

2026 Young Faculty Award (YFA) Research Announcement (RA)
DARPARA2502
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
as of 1/12/26

Questions for this RA should be submitted to YFA2026@darpa.mil. All FAQs will be updated on a continual basis. All changes to the FAQ list are noted with yellow highlights. As stated in DARPARA2502, “Question Submittal Closed: January 9, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET.”

102Q: Is the filled Model Cooperative Agreement required upon submission?

102A: The Model Cooperative Agreement attachment does not need to be completed or submitted as part of your full proposal submission. DARPA uses the Cooperative Agreement template during award negotiation for selected proposals. This is a reference document.

101Q: Regarding Attachment C, can you clarify what you mean in terms of the page limit and the references vs. bibliography distinction?

101A: The optional “Bibliography” component of Attachment C does not count toward the page limit. Additional information (e.g., references, technical papers, resumes) not explicitly called for in the Technical and Management Volume may be included as links in the Bibliography. The description of the “Bibliography” component is provided within the last page of Attachment C. This component may include “links to relevant papers, reports or resumes. Do not include technical papers. The linked materials will not be evaluated as part of the proposal review.”

100Q: Should the Biographical Sketch be submitted in NIH or NSF style?

100A: NSF. The NSF style requires a biographical sketch for each individual identified as senior/key personnel.

99Q: For the DARPA YFA program, I understand that the “U.S. Person Graduate Student” funding option includes a citizenship requirement. For graduate students supported under other budget categories (i.e., “B. Other Personnel: Graduate Students” in the Budget form), is U.S. person status also required?

99A: As stated in Section IV of DARPARA2502, “Non-U.S. individuals employed by U.S. institutions may participate to the extent that such participants comply with the citizenship and eligibility requirements under this RA, any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances.”

98Q: If the U.S. Person graduate student being proposed under the U.S. Person Graduate Student option will be employed by a different organization than the PI, does this mean that a proposer should include the U.S. Person graduate student's employer/organization as a sub-awardee with a separate sub-proposal and an ITWA in the full proposal?

98A: The U.S. Person Graduate Student's university should be proposed as a sub-awardee if it is different than the PI's organization. The Statement of Work (SOW) for this option does not need to be submitted as a separate file. The cost proposal for this option should be included as a distinct, clearly labeled section within the overall cost proposal. See FAQ 76.

97Q: Can I include a link to a video in the Attachment C Technical Plan or in the Bibliography?

97A: As instructed in Attachment C, "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."

96Q: Are we required to use the DARPA Standard Cost Proposal Spreadsheet template in addition to the SF 424 Research & Related Budget form and upload the justification?

96A: The DARPA Standard Cost Proposal Spreadsheet is not a required template. See FAQ 81.

95Q: Is a specific naming convention required for the full proposal documents that must be submitted via Grants.gov?

95A: There is no file naming convention requirement for this solicitation. Requirements for Full Proposal submission are provided in Section III: Submission Information.

94Q: How were the countries listed in Section IV: Special Considerations chosen?

94A: The countries were determined based on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security regulation, 15 CFR 791.4.

93Q: If an individual serves as a Subaward PI on a YFA (*i.e.*, is not the Prime PI/YFA award recipient), would that participation affect the individual's eligibility to (1) submit a future YFA as Prime PI (assuming funding thresholds are not exceeded) and/or (2) submit as Prime PI on non-YFA DARPA funding opportunities?

93A: YFA awards have only a single PI, who must be from the Prime proposer, and is also the Key Personnel for the award. Individuals who previously served as subawardees under a YFA are not considered to have been a PI since the PI must be from a Prime proposer. Anyone named as the PI for a previous YFA award is not permitted to serve on any future YFA as a PI, but may serve as Senior Personnel. Those proposed as Key Personnel on YFA awards are subject to the funding limitations and eligibility requirements noted in the RA. Senior Personnel are subject to the citizenship requirements, but not the tenure requirements or funding limitations (note – Senior personnel are defined in DARPARA2502 Amendment 5 as "other post-doctoral personnel.") YFA PIs are not barred from applying to serve as a PI for other DARPA funding opportunities.

92Q: The RA mentions, “All proprietary subawardee proposal documentation, prepared at the same level of detail as that required of the awardee’s proposal...” Does this mean that a subawardee is required to provide the same proposal elements that are required of the lead organization?

92A: Yes.

91Q: The RA states that the YFA is a single PI proposal. However, the administrative FAQ responses suggest that subawardees and teaming are allowed if necessary (e.g., 7Q, 62Q). If my departmental colleague may aid in a part of the proposed work, would I be able to allocate to them an appropriate amount of funds, even though they would not be listed as a co-PI? Should I mention this in the proposal and include in the budget during the full application stage?

91A: Subawardees are permitted. If they are post-doctoral researchers, they must be identified as Senior Personnel per DARPARA2502 Amendment 5, and are subject to the citizenship requirements in the RA. See FAQ 92.

90Q: I have a question regarding the definition of a “team member.” Can you please advise if the definition of a team member is anyone listed as Senior/Key Personnel on a project? Would a team member also apply to a consultant (paid or unpaid)?

90A: “Team member” is defined in DARPARA2502 Amendment 5 as “all individuals either identified in the proposal or brought in to work on efforts, to include graduate or under-graduate students... whether they are part of the Prime proposer or proposed subawardee organization.” See Section IV: Special Considerations of the RA.

89Q: Section IV of the RA states, “All proposed team members must meet these requirements...” Does this apply to subawardees? For example, the possible subawardee in my mind is a full professor with lots of funding from DARPA (> \$500,000). Can he still be a subawardee? If he cannot participate as a subawardee, then how can he participate other than as a sub-awardee senior/ key personnel? Can he be a consultant or play other roles?

89A: DARPARA2502 Amendment 5 updates this section to “All proposed Key Personnel must meet these requirements.” Team members are also defined in Amendment 5 to be “non-post-doctoral individuals either identified in the proposal or brought in to work on efforts post-proposal, to include graduate or under-graduate students.” Only those proposed as Key Personnel (i.e., the PI) are subject to the funding limitations noted in DARPARA2502.

88Q: I have in mind to team with a senior faculty at my institution. This tenured faculty is more than 3 years beyond their tenure date. Can this partner be included on my team, or is there any other capacity in which they are allowed to be joined on the proposal?

88A: DARPARA2502 Amendment 5 requires “post-doctoral personnel” aside from the PI to be identified as Senior Personnel in proposals. Senior Personnel are subject to the citizenship requirements in the RA, but not the tenure requirements or funding limitations. See FAQ 90.

87Q: Would it be possible to add an additional team member(s), such as a co-investigator, in my full proposal submission? I did not include them in my executive summary.

87A: Proposers are not prohibited from making changes from their executive summary submission, however there can be only one (1) PI per YFA award, who must be from the Prime proposer, and must be identified as the sole Key Personnel per DARPARA2502 Amendment 5. Other post-doctoral personnel must be identified as Senior Personnel in proposals per DARPARA2502 Amendment 5. Senior personnel are subject to the citizenship requirements, but not the funding limitations or tenure requirements listed in the RA. Please ensure your full proposal accurately reflects your total number of persons and their level of commitment for each position listed as well as the specific tasks (as described in the SOW) they will support. Attachments B and C contain specific instructions and templates. See FAQ 33.

86Q: The RA mentions an Interdivisional Work Transfer Agreement. Is there an available example of this document?

86A: There is no formal Government template for these agreements as they are internal to proposer organizations. They are only applicable if required by your organization.

85Q: Can you please clarify the total maximum funding possible per award? DARPA's response to FAQ 72 states that "The total maximum funding possible per award remains \$1,000,000 (\$500,000 max for the base period with an option of \$500,000 for the Director's Fellowship)." If a PI receives the additional award option for a U.S. Person Grad Student (\$350,000 max), would the total funding per award would the total funding per award then be increased to \$1,350,000 max?

85A: The maximum combined award amount the proposer's prime organization may receive for the Base period (maximum award amount of \$500,000), the Director's Fellowship option (maximum award amount of \$500,000), and a U.S. Graduate Student Option (maximum award amount of \$350,000) would be up to \$1,350,000 in sum. See FAQ 72.

84Q: Is there a maximum number of months the graduate student can participate in the project?

84A: Graduate students may be included as personnel during both the base period and the optional Director's Award period. Additionally, as stated in the YFA RA, a U.S. Person graduate student who is supported by the U.S. Person Graduate Student option must have a Period of Performance (PoP) not to exceed 12 months and the PoP must run concurrently with the 24-month base period. See FAQ 78.

83Q: Can DARPA please provide additional clarification on Amendment 3 of the 2026 YFA RA which states, “Citizens of China, Cuba, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and North Korea are not eligible to propose”?

83A: Amendment 4 and Amendment 5 of the 2026 YFA RA provide eligibility clarifications. Additional eligibility information is available in Section IV of the announcement. The eligibility information below is consistent with DARPARA2502 Amendment 4.

“Proposed Key or Senior Personnel who are citizens of China, Cuba, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and North Korea are not eligible for inclusion on a YFA proposal unless one of the following conditions is met:

- o Individual is a dual citizen of the U.S. and one of the countries above.
- o Individual is a U.S. Permanent Resident/Green Card holder.
- o Individual is in the application process to become a U.S. Permanent Resident/Green Card holder.
- If your application is in process, please email your USCIS Form I-797 to YFA2026@darpa.mil no later than the full proposal due date. DARPA will provide further instructions. If Attachment C reflects the individual is not a U.S. citizen or current U.S. Permanent Resident/Green Card holder, and DARPA has not received a USCIS Form I-797 via email by the full proposal due date, **the proposal will be removed from consideration.**”

82Q: I would like DARPA to provide specific feedback regarding my executive summary. Would it be possible to set up a brief meeting to discuss any feedback?

82A: Due to the high volume of responses to the YFA Research Announcement (RA), we are unable to accommodate such telecoms/meetings to provide additional feedback for Executive Summary submissions. However, if you have specific technical or administrative questions that may be shared via the YFA FAQ list on darpa.mil, you may email YFA2026@darpa.mil. As stated in the announcement, “Regardless of DARPA’s response to an executive summary, proposers may submit a full proposal. DARPA will review all conforming full proposals using the published evaluation criteria (Section II) and without regard to any comments resulting from the review of an executive summary.”

81Q: Is a Cost Proposal required for the full proposal?

81A: Please see Section III: Submission Information of the YFA RA. Full proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. Attachments B and C contain specific instructions and templates and constitute a full proposal submission. Budget Justification should be provided as Section L of the SF 424 Research & Related Budget form provided via Grants.gov. **See FAQ 96.**

80Q: What is the allowed number of Graduate Students under the U.S. Person Graduate Student Option?

80A: The solicitation specifies one (1) U.S. Person Graduate Student Option, described as “an additional option effort for a U.S. Person Graduate Student,” and the associated budget cap applies to that single graduate student. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

79Q: Can graduate students be included in the budget that are not covered by the U.S. Person Graduate Student option?

79A: Yes. While only one graduate student may be supported under the separate, dedicated U.S. Person Graduate Student option, additional graduate-student support would need to be justified under normal project personnel costs in the base or Director’s Award option period budgets. Additional students would not be part of the U.S. Graduate Student option; they would simply be treated like any other project personnel. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

78Q: Are there any restrictions in including graduate students outside of the U.S. Person Graduate Student option, and just within the 24-month base or 12-month option periods?

78A: The solicitation does not prohibit a proposer from budgeting for personnel, including graduate students, within the 24-month base or 12-month optional Director’s Award period, provided those costs fit within the overall funding level for those periods and are allocated only to allowable activities. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80. See also FAQ 84.

77Q: What costs are covered by the United States (U.S.) Person Graduate Student Option? Would this include salary, fringe benefits, tuition & fees, and IDC?

77A: Costs (such as salary/stipend, fringe, tuition and fees, indirect costs, and travel) may be included if they are allowable and necessary for the graduate student to perform their role in the proposed research effort. All costs must remain within the overall funding level for the U.S. Person Graduate Student option. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

76Q: The guidelines state that the U.S. Person Graduate Student Option must include a Statement of Work and associated cost proposal. Does this require a separate submission of a Statement of Work, specifically for this option? Where would this need to be submitted?

76A: The Statement of Work (SOW) for this option does not need to be submitted as a separate file. It may be incorporated into the main SOW as a clearly identified, stand-alone option task. The cost proposal for the Graduate Student Option should be included as a distinct, clearly labeled section within the overall cost proposal, following the same cost-proposal format and templates used for the base and additional option period. No unique or separate upload location in Grants.gov is required beyond including this option within the standard cost volume. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

75Q: What is the maximum time duration of the Graduate Student option?

75A: As stated in the YFA RA, the U.S. Person Graduate Student option Period of Performance (PoP) is not to exceed 12 months and must run concurrently with the 24-month base period. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

74Q: Can I use the 24-month base period and the 12-month option period funding to support one or more than one U.S. Person Graduate Student?

74A: Only one U.S. Person Graduate Student may be supported under the U.S. Person Graduate Student Option award during the 24-month base period. As defined in the announcement, a “United States Person” is a citizen or resident of the United States. A resident is an individual who meets either the green card test or the substantial presence test for the calendar year (January 1 – December 31). For additional information, please refer to the IRS guidance on the classification of taxpayers for U.S. tax purposes: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/classification-of-taxpayers-for-us-tax-purposes>. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80. In addition, a proposer may include additional graduate students who are U.S. persons as team members on a proposal. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

73Q: The announcement says that the 12-month option period is the Director’s Fellowship. The 12-month option period may include the Graduate Student option, but the Graduate Student option cannot be extended to the Director’s Fellowship. Could you please clarify?

73A: As stated in the YFA RA, “Proposals should also include a 12-month option period with a maximum funding level of \$500,000 and may include the additional U.S. Person Graduate Student option.” In other words, all proposals should include a 12-month option period with a maximum funding level of \$500,000 for the Director’s Fellowship. In addition, proposals may include the additional U.S. Person Graduate Student option which is not to exceed 12 months and must run concurrently with the 24-month base period. See FAQ 54 and 72 through 80.

72Q: Is the US Person Graduate Student option (\$350K max) separated from the 24-month base period (\$500K max) and the 12-month option period (\$500K max), making the total maximum be \$1,350K?

72A: The U.S. Person Graduate Student option Period of Performance is not separated from the 24-month base Period of Performance and the award amounts are as stated for each separate award. The U.S. Person Graduate Student option is not offered in the 12-month option period (the Director’s Fellowship). As stated in the announcement, each award may include an additional award option for a U.S. Person Graduate Student (\$350,000 max) that runs concurrent with the base period (not as a separate or additive phase). In total, the maximum YFA award amount possible is \$1,350,000 (Base period, Director’s Fellowship option, and the U.S. Person Graduate Student option). See FAQ 54, 72 through 80. See also FAQ 85.

71Q: Can the subawardee be from the same institution. Would “subawardee” be the correct designation in that case, or is there another preferred term?

71A: If the individual is from the same institution as the prime, they would not be considered a subawardee. DARPARA 2502 Amendment 5 notes that post-doctoral personnel should be identified as Senior Personnel in proposals. Senior Personnel are subject to the citizenship requirements in the RA, but are not subject to the funding limitations and tenure requirements noted in the RA.

70Q: My project is most suitable for 36 months (24 months base + an additional 12 months) with \$1M budget (\$500k for base + \$500k for third year). I was wondering if for "proposed cost & duration in months" I should write only the base part (24 months, \$500k) or total amounts (36 months, \$1M). There is no option to split the base and the additional part. Please advise.

70A: Enter the total proposed duration and total proposed cost so that the administrative record reflects the full scope and funding requested. Additionally, clearly note the base and option periods with their respective amounts elsewhere in the proposal (e.g., the cover page, the budget summary, and/or the budget justification).

69Q: Does the total from all DoD sources include DoD-related consortiums like the University Consortium for Applied Hypersonics and/or does it include DURIPs (since funds are for equipment and not research).

69A: Funding originating from any DoD and/or DARPA source will count toward the funding limit, regardless of the specific program, solicitation, or funding mechanism under which it was provided.

68Q: Could you please confirm that the faculty that currently are not but will be "in a current tenure track faculty position" by the date of a full proposal are eligible to submit the Executive Summary?

68A: Per the solicitation, eligible applicants must be Tenure-Track or Tenured professors (or their equivalents) at the time of full proposal submission. See FAQ 3.

67Q: Is a Letter of Support from the University Department Head required for the executive summary?

67A: No. An Executive Summary submission should follow the template and instructions provided in Attachment A to the RA. See FAQ 13.

66Q: Is the executive summary optional?

66A: While submission of an executive summary is not mandatory, proposers are strongly encouraged to submit one prior to submitting a full proposal. Because the YFA program is structured as a mentorship opportunity, proposers whose executive summaries are not recommended for submission are strongly discouraged from submitting a full proposal.

65Q: Could you please provide me a guideline on how to do the submission?

65A: Instructions for executive summary submission are contained within the announcement itself and in Attachment A. All executive summaries must be submitted through the Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT) via <https://baa.darpa.mil/>. Each topic area (TA) will have a separate announcement listing in BAAT (e.g. DARPARA2502-01, DARPARA2502-02, etc.) BAAT submission details are provided in “Proposer Instructions: General Terms and Conditions.”
(<https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/proposer-general-terms/>)

64Q: If a project includes multiple Co-PIs - for example, one PI and four Co-PIs - should the total award amount be equally divided among all five investigators when determining each individual’s total DoD funding for eligibility purposes? Or should the half-share rule you mentioned apply only to Co-PIs (with the PI still counted for the full award amount)?

64A: If only one individual was named as the “PI” on the award, then the full award amount is allocated to the “PI”. The award value would not be distributed between the PI and those referred to as a “Co-PI”. If all individuals were named as “Co-PIs” on the award, then an equal distribution amongst the multiple Co-PIs should be considered when determining eligibility.

63Q: Is the “total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee” defined as the total obligated amount to the prime institution (before issuing subawards), or as the amount retained by the prime after subawards are distributed?

63A: For purposes of determining eligibility for the YFA 2026 solicitation, only funds that have been formally obligated (i.e., received under an executed base or option award) to the prime and/or subawardee should be included when calculating total DARPA and/or DoD funding to date. If additional funds are obligated prior to the proposal submission date, the proposer should include those amounts when reassessing eligibility.

62Q: I am planning to submit a YFA 2026 proposal as a single Principal Investigator. Meanwhile, I have a collaborator who is preparing a separate YFA proposal and would like to include me as a subawardee on that submission. Could you please confirm whether participating in one proposal as PI and another as subawardee would comply with the YFA 2026 solicitation requirements?

62A: Yes, you may apply as long as you meet the eligibility considerations.

61Q: I was brought in at the rank of full professor, but without tenure. Am I eligible for the YFA?

61A: Proposers must meet the eligibility requirements of the YFA solicitation for current positions held. Per the solicitation, only current tenured track faculty position, tenured faculty within 3 years of their tenure date, or an equivalent at a non-profit research institution within 12 years of the receipt of their doctorate are eligible for the YFA program.

60Q: Are Tables and Figures expected in the submission, and do they count toward the one-page Executive Summary limit? Are References required, and do they also count toward the one-page Executive summary limit?

60A: The Executive Summary submission should follow the template and instructions provided in Attachment A to the RA. Executive Summaries shall not exceed a maximum of 1 page, excluding the Cover Sheet. Items 1 through 4 (to include any figures, tables, and charts) will count toward the page limit. The Executive Summary should not include any references. See FAQ 29 and 38.

59Q: Should I include the dollar amount of current award option years when determining my eligibility apply based on DOD funding? Does it matter if the option will not be active until after the YFA competition proposal window closes?

59A: For purposes of determining eligibility for the YFA 2026 solicitation, only funds that have been formally obligated (i.e., received under an executed base or option award) at the time of submission should be included when calculating total DARPA and/or DoD funding to date. Unexercised option years, even if budgeted or anticipated, should not be counted toward the funding threshold, as these funds have not yet been obligated and may not ultimately be awarded. Therefore, if an option year will not be exercised or active until after the YFA proposal window closes, it does **not** affect eligibility for the current competition. However, if additional option funds are obligated prior to the proposal submission date, the proposer should include those amounts when reassessing eligibility.

58Q: Can you please confirm the maximum amount a PI may request for the US Person Graduate Student option on a 2026 DARPA YFA award? Page 2 of the RA states the amount may not exceed \$200,000, but page 4 lists the cap as \$350,000.

58A: Each award has the potential for additional options concurrent to the base for a United States (U.S.) Person Graduate Student, not to exceed \$350,000. DARPARA2502 Amendment 1 will reflect this clarification.

57Q: Does being a co-PI (as opposed to the PI) on a DoD award count towards the total dollar amount used for eligibility? This question was addressed for subcontractors but not co-PIs.

57A: See FAQ 64.

56Q: Does the YFA allow for a co-investigator? What are the options for subawardees?

56A: This RA solicits single Principal Investigator (PI) proposals for research and development in the specific TAs of interest. See Section III: Submission Information, Subawardee Proposals and Section IV: Special Considerations for other eligibility considerations.

55Q: I have previously personally submitted and performed for a DARPA ARC effort and proposed two other DARPA efforts. My advisor is a former YFA recipient. Do these considerations and having an interested DARPA PM open any possibilities for special consideration?

55A: Proposals will be evaluated using the criteria provided in the RA and responsiveness to the chosen YFA topic. Your eligibility will be assessed based on funding you have received, your employment status, and the other considerations presented in the YFA RA.

54Q: Is it allowable for the graduate student associated with the effort to be associated with faculty at a different institution than the YFA recipient?

54A: Yes, as long as any relevant eligibility requirements are met by the graduate students. See also FAQ 72 through 80.

53Q: My advisor is a prior YFA recipient. Am I eligible to apply for a YFA and keep my current advisor? My advisor would not receive funds through the Cooperative Agreement.

53A: Yes, you may apply as long as you meet the eligibility considerations.

52Q: If a potential proposer is an incoming Assistant Professor at a U.S. institution, with a start date in December 2025, would they be eligible to apply for the DARPA Young Faculty Award in the current cycle?

52A: If a proposer is employed at a U.S. institution, which includes those in U.S. states and territories, and meets the other eligibility requirements, at the time they submit a full proposal, they are eligible to propose for a YFA 2026 award. Note, executive summaries are not required. See also Section IV: Special Considerations in the YFA RA.

51Q: The solicitation states that “Proposers who have received funding greater than \$500,000 from DARPA or \$1,250,000 from all DoD sources combined as either a prime or subawardee are not eligible to apply.” Could you clarify whether that amount refers specifically to an individual’s direct portion of funding as opposed to the total award amount? Does the amount include the total DoD funding received across all awards including any portions provided to subs? How should any prior SBIR/STTR funding awards received be applied towards this limit?

51A: If a proposer has been named on an award or subcontract as PI, the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. If a proposer has been named as co-PI on an award or subcontract where only co-PIs were named and no one was identified as the sole PI, the total dollar amount of the award should be split evenly between all co-PIs when determining eligibility. If the award identified an individual as the sole PI, then 100% of the awarded value should be applied to the PI, regardless of the number of co-PIs identified. The relevance of SBIR/STTR funding depends on the funding agency – if funding came from DARPA or another DoD agency, the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. The funding eligibility considerations do not consider work performed when a proposer was not named as a PI, Co-PI and/or Key or Sr. Personnel.

50Q: Are researchers in small for-profit companies automatically ineligible for the YFA 2026?

50A: If a proposer is employed at a U.S. institution, which includes those in U.S. states and territories, and meets the other eligibility requirements, they are eligible to propose for a YFA 2026 award.

49Q: Could you please advise if I am eligible to apply for the YFA? I work at a non-profit, and I have received my doctorate within the last 12 years. I've never been the PI on a winning proposal, but I was just made the program manager and key personnel on an active DARPA contract through a contract modification.

49A: If you are now listed as the program manager and key personnel on a DOD effort that exceeds the funding eligibility limits laid out in the RA, you would not be eligible to apply for a YFA.

48Q: The solicitation states that "Proposers who have received funding greater than \$500,000 from DARPA or \$1,250,000 from all DoD sources combined as either a prime or subawardee are not eligible to apply." Could you please clarify whether this threshold refers to Total awarded funds (regardless of obligation or expenditure), Obligated funds (regardless of whether they have been spent), or Only funds that have been spent?

48A: The threshold is based on formally Obligated funds (i.e., received under an executed base or option award) at the time of submission.

47Q: If a proposer was part of a \$500,000 collaborative award, but he/she had a small share of the award (i.e., less than \$500k), will that person be eligible?

47A: Based on the funding eligibility, they would be eligible. They must also comply with all other eligibility considerations. If a proposer was named on the collaborative award as PI, the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. If a proposer was named as co-PI with one other co-PI, half of the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. The funding eligibility considerations do not consider work performed when a proposer was not named as a PI, Co-PI and/or Key or Sr. Personnel.

46Q: The solicitation states that "Proposers who have received funding greater than \$500,000 from DARPA or \$1,250,000 from all DoD sources combined as either a prime or subawardee are not eligible to apply." Could you please confirm whether this threshold refers to the total amount awarded to the PI's institution for a project, or specifically to the portion allocated to the PI's lab? Additionally, if a project includes a Co-PI from the same institution, should each investigator's individual share be considered separately for eligibility purposes, or does the total award amount to the institution determine eligibility?

46A: If a proposer has been named on an award or subcontract as PI, the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. If a proposer has been named as co-PI on an award or subcontract with one other co-PI, half of the total share of the dollar amount awarded to the awardee or subawardee should be considered when determining eligibility. The funding eligibility considerations do not consider work performed when a proposer was not named as a PI, Co-PI and/or Key or Sr. Personnel.

45Q: I do not understand whether the focus of this program is on basic/fundamental research or applied research. Could you please clarify this?

45A: Fundamental research only. See Section IV: Special Considerations, "DARPA will not select proposals for negotiation of an award if the proposal is deemed to be Applied Research, or otherwise requires Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) restrictions."

44Q: I was the Prime for a DARPA award valued at \$900,000 but \$450,000 of this award was for my subcontractors. Do I meet eligibility?

44A: No, you would not meet eligibility requirements. The value of your award exceeded \$500,000.

43Q: I was a subcontractor for a DARPA award that was valued at \$900,000, but the Government only provided \$450,000 in total. Am I eligible to apply?

43A: Yes, the value of the subaward was less than \$500,000 and if other eligibility requirements are met you can apply for the YFA program.

42Q: Can I propose travel costs for non-DoD events and activities?

42A: Proposing travel costs for non-DoD sponsored events and activities is highly discouraged. As part of the YFA program, a number of visits/exercises at a variety of DoD sites and facilities may be scheduled. It is expected that YFA recipients will participate in a subset of the DoD visits/exercises made available to them. All requests for travel funding (for both the Principal Investigator (PI) and others) will be reviewed by the DARPA Program Manager as well as the Agreements 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 see DARPARA2502 for more guidance on budgeting for these activities.

41Q: Can I propose costs to support publication-related expenses?

41A: The inclusion of publication costs is highly discouraged. Costs proposed should focus on meeting program research goals and objectives.

40Q: I am a faculty member at University A. I have recently accepted an offer from University B. Can I transfer my YFA cooperative agreement to University B?

40A: No, YFA cooperative agreement awards can NOT be transferred to another institution under any circumstances.

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 DARPARA2502.

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 1 through 4 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 undergo a “blind” review - a common practice at many conferences and journals. The Executive Summary should not include any references.

37Q: Can I submit multiple executive summaries and full proposals?

37A: Each submission (executive summary or full proposal) must specify ONE and only one TA for the submission and identify this TA on the submission’s cover sheet.

Executive summaries and full proposals that do not clearly address a specific TA may be deemed non-conforming and may not be reviewed. DARPA reserves the right to assign a proposal or an executive summary to a different topic area than indicated by the proposer.

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

36A: No. Only one .zip file will be accepted, see FAQ 37.

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. See FAQ 87.

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 in Attachment A 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 C of DARPARA2502. Attachment C 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 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 DARPARA2502. Please discuss your eligibility determination with your Office of Sponsored Projects and refer to the guidance in FAQs 3 and 4 for further clarification.

26Q: I am interested in submitting a proposal to YFA, 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 (<https://www.darpa.mil/research/opportunities/baa>.) 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 the 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: No, please see FAQ 37.

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: Proposers are strongly encouraged to submit an executive summary in advance of a full proposal to determine DARPA's interest and minimize the effort and expense of preparing an out-of-scope proposal. If proposers have technical questions about a TA that can be shared with the general public via the FAQ, they can submit those questions to the YFA2026@darpa.mil inbox for response.

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 TA different 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 YFA2026@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 cooperative agreement 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 intend to include human or animal use in their research study do they need to include a document detailing human or animal use?

17A: Proposers that anticipate involving Human Subjects Research (HSR) or Animal Use in the proposed research must comply with the approval procedures detailed at [Human Subjects and Animal Use](#), to include providing the information specified therein as required for proposal submission. Proposals should briefly describe plans for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or the 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: I would like to know if it is ok to team with a previous DARPA YFA winner.

15A: Yes, but previous DARPA YFA awardees cannot be PIs nor participate as a Subawardee Senior or Key Personnel.

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 PI's 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?

9A: Participation is open to individuals who are U.S. Citizens, U.S. Permanent Residents, and Foreign Nationals who meet the eligibility criteria. See FAQ 83, as well as the latest Amendment of the 2026 YFA RA for eligibility updates.

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 cooperative agreement?

8A: No, provided the total amount of funding received from those programs combined with any other DoD awards received does not exceed the funding limitations noted in the RA at the time of submission. 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 or other agencies should NOT be submitted to the RA.

7Q: The RA specifies single-investigator proposals 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 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. Specific content, communications, networking, and team formation will be the sole responsibility of the participants.

6Q: Are Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, University Affiliated Research Centers, National Laboratories or other Government entities eligible to apply or team with organizations for support?

6A: See Section IV: Special Considerations. No, researchers working at Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, University Affiliated Research Centers, National Laboratories or other Government entities are not eligible to serve under this program in any capacity.

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 a Ph.D. However, an equivalent position at a non-profit research institution is required to be within 12 years of the receipt of their Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Philosophy, and/or another Doctorate Degree 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. Proposed Key Personnel (the PI) must be in a current tenured track faculty position, tenured faculty within 3 years of their tenure date, or an equivalent at a non-profit research institution within 12 years of the receipt of their doctorate 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 as long as the other eligibility requirements are also met.