DARPA-RA-17-01 Young Faculty Award (YFA)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
as of <mark>11/27/2017</mark>

45Q: Is there a specific excel budget template for this submission?

 45A: There is no excel budget template for this RA. Feel free to use your own template as long as it provides the information requested in the RA. Spreadsheet files must be included as a separate file in the full proposal package. As stated in Attachment 3 - Cost Volume, "The Cost Volume should include a spreadsheet file (.xls or equivalent format) that addresses the applicable cost information requested below and provides formula traceability among all components of the Cost Volume.

44Q:I would like to know if it is ok to team with a previous DARPA YFA winner?

 44A: Yes

43Q: We are unsure how to prepare Section 2.a. on Attachment 4 "Proof of Eligibility to Propose." Are there any instructions for how to prepare this part?

 43A: This section is only applicable to FFRDCs/Government entities who are proposing. The FFRDC/Government entity should be able to provide their proof of eligibility to propose to the DARPA RA. Such eligibility allows certain FFRDCs/Government entities to compete against industry under the terms of the RA. Any FFRDC/Government entity seeking an intergovernmental agreement should not propose to the RA but should respond to the DARPA Program Manager directly. Please refer to Section III.A.1 of the RA for more information.

<p align="center">🔴 ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ New Questions and Answers ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲</p>

42Q: In Attachment 2 under "8. Capabilities," what is expected from the proposer? Specifically, I have questions about the following two items:

- "organizational experience": Is this part asking whether the proposer had experience in organizing a team before?
- "any work in closely related research areas and previous accomplishments.": how is this different from the "previous accomplishments" in "7. Personnel, Qualifications, and Commitments?"

 42A: Capabilities and Personnel, Qualifications and Commitments have different requests. Item #7 should focus on the personnel: the level of effort and the experience and accomplishments of each person on the team. Item #8 refers to the organizational Capabilities including intellectual property, or specialized facilities to which the proposer team will have access.

41Q: In Attachment 3 under 2.a "direct labor," the template asks to "Provide individual labor categories or persons, with associated labor hours and direct labor rates." As an educational institution, we do not maintain documentation of hours worked for our faculty and staff, but rather maintain documentation to support time expended on federal projects based on percentages of effort worked. This documentation is maintained in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for

Federal Awards; as a result, we budget based on percentage of effort/number of months. Is it acceptable for us to provide percentage of effort/number of months with the salary rate or should we be providing hours/estimated hourly rates for comparison purposes?

41A: Please provide the percentage of effort worked and salary documentation as requested in Attachment 3.

40Q: In Attachment 2 it states, "The summary slide described herein (Attachment 5) must be in .ppt or .pptx format and should be attached as a separate file to this document (i.e., combine all 4 slides into a single PowerPoint slide deck)." Are there 4 slides in the powerpoint slide deck?

40A: No, there is only 1 slide requested as part of your full proposal submission – Attachment 5. Please provide this single .ppt as a separate file in your submission package.

39Q: I am a Professor in a tenure track position, but my title does not have Assistant/Associate preceding it. Am I eligible to apply for the YFA program?

39A. Yes, proposers with the title of "Professor" can apply for funding under the YFA program if they meet eligibility criteria as stated in DARPA-RA-17-01.

38Q: How are we to anonymize the Executive Summary? The argument of why the research will be successful often hinges on previous work performed by the PI.

38A: Proposers should be able to answer items A through F without naming the specific personnel or organizations involved. Proposers are expected to exercise good common sense to ensure the idea expressed in their submission stands alone. Executive Summaries will be undergo a "blind" review - a common practice at many conferences and journals. The executive summary should not include any references.

37Q: Can multiple executive summary submissions be made using the same https://baa.darpa.mil account?

37A: Yes. A single https://baa.darpa.mil account may be used for multiple executive summary submissions.

36Q: Can multiple executive summary submissions be included in the same .zip file?

36A: No. Only one .zip file will be accepted per executive summary.

35Q: Who should make a submission – the Organization or the PI?

35A: Whether the submission is made by the PI or the Organization is at the discretion of the proposer.

34Q: Should I provide my submission as a single file or multiple files?

34A: The elements of a complete submission (Executive Summary or Full Proposal) must be provided as a single .zip file containing either one document file, or a single .zip containing multiple, separate document files. Document files may be in .pdf, .ppt, .pptx, .odx, .doc, .docx, .xls, or .xlsx formats.

33Q: Must the team members be final when the Executive Summaries are submitted?

33A: Teams need not be final at the time of Executive Summary submission.

32Q: How do I confirm if I have an account with https://baa.darpa.mil?

    32A: An account with https://baa.darpa.mil will have an associated email and username. If you have the email address and have forgotten the username, you may click on the "username recovery" link on the bottom right hand side of the https://baa.darpa.mil web page. If you do not have a username or associated email, it is best to create a new account.

31Q: In order to make a submission via https://baa.darpa.mil, I must complete an online form. This form asks me to request the attention of a specific Program Manager. However, during the webinar, we were told that we're not supposed to communicate with PMs (i.e., POCs), which is why no PM names were listed within the different topic areas. Can you please clarify this input field? Which Program Manager's name shall I provide here?

    31A: Please leave this field blank. DARPA reserves the right to assign a submission to a different topic area or program manager than indicated by the proposer.

30Q: In order to make a submission via https://baa.darpa.mil, I must complete an online form. This form requests a "Submission Summary" and requires us to "Provide a summary of the proposed Technical and Management approach." What should I provide here?

    30A: Please provide a brief description of the approach or simply write, "see attached submission." Completing this field is required during the submission process; however, the contents of this field will not be evaluated as part of your submission.

29Q: May I add a bibliography to my executive summary submission?

    29A: No. An executive summary submission should follow the template provided as Attachment 1 to the RA.

28Q. What level of technical/mathematical detail is expected in the full proposal? Can I reference and hyperlink my own current research (i.e., non-published papers/internal reports) for additional technical details?

    28A. Guidance for the Technical and Management volume can be found in Attachment 2 of DARPA-RA-17-01. Attachment 2 states "Additional information not explicitly called for in the Technical and Management Volume must not be submitted with the proposal, but may be included as links in the bibliography. Such materials will be considered for the reviewers' convenience only and not evaluated as part of the proposal.

27Q. I work at an Institute at a University. The institute does not offer tenure-track appointments, but of the University does. Which clause applies in my case?

    27A. Your appointment position at your employing organization will determine your eligibility. Please review the eligibility information provided in Section III of DARPA-RA-17-01. Please discuss your eligibility determination with your Office of Sponsored Projects and refer to guidance in FAQs 3, and 4 for further clarification.

26Q: I am interested in submitting a proposal to the 2018 YFA Research Announcement (RA), but my research topic does not fall under any of the Topic Areas (TAs). Does DARPA encourage proposals outside of these TAs?

    26A: Unfortunately, no. If you feel that your research is not directly related to one of the topic areas, you may look into submitting a proposal to another active DARPA solicitation, including the DARPA Office-wide Broad Agency Announcements (http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/office-wide-broad-agency-announcements). It is important to note that any such submission cannot be referred to as a "YFA" proposal. Prior to any submission, you should carefully review technical area description to ensure the proposed concept is in line with that solicitation and/or office's technology investment portfolio.

25Q: My idea fits into multiple topic areas. May I submit to multiple topic areas and/or submit multiple applications?

    25A: You may submit only one YFA executive summary per TA and only one full proposal to the RA (total). Proposers must specify ONE and only one TA for their submission and identify this on the cover page. If your research idea spans multiple topics, then you should choose one, best-suited topic for that idea. Do not submit the same idea to multiple topic areas. DARPA reserves the right to assign proposals to a different topic area than indicated by the proposer.

24Q: My proposed idea is [insert research idea]. Is this of interest? Can I get confirmation that my research fits within the scope of one of the TAs in the RA?

    24A: The Topic Areas are purposefully broad to allow proposers to have maximum creativity in their responses. No further guidance will be provided outside of the technical information listed in the RA. Proposers are strongly encouraged to submit an executive summary in advance of a full proposal to determine DARPA's interest and avoid the effort and expense of preparing an out of scope proposal.

23Q: Under what topic area is my research most applicable?

    23A: It is up to you to choose the most appropriate TA for your proposed research. Please note that DARPA reserves the right to assign proposals to a different TA than that which was indicated by the proposer.

22Q: Will the YFA solicitation go out every year, and will the topic areas vary over the years?

    22A: We are unable to make good-faith predictions about future solicitations. While this program has received positive feedback in the past, the future of the program depends on the availability of funding. The topic areas for YFA solicitations tend to vary, but are designed to meet the needs of DARPA Program Managers at the time that the solicitation is issued.

21Q: I would like to request a meeting with a specific YFA topic POC. Is this possible?

21A: No. Unfortunately, due to the high volume of responses to this RA, YFA topic POCs are unable to accommodate such meetings. However, if you have specific technical or administrative questions that may be shared with the general public, you may send them to YFA2018@darpa.mil.

20Q: Can I view a sample of a previously-awarded proposal?
20A: No.

19Q: What is the effort requirement for the PI? We plan on having other FTEs working on this project so we want to budget appropriately for the PI.
19A: DARPA cannot determine this for you. The PI's level of effort should be substantial enough to ensure that the proposed research can be completed during the grant period.

18Q: Are preliminary results required, allowed but not required, or not allowed in this solicitation?
18A: Preliminary results are allowed, but not required.

17Q: If proposers are intending to include human or animal use in their research study do they need to include a document detailing human or animal use?
17A: For projects anticipating human or animal use, proposals should briefly describe plans for Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) review and approval. A description of these plans should be included in the proposal.

16Q: Does the limit of $500,000 for the Base Award include indirect costs?
16A: Yes.

15Q: May proposers include research students or visitors in the proposed travel budget?
15A: Proposers should submit a realistic and appropriate travel budget. If you propose a travel budget for multiple individuals you will be expected to justify this in the cost proposal. All requests for travel funding (for both the Principal Investigator and others) will be reviewed by the DARPA Program Manager as well as the Grants Officer for those proposals selected for award. Any requests for travel funding that are deemed excessive will likely be reduced during negotiations, if selected. Please also note, foreign travel cost can be proposed, but justification will need to be provided. Please read the RA very carefully regarding guidance for travel costs.

14Q: Is there a DARPA list of labor categories and associated qualifications I can use in my cost proposal?
14A: There is no such list maintained by DARPA. You may use the categories established by your institution.

13Q: Is a Letter of Support from the University Department Head required for the full proposal submission?

>13A: An official transmittal letter is required for a full proposal submission.
>This is typically a brief, signed statement from an official at the submitter's organization (perhaps a Director of Research or Sponsored Programs) in support of the research proposed. Please reach out to your University's Office of Sponsored Research for further information and guidance.

12Q: If I took a leave of absence (i.e. maternity, sabbatical, etc.) within 3 years of being hired or promoted to a tenure position, should this period be included in the 3 year window?

>12A: Situations like this are highly case-dependent. If the institution has approved leaves of absence, these dates may be listed on the cover sheet of the submission under "PI's Approved Leaves of Absence, if any." DARPA will only accept the official tenure start date according to the university. If the time between the tenure start date and full proposal submission deadline exceeds the 3 year eligibility window, DARPA will expect to see the excess amount justified in the approved leaves of absence section. Failure to provide any/all relevant information relating to the PIs eligibility on the cover page of the submission may result in the proposal being determined non-conforming and subject to rejection without review.

11Q: Is it recommended for proposers to include a budget for the Director's Fellowship in the third year?

>11A: Yes. The proposer should include cost information as defined by the RA, for both the base and Director's Fellowship Option. Note that there is a maximum budget of $500,000 for the Director's Fellowship. If a proposer does not include a Director's Fellowship Option in the proposal, they may not add the option later should the base proposal be selected for funding.

10Q: Should we include a budget for equipment, and is there a funding limitation on equipment purchases?

>10A: If you will need to purchase equipment to perform your research, then it should be included in your budget via a priced Bill-of-Materials. (All equipment priced at over $5,000 requires supporting documentation, such as a vendor quote.) There is no specific limit for equipment purchases; however, your total budget for the 24-month base period cannot exceed $500,000.

9Q: I am [a non-U.S. citizen/a Permanent Resident/Green Card/etc.]; can I apply to YFA? Do I need to be able to obtain a security clearance to be eligible for YFA?

>9A: There is no language in the RA prohibiting a non-U.S. citizen/Permanent Resident/Green Card holder/etc. from applying to this RA; all such persons MAY apply to this RA as long as the application comes from a U.S. institution. It is NOT a requirement of the RA that proposers be eligible to obtain a U.S. security clearance.

8Q: I am considering applying to other Young Investigator programs sponsored by other agencies. Does that disqualify me from proposing to (or being selected for) the DARPA YFA grant?

> 8A: No. Submission to other programs by DARPA or other agencies is not restricted. Recipients of non-YFA DARPA awards are eligible to propose. Proposers must provide a listing of federal support (past, current, and pending). This list must include the sponsor, amount, and performance dates of all federally-funded research efforts. Please note that proposals previously funded by DARPA of other agencies should NOT be submitted to the RA.

7Q: The RA specifies single-investigator proposal only. Am I allowed to include subcontractors, vendors, or other faculty members, if they are included in a supporting role, and not listed as a Co-PI?

> 7A: This RA solicits single Principal Investigator (PI) proposals; no co-PIs are allowed. However, investigators will be given the opportunity to propose teaming if the nature of the proposal requires it. Teaming and subcontract awards will be limited to no more than 30% of the total grant value. Specific content, communications, networking, and team formation will be the sole responsibility of the participants.

6Q: I see that researchers working at Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and DoD and other Government Laboratories are not eligible to apply for funding under this program as Principal Investigators. Can proposers team with these organizations for support?

> 6A: Yes. Principal Investigators can choose to team with Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and DoD and other Government Laboratories, not to exceed 30% of the total grant value.

5Q: Is a Ph.D. required?

> 5A: Current Tenure-Track Assistant/Associate Professors, and Tenured faculty within 3 years of their Tenure date are NOT required to have Ph.D. However, an equivalent position at a non-profit research institution is required to be within 12 years of the receipt of their Ph.D. to be eligible for the YFA program.

4Q: I am a young investigator at a non-profit research institute that does not have Tenure-Track positions. Do I qualify as part of an equivalent non-profit research institution?

> 4A: If the proposer is from a non-profit science and technology research institution a determination of eligibility must be made using the following guidance:

> - The appointment must be a continuing appointment (soft-money appointments and/or visiting appointments do not apply and will not be considered).

> - If the employing organization DOES NOT offer Tenure-Track appointments, then the PI must be within 12 years of the receipt of their Ph.D.

- If the employing organization DOES offer Tenure-Track appointments, then only current Tenure-Track associates and Tenured faculty within 3 years of their Tenure date are eligible for the YFA program.

3Q: If I am an Assistant Professor not in a Tenure-Track position (even though my institution offers Tenure-Track positions) am I eligible to submit a proposal?

      3A: Unfortunately no; eligible applicants must be Tenure-Track or Tenured professors (or their equivalents) at the time of submission.

2Q: If I was previously in a Tenure-Track or Tenured position, but have changed universities and am currently in a Tenure-Track or Tenured position, am I still eligible to submit a proposal?

      2A: Proposers must meet the eligibility requirements of the RA for current positions held. Previous positions held do not apply.

1Q: I am an Assistant Professor who has been in a Tenure-Track position for 6 years, am I eligible to submit a proposal?

      1A: Yes, applicants currently in a Tenure-Track position regardless of the number of years are eligible to apply to the YFA program.