

ALL OF THE FAQ'S LISTED BELOW APPLY TO BOTH THE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING (RFA-ES-19-003) AND HAZMAT TRAINING AT DOE NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX (RFA-ES-19-004) UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED. THESE FAQ'S ARE DIVIDED INTO FOUR AREAS: GENERAL; PROGRAM/TECHNICAL; BUDGET; AND REVIEW.

Note: The response to Question 16 in the "General" section (p. 3) was revised on November 19, 2019.

Note: The response to Question 2 in the "Review" section (p. 14) was revised on October 18, 2019.

GENERAL:

1. Question: Which Higher Education Institutions or Nonprofit organizations have been awarded for these cooperative agreements in the past?

NIEHS Response: Please go to the [Who we Fund page](#) for a list of all our current awardees for all programs. In addition, this is a reminder that for-profit companies cannot apply for this cooperative agreement FOA. Please refer to the FOA under Section III. Eligibility Information for more information. Also, a [summary fact sheet of current awardees](#) is available.

FAQ's published October 8, 2019

2. Question: For the U45 FOA RFA-ES-19-003, can we apply for one of these programs separately, or do we have to have one as a core then choose the optional cores?

NIEHS Response: There are three programs that you can apply for under the U45. One mandatory, two optional. You must apply to the mandatory Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program core, then you can apply for one, or both, of the optional cores that fall under it (Environmental Career Worker Training or HazMat Disaster Preparedness Training).

3. Question: Could you please review the instructions of what can be included in the Appendices?

NIEHS Response: Appendices are more limited this round. Please refer to [NIH Notice Number NOT-OD-18-126](#). These two announcements, RFA-ES-19-003 and RFA-ES-19-004, do not request additional allowable Appendix materials. Note that the policy states "**No other items are allowed in the Appendix. Simply relocating disallowed materials to other parts of the application will result in a noncompliant application unless they are items specified in the FOA as optional or required for those other sections of the application.**" For RFA-ES-19-003 and RFA-ES-19-004, specific Other Attachments are required as described under Section IV, and Letters of Support are allowable as described under the PHS 398 Research Plan section.

4. Question: Are we permitted to include hyperlinks in the program plan or different parts of the application? For example, hyperlinks pointing to online materials.

NIEHS Response: We believe there is some leniency of using hyperlinks in the biosketch for publications, but in general, you should not include hyperlinks since there is a page limit for the application.

5. Question: As a follow-up to that, are citations included in the page limits?

NIEHS Response: Citations are part of the bibliography and not included in the page limits.

6. Question: Will the slides presented today be made available?

NIEHS Response: Yes, the slides and the FAQ's will be available online on the [Current Funding Opportunities page](#).

7. Question: Could you provide more clarity on the curriculum sheets – which FOA do they need to go with and what are some examples?

NIEHS Response: For the U45, put all your curricula outlines in one attachment. Similarly, put your curricula outlines in an attachment for the DOE Worker Training Program. Please refer to the [Example Illustrations document](#) for examples. See Program/Technical question #8 for more information on attachments.

8. Question: In RFA-ES-19-0013, can topics that are included ongoing initiatives be implemented under the core and the components?

NIEHS Response: Yes, you can include topics that are under the ongoing initiatives (e.g., opioids, resilience, etc.) under the required core or either optional component.

9. Question: There was a slide about the new organizational structure. Five years ago, there was an organizational chart. What is the difference? Are there similarities?

NIEHS Response: This is the main place you want to show how your organization's staff and consortium is organized to support the program's implementation. The detailed diagram/chart should include all the program components and how the components will work within that organizational structure. It should be clear and concise, something that the reviewer can follow.

10. Question: For the DOE Training Program FOA, are we able to sub-contract to a management /sub-contractor who is already at the DOE complex?

NIEHS Response: The DOE program (UH4 FOA) is a cooperative agreement. This is a mechanism where you may have multiple Consortia partners. If you have a partner, you must clearly delineate and define their role in the application. Contracts may be associated with cooperative agreements, but with distinct roles and responsibilities. See page 104 of the [briefing presentation](#) for definitions of what constitutes a Consortium member versus contractor/consultant, and Budget question #6 about eligible organizations.

11. Question: The biosketch forms are different than they were five years ago. We are struggling a bit with the section called "Contributions to Science." Can we include Training Contributions here instead? Will that be evident to the reviewers?

NIEHS Response: Yes, the "Contributions to Science" can include the trainer's contributions to worker health and safety training; how their training has made an impact; their qualifications, education, and certifications; and all the positive attributes of the trainer and his/her experience. You can also discuss any published articles, manuscripts, or grey literature/stories associated with the trainer or individual.

12. Question: To what extent can actual research be done if it is referenced to DOE workers and improving their health and safety?

NIEHS Response: Research cannot be done under these cooperative agreements. If you are developing an approach for training and testing it within the DOE environment, it depends how this is written up in the application. However, actual research is not allowed under either of the FOAs discussed today.

FAQ's published November 5, 2019

13. Question: ASSIST is letting me pick from five different application types (New, Resubmission, Renewal, Continuation, Revision). Which are we?

NIEHS Response: Per Section II. Award Information/Application Types Allowed, **the only types of applications we're allowing for these FOAs are New and Renewal – you MUST select one of these options.** In general, current grantees should select “Renewal”.

14. Question: What is the percentage of new awards versus renewals traditional?

NIEHS Response: I believe each competition we usually make at least one award to a new applicant.

15. Question: Since we are a new applicant, is it appropriate for us to devote time and resources to developing our program such as curricula in the first year and only conduct training toward the end of the year?

NIEHS Response: As stated in the FOA, “Awards will be made for direct student and worker trainer training, technical support of training, and training program evaluation. It is believed that adequate curricula and training materials exist for worker training that can be adapted with minimal effort. Means of multiplying training are also encouraged to meet the need; thus, programs such as effective train-the-trainer programs are encouraged.” As applicant should be experienced in health and safety training, you should include a training plan for the first year where training occurs throughout the year.

16. Question: Do we need to add a Program Summary/Abstract for each of the program components? *(The response to this question was revised on November 19, 2019.)*

NIEHS Response: **Yes, a Program Summary/Abstract is requested for the Overall Component and each of the program components.**

17. Question: Is there a place to attach biographical sketches of individuals who are important to the program (i.e., instructors), but are not senior or key personnel?

NIEHS Response: You should use the biographical sketches for anyone you think is significant to your program, and all biosketches should be placed together in the biosketches section of ASSIST. Per [NIH SF424 guidance](#), all Senior/Key Personnel and other significant contributors (OSCs) must include biosketches. Other Personnel and consultants, such as instructors who are important to your program, are optional and would be included in the same section of ASSIST. Please see the [NIH Frequently Asked Questions](#) for definitions of Senior/Key Personnel and Other Significant Contributors (OSCs). Consider that a purpose of the biosketch is to allow the reviewers to determine the background and expertise of the person and if he/she is qualified to perform the job described in the grant application.

18. Question: Where are other significant contributors' biosketches added in ASSIST and can they be added as an attachment or appendix without violating the attachment/appendix limits and guidelines?

NIEHS Response: Biosketches MAY NOT be added as an attachment or an appendix. Please see General Question #3 about restrictions on appendices, and the only attachments allowed are what is specified in the FOA. All biosketches should be placed together in the biosketches section of ASSIST.

FAQ's published November 15, 2019

19. Question: In the instructions for the sections “Facilities and Other Resources” and “Equipment”, it sounds like it is geared towards research. Last time we did not use these sections and instead put our

description of training facilities and resources in our narrative. Is this a reasonable thing to do?

NIEHS Response: The sections “Facilities and Other Resources” and “Equipment” on the [R&R Other Project Information Form](#) gives you space to describe the physical resources available for training across your organization and consortium, including training facilities, training supplies and equipment, etc. The instructions on the form provide Additional Instructions for Training under “Facilities and Other Resources”. The instructions also state that if there are multiple performance sites, describe the resources available at each site. Providing this information assists reviewers in answering the “Environment” review criteria questions. It is reasonable for you to move your description of training facilities, resources, and equipment to the R&R Other Project Information Form as indicated rather than include that in your Research Plan narrative. It is up to the applicant whether or not this would all fit under “Facilities and Other Resources” or if some information could go under “Equipment”. As stated under Budget Question 10, the NIH defines equipment as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year.

20. Question: Do we need to provide *separate* Description of Curricula tables for *each component* (as one pdf attachment)?

NIEHS Response: Attachments are only allowed in Overall so all components should be in one PDF for each attachment. For curricula, it would be reasonable to make a designation in each outline which component(s) it applies to. As stated in the Q&A, applicants may tailor the attachment tables to their program as necessary.

21. Question: We are applying to the HWWTP and HDPTP components and we will have two subgrantees: our prime institution and both subawards are participating in *both* components (3 institutions, 2 components). For Type A, we then need to provide two tables: one summarizing all year 1 courses, students, and training hours for HWWTP and a second table summarizing all year 1 courses, students, and training hours for HDPTP. Is this correct? Or, do we also need to provide a third “Overall” table showing cumulative totals (HDPTP + HWWTP)? For Type B, we should have six separate tables: HWWTP and HDPTP tables for the prime organization and each of the two subgrantees. Is this correct? Or, do we also need to provide three additional tables showing cumulative (Overall) totals (HDPTP + HWWTP) for the prime and each subgrantee?

NIEHS Response: Correct for the two tables and Type A and six tables for Type B, in this example above. Additional summary/Overall tables are not required.

22. Question: Could a follow-up program to an existing program (EWDJT) serve as an ECWTP if it had two different levels. For instance, level 1 would consist of simply expanding the existing program to another state (example, expanding from NC to SC). Level 2 would be offering an OJT/Pre-apprenticeship program to graduates of the existing program in NC where they could do 480 hours of field study with an employer. During this time the participant could receive an incentive during the field study. However, after the field study is complete, the employer would have to agree to employ the participant for at least 6 months after the field study is complete.

NIEHS Response: You must have a separate training program for this NIEHS WTP that is distinct/different from the [EPA EWDJT](#) especially if you are running the programs at the same time. Training should be in a different geographic location within NC if you are doing both an EPA EWDJT and NIEHS WTP, as required by the EPA grant. You cannot duplicate efforts between these two programs such as submitted job placements for the same students under each program. You may request that we support an OJT (On the Job Training)/Pre-apprenticeship program and student incentives can be used

for this training under the ECWTP.

PROGRAM/TECHNICAL:

1. Question: Where are the existing curricula located on the web for the NIEHS Worker Training Program?

NIEHS Response: As stated in the RFAs, a list of curricula developed by current NIEHS awardees is available from the [National Clearinghouse Curricula Catalog](#).

2. Question: Is NIH limiting the number of applications that can be submitted by a single institution? Please clarify.

NIEHS Response: Only one application per institution/organization will be accepted as stated in each FOA.

FAQ's published October 8, 2019

3. Question: In describing the severity of extreme weather events, are we allowable to use the phrase "climate change" and other related terms?

NIEHS Response: It is really up to the applicant to decide and use the terms that are applicable to their level of engagement with climate and disaster preparedness. It is also up to the applicant to decide how it applies to their proposed training program, target population, experience, etc. So, it is up to the applicant on what words to use, and where they are used in the application.

4. Question: For the U45 FOA, in some places it states Hazmat Disaster Preparedness Training Program (**HDPTP**) and in other places it is referred to Hazmat Preparedness Disaster Training Program (**HPDTP**), which is correct?

NIEHS Response: HDPTP must be used even though some places in the document were incorrect in stating HPDTP.

5. Question: We are currently a single component Consortia, with a focus on the mandatory Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program. Still struggling with what should be emphasized in an application for a single component Consortia.

NIEHS Response: In the application, you can focus on the overall structure and how your Consortia is organized. State the problem and focus areas and how your Consortia plans to address them. For example, how does the chain of command or management structure work? What is the public health relevance? How many different sub-awardees are involved? How will the subs help address the focus areas and issues? With focus on the mandatory core, you can expand on what the subs will be doing. You have 12 pages for the overall component description.

6. Question: In the U45 FOA, it states that the Environmental Career Worker Training Program is optional. Can there be different focus areas under one program?

NIEHS Response: You can have different areas of focus for your training sites. The initial training courses must be included for all sites (life skills, mentoring, and hazwoper training), then each training site can have a can have a different technical or career focus such environmental, construction, community health worker. This is clearly described in the FOA.

7. Question: Can a standard HAZWOPER training be used assuming that it is already compliant to the DOE standards?

NIEHS Response: Depending on the need of the site, courses can be developed to fit the needs. It has to be adapted to the types of work being done on and at the site.

8. Question: Can you describe what to attach to the overall research plan tab of ASSIST?

NIEHS Response: There can only be 3 attachments for the overall research plan for the U45-FOA 003. They are as follows:

Other Attachments: The following "Other Attachments" must be included with the overall component to aid in the review of applications. Review the FOA's for full descriptions of the attachments. A summary of these attachments is below.

- Training Center Organizational Structure. Applicants must include a diagram of the organizational structure of the Training Center.
- Description of Curricula. Applicants must describe key curricula courses in outline form.
- Tables of Year One Training Plan. To facilitate in understanding the detailed training plans in the first year of the proposed program, tables must be provided that clearly describe the projected total year one training and the courses to be delivered under the grant, delineated by the primary applicant organization and by consortium members or subgrantees, as applicable.

For this application, tables must be uploaded in the Overall section. Please include separate tables for each program component in each attachment.

As stated at the beginning of the [Example Illustrations document](#), the table formats provided are guides to presenting the requested information. The attachments are required; however, the exact table format can be tailored to best fit applicant-specific training plans. The specific suggestions you made sound reasonable, whatever your consortium feels is the clearest to reviewers.

For the DOE UH4 FOA, there are the three above and one additional one described below.

Tables of DOE Sites, Collaborators, and Worker Populations. To facilitate an understanding of how the applicant will interact with the DOE sites across the complex, tables must be provided that describe the sites where training programs will most often take place and the partners, collaborators, and worker populations involved in the training programs. Two tables must be included: Table A - DOE Sites, Collaborators, and Worker Populations, that provides a summary of which training organizations will provide training at which DOE sites; and Table B - DOE Site Partners, Collaborators, and Worker Populations that describes the partners or collaborators and the worker populations involved in each DOE site where training will most often occur. For applicants who plan to bring workers into regional training centers for training programs or who train workers from many sites across the DOE nuclear complex, focus the tables on the sites from which the consortium trains the most workers. The tables must be loaded as a pdf file titled "Tables of DOE Sites".

9. Question: Likely an oversight, but under Section III, b Progress report for HWWT, HDP and ECWTP it states, "examples of collaboration with DOE sites and contractors"? Are we reporting on the DOE grant in these progress report sections?

NIEHS RESPONSE: This is an error. Do not report on DOE sites under RFA-ES-19-003

10 Question: Under for the U45 FOA RFA-ES-19-003, do you only submit one attachment for the whole application?

NIEHS RESPONSE: No, you are allowed to submit three separate attachments to include information for the core HWWT and the HDPTP and ECWTP components as applicable. The information within the attachment should be clearly broken out by component. Please refer to Program/Technical question #8 for further information on the attachments allowed.

11. Question: Under the DOE UH4 FOA, can the training plan include training for workers who would be called upon in case of an emergency at a DOE site? They are in a surrounding area and would be part of a response team.

NIEHS Response: This would be a reasonable worker population to include. The FOA states that one target population is “emergency response personnel surrounding DOE sites who would be responsible for or involved in a hazardous materials release.”

12. Question: Can we alter the table format for the Curriculum Outline attachment?

NIEHS Response: Yes. The table formats provided are guides to presenting the requested information. Applicants may reformat the tables as needed.

13. Question: Do you submit letters of support for each component in ASSIST?

NIEHS Response: Yes, you can submit letters of support for each component in ASSIST. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR NIH AND OTHER PHS AGENCIES SF424 (R&R) Application Packages can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/general-forms-e.pdf>.

On page g-157 - Overall and Other Components: Unless specific instructions are provided in the FOA, applicants have the option of including the “Letters of Support” attachment in the Overall Component, Other Components, or both. To avoid duplication, each letter should appear only once in the application. Letters that apply to the entire application (or to multiple components) should be presented in the Overall Component as a single PDF, while letters that apply only to a particular individual component should be presented in that component as a single PDF.

14. Question: For the DOE UH4 single component, can folks apply through ASSIST or Grants.gov?

NIEHS Response: Applicants have 3 options to submit the application for the RFA-ES-19-004 DOE UH4. These are listed in the FOA.

1. Use the NIH ASSIST system to prepare, submit and track your application online.
2. Use an institutional system-to-system (S2S) solution to prepare and submit your application to Grants.gov and eRA Commons to track your application. Check with your institutional officials regarding availability.
3. Use Grants.gov Workspace to prepare and submit your application and eRA Commons to track your application.

15. Question: From the briefing it sounded like only applications from consortia (as opposed to individual institutions) would be considered. Is that what was meant?

NIEHS Response: A single institution application is allowable under this grant. Please review the HWWTP Specific Goals and Objectives for reference from the FOA, below. You should be clear about the organizations you work with and if they are in a subgrantee/consortium or consultant role, and the organizational structure attachment should clearly show reviewers how the program is organized.

An applicant may join with one or more nonprofit organizations in a single application and share resources in order to maximize worker group coverage, enhance the effectiveness of training, and bring together appropriate academic disciplines and talents. Such arrangements are strongly encouraged. The application must have specific plans to implement the cooperative arrangements necessary for program integration and to insure effectiveness. Detailed plans of this collaboration and budgets must be described only in the lead organization application. Specific expertise, facilities or services to be provided by each participating member must be identified.

Awards will be made for direct student and worker trainer training, technical support of training, and training program evaluation. It is believed that adequate curricula and training materials exist for worker training that can be adapted with minimal effort. Means of multiplying training are also encouraged to meet the need; thus, programs such as effective train-the-trainer programs are encouraged. Programs targeted to multi-state and nationwide coverage to reach wider worker populations will be given preference in funding. Applications will not be considered that cover municipalities or other jurisdictions covering fewer than two states.

16. Question: Can we include the forms, i.e. blank questionnaires in general that we use to evaluate our trainers in the Appendix?

NIEHS Response: Yes, blank questionnaires in general can be included in the appendix.

17. Question: Concerning Human Subjects Involvement, if our programs collect data on an entry application such as: name, address, phone, email; education level' employment status typically on an application for the ECWTP, or as contact info for entities seeking our training services, is this considered human subjects research? Much of this info is used for retention and post program tracking of graduates.

Additionally, a business or entity will complete a training needs assessment. Do these data collection efforts make our trainees a part of human subject research?

NIEHS Response: Since our program has statutory requirements for collecting data for training certification, and requirements based on eligibility such as unemployed or underemployed for the ECWT entry into the training program, we do not consider this to be human subjects research. In addition, information collected in the NIEHS WTP Data Management System for monitoring purposes under OMB Collection 0925-0348 (exp 7/31/22) is not considered human subjects research. You are required to keep the PII safe and secure that you collect on individual trainees as required by law. As far as businesses, if the information is used to develop specific training for trainees to meet the needs of the business, this is appropriate under this FOA and is not considered human subjects research.

Please consult with an IRB if unsure if your data collection is considered research and if so, if it is exempted.

FAQ's published October 18, 2019

18. Question: Do training assessments and program evaluation of training courses fall under the concept of Human Subjects Research?

NIEHS Response: In general, program evaluation does not meet the definition of research as defined in 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46 when it is intended and designed only to provide information for and about the training or setting in which it was conducted, and the evaluation is not intended or designed to generate conclusions that can be applied universally, outside of the immediate environment where the project occurred. Please consult with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you are unsure if your project contains activities that could be defined as research or how human subjects research regulations and exemptions may pertain to your project. Chart 1 from the Office for Human Research Protections and the NIH page on Human Subjects Research, with its decision tools and charts, can also help with your determinations.

FAQ's published October 25, 2019

19. Question: Do you have guidance on deciding whether or not to separate some disaster-related training activities into a separate HDPTP component, or keep everything under HWWT?

NIEHS Response: It is up to the applicant to decide which programs to apply for, how much to apply for, which training courses go under the HWWT core versus an HDPTP component, and how the organizational structure and priorities of the organization are aligned. The organization will need to decide how they want to apply taking all those things into consideration.

20. Question: Does the course Active Shooter and Hostile Event Response (ASHER) fit under HWWT? The course addresses active shooter, but also discusses IEDs and other "hostile events" that first responders may face.

NIEHS Response: Active Shooter training could be considered reasonable under the U45 FOA when it is within the context of emergency response hazards such as dirty bombs or biological weapons. This would be part of all-hazards training approach that is responsive to 29 CFR 1910.120, which provides the needed framework for protecting hazardous waste workers and emergency responders. Training under RFA-ES-19-003 should be tied to HAZWOPER regulations and guidance, the NIEHS Minimum Criteria, and site- or sector-specific health and safety training needs/gaps.

21. Question: For the DOE grant, is it responsive to have Tables A and B list total and specific classes by DOE site rather than by Consortium partner?

NIEHS Response: Yes, similar to Program/Technical Question #12, the table formats provided are guides to presenting the requested information. Applicants may reformat the tables as needed.

22. Question: Can a person be the lead of a subawardee organization on one component (e.g, HDPTP), and a consultant on another component (e.g. HWWT)?

NIEHS Response: Yes, this is reasonable and allowable, if those are the most appropriate roles for them for the specific component.

23. Question: Under Authority and Regulations in RFA-ES-19-003, it mentions "additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019," U.S. Public Law 116-20, enacted on June 6, 2019." How will

the restrictions associated with this funding be applied to grantees?

NIEHS Response: NIEHS WTP received \$1 million in funding from the Disaster Relief Act of 2019. A small amount of these funds may be used to fund disaster-related training in the first year under RFA-ES-19-003. Any training funded under the 2019 Disaster Relief Act must be located in the specific states and counties listed in the spreadsheet accompanying the funding, which are associated with the Declared Disasters that occurred in Calendar Year (CY) 2018 and 2019. NIEHS will assess applications to see if the funding can be applied. The spreadsheet, along with an associated map developed by the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training, is available on the [Current Funding Opportunities Page](#), under RFA-ES-19-003.

FAQ's published November 5, 2019

24. Question: If we have a curriculum available in English and Spanish, is it sufficient to note that in the "Languages" section of the 2-page outline attachment as shown in the on-line example, or do we also need to submit two versions of the curriculum outline (one in English, one in Spanish)?

NIEHS Response: It is sufficient to note the curriculum's availability in multiple languages on the 2-page outline as shown in the example. You don't need to submit a separate outline in Spanish. If you wanted to provide reviewers an example of a curriculum outline in Spanish or another language in the Attachment, that would be reasonable, but not required.

25. Question: For the Table Type B in the Training Plan Attachment (Year One Projected Courses), the third column title is misleading ("Number of Trainees per Course"). Is it really about trainees per single course?

NIEHS Response: A better title for the column would be "Total Number of Trainees for this Course," to reflect the proposed total number of people to be trained in that course throughout the year.

26. Question: For the *Description of Curricula* attachment: My interpretation of the instructions is that the 2-page limit applies to the outline for *each separate course*. The entire *Description of Curricula* attachment, however, is not limited to 2 pages. Is this correct?

NIEHS Response: The two-page limit is per curriculum outline, not for the whole attachment. The attachment does not have a page limit.

BUDGET:

1. Question: Are grantees allowed to pay travel costs associated with the Applicant Information Meeting on September 12, 2019 in NC from grant funds, or is it an organizational cost?

NIEHS Response: As a point of clarification, NIEHS grant funds may NOT be used to attend the application information meeting that will be held September 12. These costs are considered 'costs of doing business' and are unallowable under the grant.

2. Question: Are grantees allowed to pay for travel costs associated with the Applicant Information Meeting on September 12, 2019 in NC with program income?

NIEHS Response: Program income CANNOT be used. Program income is to be used to support the on-going program. Preparing for and submitting an application is not part of the program. See [HHS Grants Net](#). "Regardless of the alternative(s) applied, program income may be used only for eligible costs, in

accordance with the governing statute, any program regulations, the applicable cost principles, and the terms and conditions of the award."

3. Question: Is the indirect cost rate of 8% for both the DOE RFA-ES-19-004 and HWWT FOA's RFA-ES-19-003.

NIEHS Response: Yes, as stated in each FOA, "Allowable indirect costs for this program are limited to 8% of a modified indirect cost base which excludes amounts over the first \$25,000 for each consortia agreement, equipment costs, and tuition and related trainee fees.

FAQ's published October 8, 2019

4. Question: Can you clarify the end dates for the new projects? There seems to be a discrepancy between the FOA and what is provided on one of the slides.

NIEHS Response: The actual end date for the project will be five years out, which would be July 31 or August 31, 2025.

5. Question: In terms of the 8% F&A, there is usually a line on the budget form. What should we cite to support that 8%?

NIEHS Response: You don't have to cite anything, because it is a mandate. However, if you have an organization with a certain negotiated rate, they will get the 8% because it is a mandate through the program.

6. Question: Does the "Eligible Organizations" section of the FOA apply to just the prime applicant or also the consortium member/subgrantee? Can a sub-grantee be a for-profit or government company?

NIEHS Response: The [NIH Grants Policy Statement 15.1](#) states that "In general, the requirements that apply to the recipient, including the intellectual property requirements in IIA and the program income requirements of the award, also apply to consortium participant(s)". So the same eligibility requirements placed on the recipient (parent grantee) would also apply to the consortium members.

7. Question: Will you accept a change of institution as part of a competitive renewal application?

NIEHS Response: Yes, we will accept a change of institution as part of the competitive renewal. If doing so, it is highly recommended that applicants provide a very strong justification for this change, explain why it happened, and how and when will the change occur, and how the currently funded organization is willing to relinquish the grant.

FAQ's published October 25, 2019

8. Question: Is there guidance on the type of information that can and cannot be included in the budget justifications for subawards to consortium members?

NIEHS Response: Budget Justification for Consortium/Contractual Costs are required. Each participating consortium/contractual organization must submit a separate detailed budget for each budget and justification.

Consortium arrangements may involve personnel costs, supplies, and other allowable costs, including Facilities and Administrative (indirect) costs. Contractual costs for support services, such as the

laboratory testing of biological materials, clinical services, or data processing, are occasionally sufficiently high to warrant a similar categorical breakdown of costs. The budget justification/narrative is simply an explanation of the costs contained in your budget. The sponsor and reviewers should be able to easily compare your budget narrative to the budget forms/dollar amounts and the research narrative. For example, if you have stated in your research narrative that you will arrange for an outside evaluator in a particular year of your study, your budget should provide for an evaluator or consultant in that year.

Any large year-to-year variation should be described in your budget justification. For example, if you have money set aside for consultants only in the final year of your budget, be sure to explain why in your justification (e.g. the consultants are intended to help you with the statistical interpretation of the data and therefore are not needed before the final year). This [website on the R&R Budget Form \(Section L\)](#) has additional guidance.

9. Question: Is a letter recommended to request an increase in budget over 10% for renewals, as has been done in previous FOAs?

NIEHS Response: For these FOAs, we are not requesting an optional letter discussing a planned increase over 10%. The FOAs state that "Application budgets for renewals are not limited but need to reflect the actual needs of the proposed project."

FAQ's published November 5, 2019

10. Question: Can we request the purchase of new equipment to support the training program as a new applicant?

NIEHS Response: Yes, you can request the purchase of new equipment to support the program. It is recommended that you only request equipment costs that are actually necessary to support your training and that the request is reasonable and allocable for the training purposed and must be justified in the application. Further details from NIH:

Equipment: Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. Tips:

- Generally, equipment is excluded from the F&A base, so if you have something with a short service life (< 1 year), even if it costs more than \$5,000, you are better off including it under "supplies".
- If you request equipment that is already available (listed in the Facilities & Other Resources section, for example), the narrative justification must explain why the current equipment is insufficient to accomplish the proposed research and how the new equipment's use will be allocated specifically to the proposed research. Otherwise, NIH may disallow this cost.
- General purpose equipment, such as desktop computers and laptops, that will be used on multiple projects or for personal use should not be listed as a direct cost but should come out of the F&A costs, unless primarily or exclusively used in the actual conduct of the proposed scientific research.
- While the application does not require you to have a price quote for new equipment, including price quotes in your budget justification can aid in the evaluation of the equipment cost to support the project.

11. Question: We have received some vendor quotes/estimates/invoices to back up some of the larger

costs in our budget for this application. Is it allowable for us to include these quotes/estimates/invoices in the budget justification attachments? We were thinking about adding them as the last pages of the budget justification pdf.

NIEHS Response: While the application does not require you to have a price quote for larger costs or new equipment, including price quotes in your budget justification can aid in the evaluation of the cost to support the project. Please make sure that costs are clearly justified for the proposal.

FAQ's published November 15, 2019

12. Question: What is the reason that the cooperative agreements have an 8% cap on indirect costs?

NIEHS Response: It is a requirement of the FOA being a training & education grant. Refer to the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#) 7.4 Reimbursement of Facilities and Administrative Costs, section below.

Research Training and Education Grants (e.g., R25), and K Awards. **F&A costs** under Kirschstein-NRSA institutional research training grants, educational and K awards will be budgeted and reimbursed at a rate of 8 percent of modified total **direct costs**, exclusive of tuition and fees, expenditures for equipment, and consortiums in excess of \$25,000. State, local, and Indian tribes (or "federally recognized Indian tribes") may receive full **F&A cost** reimbursement under NIH Kirschstein-NRSA institutional research training grants and K awards. For this policy, State universities or hospitals are not considered governmental agencies.

13. Question: Can you clarify which amounts over \$25,000 are referred to in this statement: "Allowable indirect costs for this program are limited to 8% of a modified indirect cost base which excludes amounts over the first \$25,000 for each consortia agreement, equipment costs, and tuition and related trainee fees."

NIEHS Response: The statement is referring to the F&A costs for the first \$25,000 of each consortium being included in the modified total direct cost base for parent/prime, when calculating the overall F&A rate, as long as your institution's negotiated F&A rate agreement does not expressly prohibit it.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)	All direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and subawards up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.
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14. Question: We would be a new applicant and I have two questions concerning the statement "A new applicant may request a budget for direct costs of up to \$700,000 for the first year."

- Is that \$700,000 cap in addition to the allowable 8% indirect cost rate? For instance, could the first year budget be \$756,000 (\$700k direct + 56k indirect)
- Does that \$700,000 cap in the first year mean that in years 2 – 5, the budget amount could be higher? (we would like to ramp up after the two years and conduct additional trainings if possible)

NIEHS Response: For your first question, the \$700,00 refers only to direct costs, as stated. Indirect costs would be in addition to the \$700,000. For the second question, the budget amount in years two through five is also limited to \$700,00 in direct costs.

REVIEW:

1. Question: Who will review the grant applications? Is there an NIH standing study section?

NIEHS Response: An ad hoc committee of reviewers will be recruited to assess the merit of both the Hazardous Materials Worker Safety Training and the DOE Nuclear Complex Safety Training applications. There is no standing study section for this review. The committee members will have expertise in appropriate areas reflecting the themes of the proposed projects, including adult education and training; hazardous materials and radiation safety; culturally sensitive life skills training; federal and state regulations governing the health and safety of hazardous materials workers; and disaster-related or first-responder field experience.

FAQ's published October 8, 2019

2. Question: Will the reviewers have access to previous progress reports? *(The response to this question was revised on October 18, 2019.)*

NIEHS Response: If the submission is a renewal, the reviewers will have access to the previous summary statement, but not to the previous grant application. They will not have access to the individual yearly progress reports. Renewal grant applicants should share prior accomplishments in section b of the Research Strategy for each program component -Progress Report/Compliance with Terms of Prior Award(s). Applicants may also use this section to address any concerns with the previous critiques and deviation from the original proposed work.

3. Question: Are the reviewers going to see or have access to a copy of the FAQs?

NIEHS Response: We don't provide the FAQs, but they are available on the WTP website and the reviewers have access, just as applicants. The reviewers are encouraged to ask questions. If they ask questions, program and scientific review staff refer them to the necessary documents and send the question and answer to all reviewers.

4. Question: Can we recommend specific individuals to be reviewers for these FOA's?

NIEHS Response: No, but you can submit information on the specific type of expertise that is needed to review your application in the application cover letter.

FAQ's published October 25, 2019

5. Question: The FOA states that there is 12-page limit for overall and each component. Are specific aims included in the 12-page limit? In ASSIST, specific aims are a separate file attachment from research strategy. Also, is our report on the previous 5 years included in the research strategy attachment, or should it be a separate document as listed in ASSIST?

NIEHS Response: The specific aims are not included in the 12-page limit of the research strategy. The specific aims are a separate attachment with a one-page limit. Renewal grant applicants should share prior accomplishments in section b of the Research Strategy for each program component, as stated in Review Question #2.

FAQ's published November 5, 2019

6. Question: How many LOI's did NIEHS receive?

NIEHS Response: The number of LOI's we receive is for internal NIEHS grant planning purposes.