LUMOS
HR001120S0008

Proposers Day

November 20, 2019

Michael Blackstone
Contracting Officer
DARPA Contracts Management Office

Distribution Statement A. Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited.
Lots of information is made available to potential proposers to clarify program goals/objectives and proposal preparation instructions - those things that are stipulated in the BAA

However:

• Only the information/instructions in the BAA counts
• Proposals will only be evaluated in accordance with the instructions provided in the BAA
• Any response provided by the Government in the FAQ that’s different than what is provided in the BAA will be made formal by an amendment to the BAA
  • Such responses will make note of an impending BAA amendment

Only a duly authorized Contracting Officer may obligate the Government
BAA Overview

- BAAs allow for a variety of technical solutions
  - The BAA defines the problem set, the proposer defines the solution (and SOW)
  - Allows for multiple award instrument types:
    * Procurement Contract, Cooperative Agreement (No Grants), Other Transaction
    * Anticipated Funding Type: 6.2
      - Fundamental research for Universities (prime or subcontractor)
      - Restricted research for for-profits (prime or subcontractor)
      - No Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Guide with the BAA, but there is information in the BAA on this topic (please ask questions if necessary)

- DARPA Scientific Review Process
  - Proposals are evaluated on individual merit and relevance as it relates to the stated research goals/objectives rather than against one another
  - Selections will be made to proposers whose proposals are determined to be most advantageous to the Government, all factors considered, including potential contributions to research program and availability of funding

- Government may select for negotiation all, some, or none of the proposals received
- Government may accept proposals in their entirety or select only portions thereof
- Government may elect to establish portions of proposal as options

Distribution Statement A. Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited.
BAA Process/Timeline

1. BAA Release - 18 November 2019
2. Proposers Day - 20 November 2019
3. Abstracts Due - 11 December 2019
5. Proposals Due – 7 February 2020 (1pm, Eastern)
6. Proposals are reviewed for BAA compliance
   Noncompliant proposals are not reviewed (and cannot be selected)
7. Government conducts Scientific Review Process
   Clarification requests may be sent to various proposers
8. Government sends out notification letters ~ 20 March 2020
9. Contracts negotiated & awarded (performance start) ~ 1 July 2020
Eligibility Issues

- All interested/qualified sources may respond subject to the parameters outlined in BAA
- Foreign participants/resources may participate to the extent allowed by applicable Security Regulations, Export Control Laws, Non-Disclosure Agreements, etc. (Unclassified proposals are anticipated)

FFRDCs and Government entities (who are not on the Gov’t team):
- Are not prohibited by the BAA from proposing
- Are, however, subject to applicable direct competition limitations
- Are, however, required to demonstrate eligibility (sponsor letter)

- The burden to prove eligibility for all such team members rests with the proposer
- All elements of a proposal (tech and cost, prime and subs – even FFRDC team members) must be included in the prime’s submission

Real and/or Perceived Conflicts of Interest:
- Identify any conflict/s
- If any are identified, a mitigation plan must be included
Proposal Abstracts (1/2)

- **Abstracts are highly encouraged:**
  1. They minimize unnecessary effort in proposal preparation and review
  2. They reduce the potential expense of preparing an out of scope proposal

- **The abstract provides a synopsis of the proposed project (tech and budget)**

- **Government will reply by letter with one of two possible responses:**
  1. Encourage full proposal, and may provide feedback
  2. Discourage full proposal, and will provide rational

  - DARPA will not communicate further (verbally or in writing)

- **Regardless of DARPA’s response to an abstract, proposers may submit a full proposal**

  - DARPA will review all full proposals submitted without regard to abstract recommendation/feedback
Abstracts (1 per TA) must include the following components:
- Cover Sheet
- Innovative Claims
- Technical Approach
- Deliverables
- Cost and Schedule
- Tech Transition/National Security Impact
- Capabilities and Teaming

The total page limit does not include the cover sheet (required) or a submission letter (optional)

Submit ONLY to the DARPA BAA Website: https://baa.darpa.mil
- Not to Grants.gov
- Not via email
- Not by any other transmission/submission mechanism
KEY POINTS:

- One proposal per TA

- Proposers can submit to more than one TA

- Tasks that would be duplicated in the effort if multiple TAs were awarded must be called out (and priced) explicitly

Proposal Submission:

- Contracts and OTs - Only to https://baa.darpa.mil
- Cooperative Agreements – Only to Grants.gov (or hardcopy)

- No other submission mechanism is permitted (e.g., no email)

TIP: Propose to the program (goals, objectives, metrics, schedule, deliverables, etc.) the BAA has defined (per TA), not to the program you desire.
Full Proposal Preparation

**Volume 1: Technical/Management Proposal**

- Be mindful of the page limitations
- Be sure to respond to all of the required “Detailed Proposal Information” items

  - **Technical Approach** – is the centerpiece of the technical proposal
    - The PM provided very detailed instructions per TA (cover it all)

  - **Statement of Work** – Organize tasks by Phase. Define all tasks (what you are going to do, not how you are doing it)

    - Keep an eye out for proposal preparation guidance in the “Funding Opportunity Description” section as well
    - Associate Contractor Agreements (ACAs) required for TA1 performers – by the end of Phase 1 (be sure to acknowledge this in the proposal)

**Volume 2: Cost Proposal**

- No page limitations
- Fully detailed cost build-ups/estimates by phase & phase/month (Prime and Subcontractors)
- All necessary supporting information (BoE, BoM, vendor quotes, rate agreements, etc.)
- No Rough Order of Magnitudes (ROMs)
Data Rights

Government desires as few restrictions as possible - however….

If asserting less than Unlimited Rights (e.g., Restrictions):
  – Provide and justify basis of assertions using the prescribed format
  – Explain how each item will be used to support the proposed research project
  – Explain how the Government will be able to reach its program goals (including technology transition)

✓ The above Data Rights Cert includes prime and sub info, as applicable
✓ Provide even if you are proposing an OT.
✓ This information is assessed during evaluations (barriers to transition)
Pitfalls That Delay (or prevent) Proposal Review

- **Failure to submit proposal on time (noncompliant!)**
  - Please note there is no 2nd round due date for this BAA so “Late is Late”

- **Failure to submit using the correct mechanism (noncompliant!)**
  - DARPA BAA site for contracts and OTs (Click “Finalize Full Proposal” button or it does not get submitted)
  - Grants.gov for cooperative agreements (not a DARPA site, give yourself plenty of time)

- **Failure to submit both proposal volumes (noncompliant!)**

- **Pages beyond the page limitation (tech prop) – pages will not be reviewed**

- **ROM/s instead of full subcontract cost proposal/s (noncompliant!)**
  - “I didn’t have time to get the subcontract proposal/s” will not change the outcome
  - “My subcontractor/s would not give me a proposal” will not change the outcome
Communications

- **Prior to Receipt of Proposals (Solicitation Phase):** No restrictions, however Gov’t (PM/PCO) shall not dictate solutions or transfer technology
  - Typically handled through the FAQ

- **After Receipt of Proposals/Prior to Selections (Scientific Review Phase):** Limited to Contracting Officer or BAA Coordinator (with approval) to address clarifications requested by the review team
  - Proposal cannot be changed in response to clarification requests

- **After Selection/Prior to Award (Negotiation Phase):** Negotiations are conducted by the Contracting Officer
  - PM and/or COR typically tasked with finalizing the SOW (with PI)
  - PM and/or COR typically involved in any technical discussions (i.e., partial selection discussions)
  - Pre-award costs will not be reimbursed unless a pre-award cost agreement is negotiated prior to award

- **Informal Feedback Sessions (Post Selection):** May be requested/provided once the selection(s) are made
  - If made on a timely basis (~2 wks after letter), all requests will be accepted