

Q: NSF proposals, and NSF EPSCoR in particular, expect significant effort be focused on outreach activities, including training of under-represented groups, K-12 students and teachers, and other groups. In reading the FOA for the DOE EPSCoR, it appears that the outreach focus is more on training undergraduate and graduate students, and that the strength of the technical proposal carries almost all of the weight in the merit criteria. I am interpreting this component of the FOA correctly?

A. The focus of DOE EPSCoR is on promoting capability to conduct competitive research. The evaluation criteria are structured to that end. Outreach activities within the DOE EPSCoR mission are welcome but are not explicitly considered under the review criteria. Previously supported outreach efforts have included but are not limited to: research experiences for undergraduate students from under-represented groups, including first generation college attendees; seed grants to junior faculty for energy related research; and travel grants for faculty and students to DOE National Laboratories, user facilities, or to meetings of DOE sponsored investigators to help advance their research programs.

Q: For a project that contains coordination with multiple universities, private participants, and an advisory board, would the inclusion of a project assistant to be responsible for the administrative duties (including subcontracts, personnel, making travel plans and coordinating advisory board as well as other meetings, etc.) be an allowable and acceptable budget item for the DOE funds?

And

Q: Regarding the advisory board, in addition to travel, would honorarium for the board members be an allowable and acceptable budget item for the DOE funds? If so, is there an amount that would be consistent (daily rate) with historical costs charged to DOE or allowed under DOE policy?

A. Staffing for an award and staff compensation as well as travel reimbursement and any honoraria for members of an advisory board are at the discretion of the awardee and their policies and any applicable law or regulations.

Q: We are preparing the list of conflicts of interest for Appendix 7 of our EPSCoR application. There is disagreement about whether _anyone_ from the group of institutions applying should appear in the Table listing of conflicts of interest. So for example, if I was co-author on a paper with Joe Bloggs within the last 48 months, but Joe Bloggs is from my same institution, does he need to be listed on Table?

My interpretation is no, but others disagree. Could you please clarify?

A. Your interpretation is correct.

Q: I have reviewed Appendix 6 and the more recently posted FOA amendments and FAQs, but see no indication of the scale of the commitment that would be deemed appropriate for this program.

Can you provide guidelines on the amount of the commitment, and to what extent it can be in the form of an in-kind commitment?

A. There are no guidelines on the composition or amount of any commitment that might be made.

Q: It is understood that DOE funds cannot be provided to FFRDCs, but can part of the institutional/jurisdiction voluntary commitment to the project be for a contractual arrangement with an FFRDC? Would this be contradictory to the "limited basis" language in the FOA reproduced below?

While DOE EPSCoR funding will not be provided to FFRDCs nor awarded to non-EPSCoR jurisdictions, the awardee may use consulting and other arrangements with FFRDC for necessary expertise and capabilities on a limited basis.

- A. The "limited basis" language in the FOA reproduced above does not preclude contractual arrangements by the applicant with its own funds.

Q: Can you please confirm whether the Appendix 6 Institutional and EPSCoR Jurisdiction Commitment should just be in the form of letters, and that any voluntary commitment amounts should not be included in the actual grants.gov budget forms anywhere or be included as part of the Total Project Cost?

- A. Any institutional commitment does not have to be included in the budget forms or as part of the total project cost.

Q: Do I have to have positive feedback from DOE Program Staff in order to list their name or their office on the application as point of contact?

- A. No

Q: May additional investigators/institutions be added to the application who did not appear on the Letter of Intent? It is also possible at this stage to change the title of the proposal?

- A. It is to be expected that the nature of the collaboration may evolve within reason. Please note any change(s) in investigators/institutions in the full application on the listing of senior/key personnel, etc. Also provide an update to the list of collaborators, as needed. The title of the proposal may also be changed within reason.

Q: The FOA language stated, "It is recommended that the Principal Investigator (PI) be the lead technical director for the application and have affiliation with the lead institution or organization." If the Project Director (PD) is at another institution, then could the management and coordination role of the PD be supported through a subcontract between the lead institution and PD's institution?

- A. This is permissible under the FOA. The management relationships and arrangements should be clearly defined in the management plan. These may include a waiver of overhead expenses on subcontract(s) between state institutions.

Q: May DOE National Laboratory staff serve on an external advisory board and may they be compensated for their travel?

- A. Advisory board membership is at the discretion of the applicant. Should DOE National Laboratory staff participate in the advisory board, their travel expenses may be reimbursed from an EPSCoR grant.

Q: As part of development of human resources in previous DOE EPSCoR applications and awards, we have included some support for faculty or graduate students to travel to DOE labs or to energy-related conferences. This has been [competitively] available to faculty who are not directly supported by the DOE EPSCoR Research Implementation Award and has been a valuable way to support the development of energy research at our [state name deleted] universities. While this is not explicitly mentioned in the FOA, we believe that it can be an important aspect of increasing the energy research competitiveness of our research universities. Please let me know if this would be an acceptable part of our proposal.

- A. Efforts and associated expenses similar to this have been part of some previous EPSCoR awards and is justifiable under this FOA.