

NCAE-001-2021 Solicitation
PMO Q&A Session FAQs

Overall statement: This solicitation and any future solicitations are open to **all** National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (CAE-CD, CAE-R, CAE-CO). No specific CAE has been “pre-selected” to receive a grant for a specific solicitation/initiative. Each submission will be reviewed independently and fairly. CAEs who are found (with evidence) persuading or suggesting other CAEs not apply to a grant solicitation/specific initiative will be barred from future grant opportunities.

Prior to the event questions:

1. Is it possible to work jointly with a company. In particular, the company is developing tools that are useful in formally verifying software, language, and hardware properties, among others.
 - a. You may work with companies, but they can not receive salary funding for their personnel. You may request funding for the lease or purchase of tools.
2. Can a professor emeritus at a CAE submit a proposal as a non-profit independent contractor?
 - a. The proposal must come from the CAE and include the identified CAE point of contact that heads up the CAE program on campus. If the CAE wants to include the professor emeritus in the grant, they may do so. Proposals directly from the professor emeritus on behalf of the CAE are not eligible.

Session 1: Tuesday February 9th, 2021 1:00 EST (10:00 AM PST)

1. In Puerto Rico we do not have Community Colleges. Will it be a problem to submit a coalition proposal for this RFP?
 - a. There are a few other states where this is true, please iterate your situation in the proposal so that it can be taken into consideration.
2. For the curriculum committee formation and development, the solicitation says “one lead institution, and at least 2 others including a Community College”. Any insight on what should be the right size of that group?
 - a. 5-6 schools are typical, but set the coalition to what you can manage.
3. If you wanted to participate in the curriculum committee should you form a team or just submit a single proposal.
 - a. If you have others that you have worked with let them know that you are interested. In addition, you could send a note out to other schools in your region or work with the CAE Community to help send a note out.
4. Who should we contact to find out if there are groups of folks working on a coalition?
 - a. There is no designated keeper of the coalitions. If you have a group of other CAEs you are comfortable working with, start there. You can also work cross

regionally. Look at who is designated differently than you like research (CAE-R), etc. to help create a diverse group.

5. If we have a Cybersecurity Community Development Project in its beginning stages be considered a candidate for 2021-8?
 - a. Yes, but you cannot receive a grant for a project already funded by other sources. You may expand on an existing project and your proposal would indicate what is funded, and how you would apply the new grant funding.
6. Do all the members of the curriculum committee have to be CAE's?
 - a. Yes. Unless a reason can be provided for a need of a member outside of the community. The benefit of being a part of the CAE community is to be included in these opportunities. Bringing in a non-CAE would cause difficulties, such as them not knowing the shared lingo and goals. Valuable grant time would be wasted catching them up to speed
7. For the Critical Infrastructure Coalition, would port/maritime protection be a good area to build a coalition around?
 - a. Yes. What we would be looking for is some type of critical infrastructure. For example, anything that has cyber security requirements.
8. Double checking -- that ALL funded PIs, staff and Students must be citizens or permanent residents (H-1B1 Visas not sufficient).
 - a. Yes. This is a requirement that has existed for some time but is now being enforced heavily.
9. Idaho National Labs has a multi pronged effort underway on Critical Infrastructure Security Education - A lot of CAE's are connected to that effort - is that on your horizon for the critical infrastructure part?
 - a. PMO is not aware, but if something was underway we are certainly willing to work with it.
10. For initiative 2021-7, must the pilot program be in Summer 2023 or could there be a mini-pilot in Summer 2022 with a follow-on in Summer 2023?
 - a. Do not set yourself up to be unable to achieve the deadline, but this is a welcomed goal. Our requirements allow plenty of planning time to avoid penalizing anyone by making them perform before they are ready.

Note: Alice mentioned: New requirement- grantees must identify current and future (pending) grant activities for Federal or DoD work. PI, Co-PI, Director etc, document anything you are involved in. This helps the program office know what is happening and ensures no one is overwhelmed. She will be sending out information on the requirements with a template. SEE QUESTION 13

11. I have a locally HQ-ed coalition (the Water Council) that is a global coalition on critical infrastructure. I assume this is OK under option 3.
 - a. Yes.
12. When you say 1 coalition in figure 1, would you consider multiple coalitions with smaller budgets?

- a. When the proposals are received, they are graded based on how closely they meet the requirements based on the solicitation, what schools are involved and if there is a return on investment. If there are multiple proposals approved and funding available, a second award may be considered even if only one award was designated. An example is if a smaller coalition is proposed that needed less than the money available, this would be an ideal situation to be able to award more than one.
13. Can we use the NSF method of reporting current and pending -
- a. Alice Smitley said in the comments: Yes. I just got this information yesterday and I found NSF information but couldn't find an example of the NSF method.
14. Are institutions permitted to submit proposals for more than one initiative.
- a. Yes. The time has to be reviewed for other projects to assess your ability to perform on the grant. If you are a 1 designation school, you can submit one proposal for each of the 8 initiatives (max of 8). If you have multiple designations you can submit one proposal per each 8 initiative (max of 16). Multiple proposals for the same initiative are not allowed. If one PI is listed for multiple proposals you need to also submit the work load for that PI to be reviewed
15. What if each initiative from the same institution has different PI?
- a. Yes, each PI can be different only as long as they are tied to the program.

End Session 1 Questions

Session 2: Friday February 12th, 2021 3:30 PM EST (12:30 PM PST)

1. Grant Initiative 2021-2 (Increase NCAE-C K12 RING Capacity) is for a single institution. Would a coalition proposal be considered, or will the awardee be prohibited from subawarding to other institutions?
 - a. Yes, if you have a group of schools. A proposal will be considered from a coalition if there is a single leader and clear registration process. We want to ensure there is no confusion on who is collaborating.
2. Some of the grants are regionally based. Would your team look positively on collaboration across regions? Example five institutions partner one in each region for faculty development.
 - a. Yes, you can have a geographically diverse coalition.
 - b. Pay attention to the requirements where there is one award per region. 2021-3 is one award per region for high school teacher development. This was intended to be accomplished per region because one of the requirements is to ensure state requirements for teacher education is considered in the program. If you combine regions, you would have to address all the states in both regions. Same applies for 2021-4: the awards are pro-rated for each region based on the

number of states in each region. While variations from the solicitation will be accepted, if there is a proposal that meets the original requirement, the alternate solution would have to be exceptional.

3. Can a CAE submit proposals for more than one grant/initiative (i.e., 2021-1 and 2021-7)
 - a. Yes, you can. Pay attention to the paragraph that focuses on what you are already committed to. A document will be released next week regarding you identifying current and future grants. This will allow the PMO to ensure you are not stretched too thin. You can submit a proposal for each designation you have. (see question from Tuesday) 1 proposal per designation per initiative. The CAE Point of Contact on campus needs to be involved in some way. This does not have to be a paid position. If your institution holds CAE-CO, CAE-CD, and CAE-R, each program Point of Contact may submit a proposal. Each proposal can include one response for any combination of the 8 initiatives. Each designated program must submit their own proposal.
 - i. For example: John Doe submits a proposal for initiative 2021-1 and initiative 2021-7 because he is the POC for the CAE-CO designation. Jane Smith at the same institution is the POC for CAE-CD designation. Jane may submit a proposal for initiative 2021-2, initiative 2021-3, and initiative 2021-7.
 - ii. What can't happen is John Doe submits a proposal with 8 projects for initiative 2021-1.
 - iii. Each designation is required to submit all the supporting documents (Certifications, SF424, SF424A, cover and summary page, identified grants, etc)
4. Will all these grants be sub awards through CSUSB or direct contract with NSA?
 - a. If you are the lead of the coalition, the grant will come to you.
 - b. If CSUSB is the lead, then it comes through the subaward. Please contact CSUSB if you have questions re: subaward
 - c. If you need the CAE COMMUNITY to provide support on something, please contact CSUSB to see if they can accommodate or how much it would cost to support. THIS IS NOT REQUIRED. Please don't assume that the CAE Community will do something on your grant because they have been doing the work for years. Example: You want CSUSB to help with Zoom calls. Please contact CSUSB to see if they can accommodate this. If not you may need to subaward to them through your grant to cover the additional costs.
5. For Cybersecurity Community Development, coalitions should be from a particular region only? Or schools from different regions can collaborate?
 - a. If you look at the regional map- some states are near each other but in different designated regions. If you want to form a coalition and your neighbor state is in a different designated region, you can cross the regional line. This is only to prompt regional diversity and spread the awards throughout.
6. For 2021-3 (teacher professional development), would a multi-region (CAEs from multiple regions) proposal be considered?

Would be considered, but would have to demonstrate regional representation for all states in your region.

- a. You can combine regions but would have to account for ALL states in both regions. Designed to compensate for all different state requirements.
 - b. Amounts prorated based on the region location. Ex: NE region has more states than the SW region, so more schools to contend
7. Can you please expand on option 3: Regional Cybersecurity Critical Infrastructure Coalition?
- a. Pick a critical infrastructure that is important to your region and infrastructure. EX. healthcare, oil, etc.
8. Is there any specific consideration as a MSI or HSI institution?
- a. No. All designated schools will compete equally for this solicitation. However, for the Community Development options, MSIs or community-area schools not currently designated may join a coalition as long as a designated NCAE-C school is the lead. EXAMPLE: A designated CAE has nearby academic institutions qualified to contribute to the proposed activity, and those partners will continue to collaborate when the grant expires.
9. When are you looking to launch the CAE-CD Summer Program?
- a. Para 2.2.3.2. Specifies the first program would be executed as a pilot in summer 2023.
10. Any other faculty development RFP ?
- a. The Faculty Development grant issued in August 2020 runs through summer 2022. The 2022 federal fiscal year starts in Oct 2021. This will allow time to assess the effectiveness of the current program and determine follow-on funding to be issued in summer 2022.

If at any time you have questions, please send them to NCAECGrants@nsa.gov