

# FY24 CINR FOA and University Programs Q&A

## CINR FOA Overview

**Q: Could a PI apply for the REU Supplement for existing CINR projects?**

A: No, the REU Supplement is required to be negotiated with the CINR award, so this is only available for FY 2024 proposals.

**Q: For the REU Supplement, would indirect participant costs be allowed, such as for administering a summer program?**

A: Yes, it can include other costs because other people may be needed to run the program. All the costs will have to be justified in the proposal and sized appropriately to the number of students and people who are participating.

**Q: Can REUs be used to supplement or sponsor existing multi-disciplinary design programs that receive sponsorship typically from industry?**

A: This might be possible if the new expenditures are justified and it follows the eligibility restrictions which are targeted toward undergraduate students.

**Q: Will REU be reviewed as part of the proposal or independently?**

A: The REU will be reviewed as part of the proposal, so it should have a strong integration with the overall strategy and show how those students will be used for the research activities and the specific tasks being proposed.

**Q: For the REU program, is there a limitation on student's major? Does it have to be nuclear engineering?**

A: The student's major does not need to be limited to nuclear engineering, but should have a direct tie to the project and the research activities should support the NE mission in its area of research.

**Q: Am I eligible to apply from a university where I will be starting after the pre-application due date?**

A: You would be able to apply if the university that would be listed as the lead university agrees, as the university takes the risk and responsibility of the application. University concurrence may include written agreement from the department head (at a minimum) and/or Office of Sponsored Programs concurrence.

**Q: What is the philosophy associated with allowing un-invited full proposals for appendix A?**

A: The Pre-Application phase is intended to make invitations of proposals that are deemed high quality and of interest to the NE mission based on the technical merit at the time of Pre-Application. If one of those pieces is not there, at least of the opinion of the technical merit review, then it will not be invited for Full Application. Uninvited Pre-Applications can still submit Full Applications because the process gives the opportunity for the PI to look at the Pre-Application feedback and make technical or overall research adjustments to improve the technical merit and/or make it more applicable to the NE mission for reconsideration at the Full Application stage. This iterative feedback allows all high-quality submissions to be considered at the Full Application stage. Every year there are some uninvited applications that are awarded.

**Q: Is there a document describing the differences between R&D and NSUF based applications in more detail?**

A: At [neup.gov](http://neup.gov), previous funding opportunities are linked at the bottom. Going back a few cycles (fiscal years) would be a good way to better understand the NSUF-1 with both R&D and NSUF access components and the associated requirements.

**Q: The REU requires 'US persons' only, does that apply to the GRAs or any personnel working on the CINR projects as well?**

A: The REU requirement is specific to undergraduates. The GRAs do not have the same requirement.

**Q: Will reviewers be the same for both pre-proposal and full proposals or are they different in each review cycle?**

A: When available, the same reviewers can be used from Pre-Application at Full Application. Because reviewers are not always available at both stages, they are often different, but could be the same. In addition to the reviewer(s) from the Pre- Application, the Full Application also utilizes additional, new reviewers who have not seen the Pre-Application.

**Q. Are the publications in the pre-application for only the PI or for both the PI and the co-PIs? Can the co-PIs on my proposal provide publications from their previous DOE NE R&D projects? Also, can I submit publications resulting from NE projects where I participated, but was not the lead PI?**

A. The requirement is for the lead PI's publications from previous NE funded projects to be listed. If you have this information for the co-PIs, this could be included and is encouraged. You are also strongly encouraged to list publications that resulted from your participation in NE funded projects, even if you were not the lead PI.

**Q: Will not requesting an REU supplement in the pre-application negatively affect my application?**

A. No, applications will be reviewed based on the technical merit of the application. REU is only a supplement and not a requirement and would therefore not impact a pre-proposal's chance for invitation.

**Q: Shall I discuss involvement of my MSI collaborators in the Benefit of Collaboration document or somewhere else?**

A: The Benefits of Collaboration document is an appropriate place to discuss this involvement. In addition, the system will identify MSIs that have been listed in the application form (both lead and collaborators).

**Q: Are there guidelines regarding hourly rates that can be paid to industrial partners under NEUP contracts?**

A. The guidelines applicable to hourly rates that can be paid to industrial partners can be found in CFR 31.201-3 (Determining reasonableness) and CFR 200.460 (Compensation – personal services):

31.201-3 Determining reasonableness.

- (a) A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person in the conduct of competitive business. Reasonableness of specific costs must be examined with particular care in connection with firms or their separate divisions that may not be subject to effective competitive restraints. No presumption of reasonableness shall be attached to the incurrence of costs by a contractor. If an initial review of the facts results in a challenge of a specific cost by the contracting officer or the contracting officer's representative, the burden of proof shall be upon the contractor to establish that such cost is reasonable.
- (b) What is reasonable depends upon a variety of considerations and circumstances, including-
  - (1) Whether it is the type of cost generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the conduct of the contractor's business or the contract performance;
  - (2) Generally accepted sound business practices, arm's-length bargaining, and Federal and State laws and regulations;
  - (3) The contractor's responsibilities to the Government, other customers, the owners of the business, employees, and the public at large; and
  - (4) Any significant deviations from the contractor's established practices.

§ 200.430 Compensation—personal services.

(a) General. Compensation for personal services includes all remuneration, paid currently or accrued, for services of employees rendered during the period of performance under the Federal award, including but not necessarily limited to wages and salaries. Compensation for personal services may also include fringe benefits which are addressed in § 200.431. Costs of compensation are allowable to the extent that they satisfy the specific requirements of this part, and that the total compensation for individual employees:

(1) Is reasonable for the services rendered and conforms to the established written policy of the non-Federal entity consistently applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities;

(2) Follows an appointment made in accordance with a non-Federal entity's laws and/or rules or written policies and meets the requirements of Federal statute, where applicable; and

(3) Is determined and supported as provided in paragraph (i) of this section, when applicable.

(b) Reasonableness. Compensation for employees engaged in work on Federal awards will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is consistent with that paid for similar work in other activities of the non-Federal entity. In cases where the kinds of employees required for Federal awards are not found in the other activities of the non-Federal entity, compensation will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is comparable to that paid for similar work in the labor market in which the non-Federal entity competes for the kind of employees involved.

**Q: Is fee/ profit allowed on R&D/ NSUF proposals?**

A. Profit or fee is unallowable (see 2CFR 910.356) for the recipient and any subrecipients. However, profit or fee may be paid to an entity if acquiring goods or services under the award (see CFR 200.331). Also 2CFR 200.400(g) indicates that the non-Federal entity may not earn or keep any profit resulting from Federal financial assistance, unless explicitly authorized by the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

**Q. I am working with a Westinghouse researcher, who is currently located in Europe. He frequently works on and charges to projects through the Westinghouse U.S. office but is not physically located here. Is it possible to send a portion of the award to Westinghouse (US office) but have someone work on it who is physically located outside of the U.S.?**

A. Yes, this would be fine. There is no restriction that the work effort be performed in U.S., only that funding must go to a U.S. owned or incorporated entity. See CFR 910.124 Eligibility.

**Q. Is it acceptable to submit both a NSUF 1.1+R&D, such as to NSUF 1.1 and R&D TOPIC AREA 11 on a similar topic?**

A. The same proposal cannot be submitted to multiple Topic Areas, including the NSUF Access areas.

**Q: I am in the process of submitting an application to the NEUP CINR R&D call and have a company on our proposal as an unfunded collaborator. It is public information that the company has \$30M of foreign investment, which has been reported to the U.S. State Department. Is this the type of information this question is asking for?**

A: That area is for foreign funds that will be used for this specific project, not a declaration of foreign interests in a company. You would put \$0 in that area since they are unfunded.

**Q: In the benefit of collaboration description in the FOA, it states "It may contain brief biographies of staff and descriptions of the facilities wherein the research will be conducted." If an image is included with the description of facilities, is that allowed or will it be redacted?**

A: If the image is an image of a text table it may be redacted for not conforming to font limits. Otherwise there's no issue with including an image as long as the whole document still fits within the page limit restrictions.

## **CINR Full-App FY24 Q&A**

**Q: I have been writing out all the sections of the full proposal project narrative and one portion that I am having some trouble with is the "Logical path to accomplishing scope, including descriptions of tasks" section of the full proposal. Specifically, the FOA describes that we should write this such that we should address the merit review criterion and sub-criterion listed in Part V, Section A. When I read Part V, Section A.3 for merit review of full proposals, it says, "review criteria identified for each area and the program policy factors (other selection factors) listed in Part V, Section A.7..." However, there is no Part V, Section A.7 in the table of contents.**

**Is there a summary of the review criteria and program policy factors that should have been in Part V, Section A.7 that I should be addressing in the project narrative?**

A: This is an old reference which it seems we missed when updating the FOA. The merit review criteria are those outlined in Part V, Section A.3. The other selection factors which this mentions are now in Part V, Section A.5.

**Q: Are there any limits on the number of full proposals someone can submit as a co-PI (not lead)? I would like to participate in 4 proposals in response to the NEUP topics and 3 proposals in response to the IRP topics. I found a limitation on the number of pre-applications, but no limitation on full applications for co-PIs considering the IRP topics.**

A: The restriction for full apps is the same as pre apps (up to 3 as lead, up to 6 total). Acting as a collaborator on any number of IRP proposals does not affect this total. There would be limits if you were submitting an IRP as a lead PI. Please let me know if I can help with anything else.

**Q: I have a question on what documents are required of an unfunded collaborator named in a pre- application. Do we need CV, Current and Pending, Site Location, and make sure no conflict of interest? The FOA says “key personnel” needs these, but it’s unclear if unfunded collaborators (which were listed in a pre-app by name) need to submit all or some of these documents.**

A: The definition of key/senior personnel is at the discretion of the applicant. It is more likely that unfunded collaborators would not be key/senior personnel but there are some cases where the applicant may designate them as such. The document requirements are not defined by a collaborator’s funding status but by the key/senior personnel designation which is determined by the applicant. I hope this clarifies things for you.

**Q: In the initial budgets for My R&D proposals I had entered people in the senior/key personnel section if they were receiving funding but did not list myself under the assumption that the balance of the \$1 million requested would go towards the PI (myself). Did I interpret this section correctly?**

A: The PI should be included in the budget listing.

**Q: I am preparing proposals for the CINR call and am uncertain on the exact period of performance of the awards, since the FOA mentions three years + 2 months. Would that run from October 2024 – December 2027?**

A: Due to the project start date moving forward, the award period for this year would end October 1, 2027

**Q: Can we change the project length for the full applications from 3 to 2 years?**

A: Yes, you can move this to two years.

**Q: In the FOA, the full proposal narrative description (Page 32) says that “DOE has the right to evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria.” It sounds to me like the best way of doing that would be creating a section in the proposal narrative called “Merit review criteria”, where I directly, one by one, address each of the three merit review criteria. I was wondering if this is something that is expected or allowed?**

A: This is allowed. Applicants can either do as you suggest or more generally be aware of those merit criteria and build those justifications into the overall proposal. It is at your discretion which option you’d like to use.

**Q: We plan to include REU supplemental funds to support undergraduate research within the proposed project. We are wondering if letter of supports in the form of supporting proposed student recruitment, student activities, etc. should be provided with the submission?**

A: Only required documents (as outlined in the FOA) will be made available for review.

**Q: Are national labs also required to complete and submit the SF-LLL form? or is the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities required only from the Lead Applicant?**

A: The Disclosure of Lobbying Activities should be submitted by the lead applicant but should contain complete information for the entire project.

**Q: Is a National Lab considered non-federal for conflict-of-interest purposes, Section E.1?**

A: A national lab is not considered as federal, but they are considered as federal contractors.

**Q: The links to the NSF template (provided in the FOA PDF and the proposal submission portal) no longer link to an active document. Can you provide a revised link or perhaps the preferred template as an attachment?**

A: There is no required template for this. Below is a link that will provide information on what to include in the current and pending document. You will want to include all of the information as it is outlined in the FOA. <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/senior-personnel-documents#current-and-pending-other-support-5db>

**Q: Can you clarify if the certification language described under the fillable PDF section on Page 53 should be appended to all Current and Pending Support files even if they are pulled from SciENCv or is the certification statement generated by SciENCv sufficient without needing to append a separate certification document?**

A: As stated in Part IV, Section E.12.1 of the FOA: “If the online version is used in SciENCv, a signature, date, and a certification statement is attached as part of the document.

If the fillable PDF NSF format is used, the individual must still include a signature, date, and a certification statement using the language included below.

I, [Full Name and Title], certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information contained in this Current and Pending Support Disclosure Statement is true, complete, and accurate. I understand that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, misrepresentations, half-truths, or omissions of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties for fraud, false statements, false claims or otherwise. (18 U.S.C. §§ 1001 and 287, and 31 U.S.C. 3729-3733 and 3801-3812). I further understand and agree that (1) the statements and representations made herein are material to DOE’s funding decision, and (2) I have a responsibility to update the disclosures during the period of performance of the award should circumstances change which impact the responses provided above.”

**Q: On the FOA, it says that 100k per award for REU supplement may be provided. Can you clarify whether I should add this to the total budget when I make the budget form?**

A: The FOA states in Part IV, Section E.11.1 that, “If proposing an REU supplement, yearly project budgets for the REU portion of the project should be included in the R&R Lead Budget Form and R&R Subaward Budget Form (if applicable)”.

**Q: Is DOE planning to consider undergraduates involved in this program as participants or is DOE anticipating that costs associated with these undergraduate students will be subject to overhead costs?**

A: Please see Part 1, Section B.4 of the FOA. It states:  
“The REU supplement portion of the award is expected to fall under participant support costs as defined by 2 CFR 200:

*Participant support costs means direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects.*

Participant support costs are typically excluded from the allocation base of the indirect cost calculations unless explicitly provided for in the awardee’s or subawardee’s Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement”.

**Q: Can funds be split with another collaborator with regards to the REU Program?**

A: Applicants may split the REU portion between the prime applicant and any proposed subrecipients.

## **Phase II Continuation FOA Overview**

**Q: I am the lead PI for a NEUP project ending on September 30, 2024. However, I am moving institutions and will lose PI status for this project. Am I eligible to apply for a Phase II Continuation award from my new institution?**

A: Based on how we have the guidance, you would be considered a co-PI and could not submit as a lead PI at a different institution. The new PI of your current NEUP project could propose a Phase II project with you included as a Co-PI. Of course, because you are Co-PI, you could also propose a new CINR project that covers many aspects of the Phase II, if you choose to do that.

**Q: Are projects that are currently under NCE eligible for phase II?**

A: CINR projects that are concluding on a no-cost time extension between January 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, can apply for a Phase II Continuation award.

**Q: Can we apply for continuation on an award that is finishing before September 2024?**

A: Yes, CINR projects that are concluding between January 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, can apply for a Phase II Continuation award.

**Q: Will CINR projects ending on 12/31/23 be eligible for Phase II Continuation?**



A. No, only CINR projects that are concluding on a no-cost time extension between January 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, can apply for a Phase II Continuation award.

**Q: Are Phase II Continuation proposals subject to the six-page pre-application limit?**

A: Phase II is not subject to the pre application limit. LOIs are a requirement for all Phase II Continuation applications. LOIs must be submitted by the date and time specified in Part IV, Section F.1. of DE-FOA- 0003039.

**Q: Is this for ending CINR projects that need extra funding?**

A: This Phase II Continuation CINR FOA provides opportunities for teams that have performed high quality work through the NEUP to propose new projects that complement and enhance ongoing NEUP research. Phase II Continuation projects, by their nature as extensions of current research direction, are shorter in duration and smaller in scope than original CINR projects. Phase II Continuation projects should provide a logical path between the current research scope of the active CINR project and the new scope in a way that creates a seamless transition between the two projects. CINR awarded projects, including R&D and IRPs, that conclude between January 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, are eligible to apply. Remaining funds from the original CINR project cannot be transferred to the Phase II Continuation project award.

**Q: Does the Phase II Continuation proposal have to have the same collaborators?**

A: No, the collaborators do not have to be the same as the original CINR project, although the lead PI must be the same.

**Q: Can Phase II Continuations projects add collaborators, or does it keep the original NEUP project personnel?**

A: The original CINR project collaborators do not have to be the same as the original CINR project, although the lead PI must be the same.

**Q: Do the Phase II Continuation applications require less documentation?**

A: The list of required documents for Phase II continuation CINR full application is available on Table 2 of DE-FOA-0003039.

**Q. Is cost share from industry collaborators required?**

A. No, cost sharing is not required. All non-profit prime recipients have a cost sharing waiver which does not require a cost sharing for partners. All other for-profit prime recipients will, however, have to follow the cost sharing requirements as stated in Table 1 of the Phase II Continuation FOA. So in your case, as you are a PI from a U.S. University, the cost sharing is waived for your collaborator.

**Q. Are partners from MSIs required for the Phase II Continuation, if no such partners were involved in the current project based on the "Ensure Energy Equity"?**

A. Partnering with MSIs not required but having a MSI (including HBCU and TCU) partner may contribute up to 3 additional points as mentioned in Part V, section A.1.4. of the Phase II Continuation FOA and could be a selection factor as explained in section A.4.

**Q. Is cost share from industry collaborators required?**

A. No, cost sharing is not required. All non-profit prime recipients have a cost sharing waiver which does not require a cost sharing for partners. All other for-profit prime recipients will, however, have to follow the cost sharing requirements as stated in Table 1 of the Phase II Continuation FOA. So in your case, as you are a PI from a U.S. University, the cost sharing is waived for your collaborator.

**Q. Are partners from MSIs required for the Phase II Continuation, if no such partners were involved in the current project based on the "Ensure Energy Equity"?**

A. Partnering with MSIs not required but having a MSI (including HBCU and TCU) partner may contribute up to 3 additional points as mentioned in Part V, section A.1.4. of the Phase II Continuation FOA and could be a selection factor as explained in section A.4.

**Q. Is it possible to write the Phase II Continuation proposal as if it were a continuation of two different CINR proposals?**

A. It is allowed to propose only one Phase II CINR per awarded CINR project. However, this does not restrict combining 2 project ideas. The lead PI for Phase II Continuation application should be the same as that for the original CINR project.

**Q. Would the Phase II Continuation application count towards the FY24 CINR Pre-Application limit?**

A. No, the CINR FOA and the Phase II Continuation FOA are separate competitive NE processes, so the CINR Pre-Application eligibility restrictions are not applicable to Phase II Continuation.

**Q. Can PI's submit a Phase II Continuation CINR for a current NEUP project?**

A. No, the project will be submitted under the 'CINR Project' topic area selection as there aren't topic areas/workscopes for the Phase II Continuations.

**Q. We are going through a PI transfer process for a current CINR project. Is it allowed for future PI to propose Phase II Continuation CINR LOI submission from the same institution?**

A. If the PI change request is approved then new PI would be eligible to submit as the Lead PI for the Phase II Continuation CINR.

## **Infrastructure FOA Overview**

**Q: Is there a due date for infrastructure applications?**

A: CINR Infrastructure applications are due on August 24, 2023.

**Q. One of the submission requirements for the Infrastructure call is that we volunteer to participate in NSUF. I just noticed that the call suggests that we contact you. Is there something that we need to do with regards to the NSUF organization as part of the submission process, other than just saying we want to participate?**

A. No action is required prior to submitting your application. We include that statement in the FOA with the goal of making the largest impact with the available funding. In the past, successful applications have made a statement that they would be willing to join the NSUF as a partner facility. You can provide as much detail beyond that as you see fit. NSUF partnerships have always been self-nominated by the institution. If you would like to consider joining the NSUF, with or without this award, let us know and we can start the process. Your current membership status has no impact on your application to this FOA.

**Q. I am trying to submit a proposal to the FY24 Scientific Infrastructure Support for Consolidated Innovative Nuclear Research (GSI) program. On the submission page, I find that “Signature blocks must be signed by the designated official,” is this required?**

A. The FOA does not require a signature on the narrative.

## **Distinguished Early Career Program (DECP) FOA Overview**

**Q: What milestone is used for the requirement that applicants be no more than 7 years removed from their PhD?**

A: The due date of the full application.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of applications you can submit?**

A: Only one application on behalf of a PI may be submitted to this FOA. A PI may not submit an application to more than three NE DECP FOAs.

**Q: Can there be an REU supplement?**

A: That is not something that has been considered for this year’s funding opportunity for the Distinguished Early Career Program.

**Q: Why is this program a 7-year limit whereas other DOE programs are 10-years post terminal degree?**

A: The 7-year limit was a recommendation from the review panel, but also with other DOE opportunities, there can be lab participation. This opportunity does not allow that and is just for university submissions.

**Q: Are research faculty, or other non-tenure track faculty, eligible?**

A: No, the PI must be an untenured assistant professor at a U.S. academic institution on the tenure track and no more than seven years beyond his/her doctorate as of the last day of January 2024.

## **UNLP Scholarship and Fellowship Overview**

**Q: Does DOE anticipate increasing the tuition allowance anytime soon? It has stayed pretty low and covers very little. The Stipend goes up every few years, but not the tuition.**

A: Tuition is something that the UNLP Program reviews each year. UNLP tries to balance the award, providing the most support for the student while also making the fellowship competitive with other opportunities available to students. UNLP also takes a look at the funding level provided by Congress and the number of fellowships UNLP hopes to award, having the right balance.

**Q: Is there a restriction on the number of years a student is in a PhD program to qualify for the fellowship? Does the limit include Master's years as well?**

A: Yes, it includes any graduate school attended; you can apply the year before you start graduate school, or in your first year of graduate school. The most graduate school an applicant can have completed at the time of award (Fall 2024) is 12 months.

**Q: If a student finishes their Master's degree, will they be eligible to apply for the fellowship for their PhD?**

A: If their research is similar in their Master's and PhD, the fellowship is for 3 years total, if requested for all 3 years, then it could cover two years of the Master's degree and one year of the PhD.

**Q: Are the students in physics working on nuclear energy materials eligible to apply for the fellowship?**

A: Yes, students in physics may be eligible.