

Document Type: Request for Full Proposal – Special Notice

Contracting Office Address:

Department of the Army, Army Contracting Command, ACC – APG Research Triangle Park Division, 800 Park Office Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Reference:

Broad Agency Announcement W911NF-23-S-0001-0002, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Army Research Laboratory Broad Agency Announcement for Foundational Research

PROGRAM TITLE: U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Army Research Laboratory (ARL) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)/Minority-Serving Institutions (MI) Early Career Program (ECP). Under the DEVCOM ARL HBCU/MI ECP Program, funding will be provided for HBCUs/MIs to participate in fundamental research opportunities within the HBCU/MI community with DEVCOM ARL’s Army Research Office (ARO) extramural research programs.

ELIGIBILITY: This opportunity is only open to HBCU/MIs as provided in 10 U.S.C. § 4144, eligibility for this competition is open only to “covered educational institutions,” which are defined as:

- a. institutions of higher education eligible for assistance under Title III or V of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1051 et seq.); or
- b. accredited post-secondary minority institutions.

Enrollments, accreditation, and other factors may affect an institution’s eligibility in any given year. With the exception of HBCUs and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) for which eligibility can be readily validated with the U.S. Department of Education (DoEd), in order to meet the eligibility criterion noted above, an institution must apply to the DoEd each year for Title III or Title V eligibility. A copy of the DoEd letter dated November 2022 or later certifying eligibility for Title III or Title V assistance should be included with each proposal submitted under this program. The eligibility letter will not be included in the page limit. If the DoEd eligibility letter is not submitted, DEVCOM ARL will utilize the current DoEd eligibility lists (Fiscal Year 2023) to validate the eligibility of a proposing institution. If DEVCOM ARL cannot verify the eligibility of a submitting institution, the proposal will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered for funding.

SYNOPSIS:

The DEVCOM Army Research Lab seeks unclassified research proposals from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI) under Broad Agency Announcement (FOA) W911NF-23-S-0001-0002 (hereafter referred to as the DEVCOM ARL BAA”) to establish an Army HBCU/MI Early Career Program (ECP) which embodies the high priority placed by the government on maintaining the leadership position of the United States in science by producing outstanding scientists and engineers and nurturing their continued

development. Each award will support basic research contributing to Army modernization needs conducted by outstanding scientists and engineers beginning their careers at HBCU/MI institutions. ECP awards are funded by the Army to support early career scientists and engineers who show exceptional ability and promise for conducting basic research. This targeted opportunity is open to U.S. citizens, U.S. Nationals, or Lawful Permanent Residents of the U.S. who have held a tenure-track position at a covered educational institution for fewer than five years at the time applications are due in response to this special notice. Faculty at an institution of higher education which does not designate a faculty appointment as "tenure track" are eligible if that fact is so indicated in the proposal, and the supporting letter from the institute states that the faculty member submitting the proposal will be considered for a permanent appointment, or it is demonstrated that the faculty member is within five years of receiving his or her first competitively awarded federal research funding (as principal investigator), excluding funds secured during graduate school or postdoctoral training/fellowship and funds secured for training, fellowship, education, or career development. The objective of the ECP Award is to foster creative basic research in science and engineering; enhance development of outstanding early career investigators; and increase opportunities for early career investigators to pursue research in areas relevant to the Army. Proposals that do not meet these criteria for the Principal Investigator (PI) will be considered ineligible and not reviewed or considered for funding.

DEVCOM ARL executes intramural and extramural research organized by eleven competencies that provide the Army with foundational expertise and specialized capabilities grounded in scientific excellence and driven by unique Army challenges. Our disruptive scientific research coupled with collaborations and prioritized funding to the worldwide scientific community, both academic and commercial, create and exploit scientific knowledge in the competencies that are leveraged to develop new opportunities, build programs, align people and funding, and advise on future operational concepts. DEVCOM ARL also seeks to dynamically and continually reshape these competencies by creating and directing new scientific discoveries to redefine the frontiers of the possible. The eleven DEVCOM ARL competencies are:

- Biological and Biotechnology Sciences
- Electromagnetic Spectrum Sciences
- Energy Sciences
- Humans in Complex Systems
- Mechanical Sciences
- Military Information Sciences
- Network, Cyber, and Computational Sciences
- Photonics, Electronics, and Quantum Sciences
- Sciences of Extreme Materials
- Terminal Effects
- Weapons Sciences

Interested parties must view current topics in the DEVCOM ARL BAA by going to the following webs site: <https://www.arl.army.mil/collaborate-with-us/>. After clicking on "Browse Current Topics," filter results by selecting "Army Research Office" in the "Filters" window on the left, and then click "Apply Filters." This provides a full list of research programs applicable to this funding opportunity. Results can be further refined by selecting specific "Disciplines" and/or "Sciences" in the "Filters" window on the left. Discussions with the cognizant Technical Point of Contact

(TPOC) associated with the research topic of interest is strongly recommended before submission of a research proposal, consistent with guidance in the DEVCOM ARL BAA.

Scientific knowledge and technologies produced in DEVCOM ARL HBCU/MI ECP will enable the Army to address a broad range of technical challenges. Some of the research will be applicable to master's and Ph.D. level work that breaks new ground in the associated areas of research in the DEVCOM ARL BAA.

FUNDING:

DEVCOM ARL plans to award up to eight (8) new HBCU/MI ECP grants at a total cost of \$990,000 each over a duration of 5 years, with funding profile of \$110,000 in year one, \$165,000 in year two, \$220,000 in year three, \$330,000 in year four, and \$165,000 in year five. Note this is more funding and longer duration than the typical ECP award specified in the DEVCOM ARL BAA.

Faculty and/or post-doctoral associates as well as graduate research assistants at the applicant and partner institutions may participate in the project and assist the PI as co-PI or in another capacity. HBCUs/MIs applying under this Special Funding Announcement may propose collaboration with up to one degree-granting Institution of Higher Education (IHE). Collaborations with entities other than degree-granting IHEs are not permitted. Any proposed collaboration with an IHEs should be explained in the narrative as well as the budget justification. A collaborator may not account for more than 30% of the total budget.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

An HBCU/MI institution may submit no more than three (3) proposals under this Special Notice. If a given HBCU/MI submits more than three proposals, the institution will be required to coordinate with DEVCOM ARL to withdraw all proposals that exceed this limit. This requirement does not prohibit a covered institution from submitting a proposal for consideration under Broad Agency Announcement W911NF-23-S-0001-0002 outside this particular opportunity.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with instructions provided in the referenced BAA and must be received no later than 4:00 PM (ET), January 12, 2024. An award announcement is expected by March 2024. The recipient of an award will be contacted by a Contracting Officer/Grant Specialist of the Army Contracting Command or by a representative of DEVCOM ARL.

NOTE: The proposal is submitted by the institution where the individual is employed. The proposal must include a supporting letter, both through official channels in the institution

where the individual is employed. The proposal must follow the format set forth in Section II.D.2 (Application and Submission Information) of this BAA. The supporting letter must be from the individual's Department Chairperson, Dean, Supervisor, or other official who speaks for the institution, and should address support for, and commitment to, the applicant. Strong institution support for the applicant is essential. Evidence of this support can include the applicant's salary, release time from administrative responsibilities, the purchase of equipment, support for the applicant's graduate students, any cost sharing, any start-up funding, etc. The proposal must support the institution's views that the individual is an outstanding investigator, and the institution is making a long-term commitment to the proposal and the research. Any resulting award will be made to the institution, not to the investigator.

Proposals must be compliant with instructions provided in the associated BAA, with the exception that whitepaper submission is not required in advance of full proposal submission. When preparing a proposal under this special notice, applicants should enter "DEVCOM ARL HBCU/MI ECP" in Field 4.b., Agency Routing Identifier, of the SF-424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance form.

Questions regarding the intent, scope, and administration of this Request for Proposal: Special Notice must be submitted to usarmy.rtp.devcom-arl.mbx.hbcu-mi-programs@army.mil. The deadline to submit questions is 4:00 PM (ET), December 15, 2023. Questions regarding scientific programs should be directed to the program manager associated with the research area of interest listed in the DEVCOM ARL BAA.

ARMY RESEARCH RISK ASSESSMENT:

Each proposal recommended for funding in accordance with II.E.2.c in the DEVCOM ARL BAA, whose costs have been determined to be reasonable and realistic in accordance with II.E.2.d in the DEVCOM ARL BAA, and for which funds are available, will be subject to an Army Research Risk Assessment (ARRA) prior to award. The ARRA process is described fully in the DEVCOM ARL BAA. More information on the Army Futures Command (AFC) Army Research Risk Protection Program (ARRP) can be found on the following web site: <https://www.arl.army.mil/collaborate-with-us/opportunity/arrp/>.