the scope, complexity and duration.

Q: What is success rate for program BAAs?

A: The number of proposals and awards varies significantly for DSO programs. Proposers are encouraged to participate in the abstract process, if available, which improves the success rate for full proposal submissions.

Q: When/how is the decision made to have an abstract prior to a full proposal? Are abstracts encouraged?

A: Most program-specific BAAs within DSO request abstracts prior to full proposal submission. Proposers should read the BAA carefully to determine if there is an abstract phase. While typically not required, abstracts are highly encouraged as they offer an opportunity for feedback prior to investing a large amount of effort in a full proposal.

Q: Should proposers focus on just one aspect of a program (i.e., one technical area) or respond to all?

A: Please read the BAA carefully and respond as directed. The instructions should clearly state the expectations for that specific program. Questions can always be directed to the relevant BAA Mailbox for clarification.

Q: Are programs always discrete? Some seem related (and build on each other).

A: Programs are discrete. They can be related, and some build off of what has been learned in a prior program, but they are not dependent on each other.

Q: Does DARPA have any programs geared toward early career faculty?

A: Seedlings are a good start. DARPA also has a program called the Young Faculty Award (YFA) to identify and engage rising research starts in junior faculty positions. Interested Program Managers write topics that may be included in the YFA solicitation, which has historically been released once per year typically between December and February. For more information, please see: <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/for-universities/young-faculty-award>

Q: Are the Young Faculty Award program awards of a fixed size?

A: Please carefully read the YFA solicitation when it becomes available. Typically, YFA awards have been \$250k/year for two years.

Q: Does DSO use the SBIR program?

A: Yes.

Q: Do programs or projects initiated by senior Program Managers (i.e., those with one or two years remaining) differ in scope/size from those of a new Program Manager?

A: No. Differences in scope are based on an individual Program Manager's interests, and size of programs is dictated by the program goal and available funding.

Q: Typical tenure for a DARPA Program Manager is 3-5 years, but many programs still have funding when a Program Manager is departing. Who picks up a program when a Program Manager departs and how does that work?

A: Another Program Manager will take over the program.

Q: What metrics does DSO use to measure program success?

A: The metrics we use differ for each program. We identify relevant technical metrics when the programs begin and evaluate them internally through various forums, such as program reviews with

office leadership. Metrics aren't always quantitative, and we try to find the right measures of success for the technical question at hand.

Q: Is DARPA interested in X (Where X is any technology area)?

A: DARPA's interest is driven by its Program Managers. More information on the Program Manager interests can be found at <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso/staff-list> and the Program Manager Introduction scripts can be found under DARPA BAA-16-46 at <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities?oFilter=2>

Q: Is DARPA interested in an enabling capability with no application in mind? Is there a shortcut to securing funding enabled by choosing a particular application?

A: Program Managers at DARPA are interested in finding challenging problems to focus technology development and pull communities together to cross-connect expertise.

Q: How does DARPA connect to the community so they know what DARPA is working on/interested in?

A: We use strategies such as Requests for Information (RFIs), Special Notices (SNs), Research Announcements (RAs) and Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs) posted on FedBizOpps and Grants.gov (if applicable) as formal methods of communication. Our Program Managers also travel to various organizations, conferences and meetings to discuss their interests. You will also find some information on the DARPA website and can always contact a Program Manager directly.

Q: What does the Archive RFI date mean?

A: This is typically near the date after which responses are no longer accepted. Respondents should refer to the Request for Information (RFI) document for the official response due date.

Q: Do you seek alternative funding paths for proposals that don't fit in your portfolio?

A: If we think a whitepaper or proposal would be of interest to another office or agency, we will share the information to the best of our ability.

Q: When we submit ideas to DARPA, are they shared publicly or within the Government?

A: Ideas submitted to Program Managers are not shared publicly, though we will often engage with relevant government stakeholders. You can submit your ideas through the BAA mechanism, via email or in person. If you are concerned about disclosing a particular idea or trade secret, simply mark the document as proprietary.

Q: I have technology that can solve problems in a lot of different areas. How do I find a good fit?

A: You should review the DARPA website to see which Program Manager might be interested in your idea. If you cannot find a Program Manager, please contact the Director or Deputy Director of the appropriate technical office for guidance on who might be interested in your idea.

Q: If you have a concept that covers more than one office, how do you choose to which office you should submit?

A: DARPA offices are a way to organize people and ideas, but there are complements between the offices. If possible, please discuss your concept with the cognizant Program Manager(s) to determine the best path forward. You may submit to more than one office, but please let the Program Manager(s) know. You can always talk to an Office Director or Deputy Director to help point you in the right direction.

Q: Will one office at DARPA share whitepapers and/or proposals with other offices?

A: If we think a whitepaper or proposal would be of interest to another office, we will make every effort to share the information or inform the proposer of the office or agency to which the research is best suited. However, proposers are ultimately responsible for ensuring their information is submitted to the appropriate DARPA Office and/or BAA(s).

Q: Can you submit multiple Executive Summaries and Proposals?

A: Yes, there is no limit as long as they are new ideas.

Q: Are we required to disclose if the proposed work overlaps with work we are doing with another government agency?

A: It depends. One government agency will not fund work already being funded at a separate government agency. If you are submitting the same proposal to multiple agencies for funding, you must state as much in your proposal. However, there are often times synergies and overlap between projects that benefit all involved parties. We ask that when reporting results that were funded by more than one organization (government or private), that you simply distinguish what was funded wholly or in part by DARPA.

Q: When solicitations come out, is it always clear which Program Manager you should contact?

A: Yes, the cognizant Program Manager will be listed in the solicitation (Broad Agency Announcement, or BAA), as well as the Program Manager's program office. Once a BAA is released, you should use the BAA Mailbox listed in the BAA to communicate with the Program Manager. Prior to BAA release, you may reach out to Program Managers directly with your ideas and to discuss their interests.

Q: Is there a single point of contact who can arrange meetings with a Program Manager?

A: There is no single point of contact for arranging meetings. You will need to contact each Program Manager individually to arrange a meeting.

Q: What is the best way to contact DSO Program Managers? What do we do if Program Managers don't respond?

A: You can find Program Manager bios and program portfolios at <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso/staff-list>. Individuals can be contacted via the DARPA website, or emailed (Firstname.lastname@darpa.mil). If you don't receive a response within three weeks, you may contact the DSO Office Director or Deputy Director for assistance.

Q: Are there better times to contact a Program Manager during the year?

A: No. DSO funds research throughout the year, so there is no advantage to contacting a Program Manager at a specific time.

Q: Should I approach the Program Manager directly with a new idea, or contact a Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance (SETA) support team member first?

A: It is best to email Program Managers directly.

Q: Should we engage DARPA Military Liaisons as a resource for concepts of operations (CONOPS) discussions?

A: It is within the scope of a Program Manager's responsibilities to consider CONOPS, and they typically engage DoD representatives as necessary.

Q: Will all executive summaries submitted to the DSO Office-wide BAA receive a response, regardless of whether it is positive or negative?

A: Yes, every conforming executive summary will receive a response.

Q: How are proposals reviewed?

A: Every conforming proposal will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria listed in the BAA. DARPA will conduct a scientific/technical review of each conforming proposal. Proposals will not be evaluated against each other since they are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement. For more information on how proposals will be evaluated under DARPA-BAA-16-46, please see Section V of the BAA.

Q: What is the feedback process for proposals that are declined?

A: Conforming proposals will receive a rejection letter. You may also request an informal feedback session.

Q: Are yes/no responses sent for all submitted proposals? What do we do if we haven't heard within a reasonable timeframe?

A: Our policy is to provide a response to all conforming submissions. If you do not hear from us with regard to your submission, you should email the appropriate BAA Mailbox to request status.

Q: Typically how long does it take to receive a response to a submission?

A: Executive Summary submission responses are typically sent out 30 days after the submission, while abstracts and full proposal responses are typically sent out after 30-45 days.

Q: If there is no response over 45 days from submission, can we contact DSO for a status inquiry?

A: Yes. Send your inquiry to the relevant BAA Mailbox.

Q: Can you comment on feedback sessions to submissions?

A: For conforming full proposals that are not selected, a proposer may request an informal feedback session with the Program Manager and contracting officer. During an informal feedback session you will be provided insight into what aspects of your proposal were identified as specific strengths and weaknesses. You will not be provided any information regarding other proposals submitted in response to the BAA.

Q: Does DARPA work past fundamental (6.1) and applied (6.2) funding levels?

A: While we in DSO don't fund much work beyond 6.2, we do help influence and guide transition to prototype, when applicable. Other offices in DARPA do fund advanced research and development (6.3) efforts.

Q: Can the same program (grant or contract) be both 6.1 and 6.2 research?

A: Yes, if the research meets the definition of both 6.1 and 6.2 research. Awards to universities that are performed on campus are considered Fundamental Research whether funded with 6.1 (Basic Research) or 6.2 (Applied Research) money.

Q: What types of contracting vehicles does DSO use?

A: DSO uses procurement contracts, grants, cooperative agreements or other transactions.

Q: What types of contract vehicles can a non-profit use? Will DARPA ever issue a grant?

A: A non-profit can request any of the contract vehicle types the BAA allows. Note that no fee is provided with a grant. As an alternative, a FAR-based contract may be a better option if fee is requested.

Q: Does the website explain the differences between a grant, other transaction, cooperative agreement and FAR-based contract? How should proposers decide what type to submit?

A: The only award instruments described on the darpa.mil website are other transactions. One key difference between FAR-based contracts and assistance instruments (i.e. grants, cooperative agreements, and other transactions for research) is that only contracts may include a fee or profit. Proposers may decide what award instrument to request, but the ultimate decision regarding the type of instrument used rests with the Contracting Officer.

Q: Does a proposer's decision on whether to request a grant, cooperative agreement, other transaction, or FAR-based contract impact the award decision?

A: No. The contracting officer will negotiate the appropriate award type with the proposer for those proposals selected for negotiation.

Q: Is equal weight given to universities, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) and companies when funding seedlings and programs?

A: We fund the best ideas and the teams most qualified to carry out the work, regardless of the submitter's organization.

Q: What is the scale of funding to Universities?

A: The size of the award in DARPA programs is in line with the scope of the effort; there is no restriction on how much money universities receive relative to other organizations.

Q: Can National Laboratories submit proposals? Are there any issues with their participation?

A: Section III of DARPA-BAA-16-46 addresses the eligibility requirements for Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and Government Entities to submit proposals.

Q: Can universities work on classified programs?

A: Any group with the proper facilities and clearances can work on classified efforts. In some cases, it is best for researchers to team with another technical organization that has the relevant security qualifications and experience.

Q: Can non-U.S. based organizations propose to DARPA?

A: While this varies among BAAs, typically, yes. For DARPA-BAA-16-46, non-U.S. organizations and/or individuals may participate to the extent that such participants comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances. Please see Section III of the BAA for more information.

Q: Are there obstacles to foreign nationals (US-based or otherwise) receiving funding?

A: Typically in DSO, no. Much of the work we support is fundamental research with no funding restrictions. In the case of more mature technologies, or those with an operational relevance, restricted research rules may be applied. Such restrictions would be noted in the BAA. Please see Section III of DARPA-BAA-16-46 for more information.

Q: How much does past performance and a 'resume' matter?

A: One of the review criteria includes Scientific & Technical Merit, which includes the strengths/weakness of the proposed team to carry out the effort. Past-DARPA funding is not a criteria for award.

Q: How do you define key personnel?

A: This varies across DARPA (i.e., a more applied systems office vs. a more fundamental science office such as DSO). In DSO, there is no hard and fast rule, and it typically depends on the program and its specific requirements. However, the Principal Investigator will always be considered key personnel.

Q: Does DARPA fund equipment purchases and, if so, is it only to firms with existing grants?

A: DARPA does not provide grants solely for purchasing equipment. However, DARPA may fund equipment if such purchases are incidental to and necessary for the proposed research work.

Q: If the DSO Office-wide BAA does not close until 2017, are funds dispersed before then?

A: Awards are made on a rolling basis throughout the DSO Office-wide BAA's open period. Payments are made in accordance with the terms of individual awards and are not tied to the timeline of the BAA.

Q: Does DARPA adjust/negotiate costs during the proposal period?

A: Costs may be negotiated once proposals are selected for award. Additionally, DARPA reserves the right to select proposals for partial award. This will require submission of a revised proposal. You will be contacted by a contracting officer if your proposal is selected for partial award.

Q: If the proposed budget is out of line with DARPA's expectation, will there be any back and forth discussion?

A: Potentially. If your proposal exceeds DARPA's expectations for cost, it may still be selected for negotiation of an award. However, you will be contacted by a contracting officer to discuss submitting a revised proposal.

Q: Should options/contingencies be built into a proposal, and how does that factor into award?

A: Proposals should follow the cost proposal format (base and option periods) as identified in the program BAA, as well as any other specific requirements of the BAA.

Q: If your proposal is selected for partial funding, how much feedback will you get?

A: You will receive feedback in the form of a letter from a DARPA contracting officer. This guidance is usually delineated by Statement of Work paragraph regarding that portion of your proposal that the Program Manager does not wish to pursue. It usually also includes a Not-To-Exceed value for the revised cost proposal. The letter will also include a date by which you are expected to submit your revised proposal.

Q: How does DARPA work around patents?

A: We follow the rules, policies and procedures in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

Q: With all the great ideas that DARPA receives, there must be many intellectual property (IP) issues. What protocol does DARPA use to protect IP? Does it impact the award decision?

A: The inclusion of IP restrictions most likely will not impact award decision, but please carefully read the BAA to which you are applying. Offerors should assert their rights to IP developed at private expense in their proposal. Proposers should disclose any costs for DARPA's use of IP developed at

private expense. Unreasonable costs associated with the use of IP developed at private expense may impact DARPA's ability to transition technology and could, therefore, result in a proposal not being selected for award. For DARPA-funded research, we usually, at a minimum, obtain Government Purpose Rights (GPR) as defined in the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS).

Q: Is teaming required? Can a university lead and/or a subcontractor?

A: Teaming is not required in all programs. Please read the BAA for the specific requirements of each DARPA program. Universities can serve as lead or subcontractor.

Q: Are collaborations required, or can a single group or organization submit a proposal?

A: Proposers can submit a proposal as a team or as an individual organization; proposers are typically responsible for identifying and organizing their own team, if applicable.

Q: Are there drawbacks to coordinating with other proposal teams when submitting?

A: Each proposal is reviewed independently and must stand alone. Proposals whose success is dependent on award of another proposal will likely be declined. An alternative strategy is to form a larger team and submit one proposal.

Q: Should universities partner with companies?

A: Not necessarily. Proposers should form a team with the best technical capabilities to carry out the effort.

Q: What is the interaction like between different teams (projects) within a DARPA program?

A: It really depends on the specific program, Program Manager and project requirements.

Q: Can a university Principal Investigator take the project with them if they move to a different academic institution?

A: In principle, yes. However, the details are specific to the situation and you should notify your Program Manager as soon as you are seriously considering a move.

Q: If you have an idea that is fundamental research with a classified potential what happens in that circumstance?

A: It depends. The award will be structured as classified or unclassified depending on the nature of the research.

Q: Can DARPA support development of a new sensitive classified information facility (SCIF)? Will DARPA fund infrastructure?

A: DARPA is not in the business of building out SCIFs, but we will work with you to accommodate security requirements. For example, if you are working in a classified facility for another agency, we will work with you to initiate a co-use agreement.

Q: Are final reports for programs released to the public? What program information can we find online?

A: Final reports for unclassified programs that include Distribution Statement A and are available for public release on the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) website (www.dtic.mil) under DoD Collections/Technical Reports. Additional program information is available on the DARPA website under program descriptions.

Q: Something had been initiated [in the past] to build a community in computer science. Is that still around?

A: DARPA had the Computer Science Study Group targeted at junior investigators and computer science for national security, which is not still active (it was built on the passion of a former DARPA Office Director). DARPA is currently funding the Information Science and Technology (ISAT) study group.

Q: What is the relationship between DARPA, OSD and OSTP?

A: DARPA interacts with the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) at many levels as interests align, although the two organizations are not formally linked from a budgetary or management perspective. Organizationally, DARPA is housed under the umbrella of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, under the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

Q: Will you host another Proposers Day meeting?

A: Yes, we do this every year to coincide with the release of the new Office-wide Broad Agency Announcement.