Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Agency-Wide Announcement

Research Solutions Opening

DARPA-PA-26-08

June 2, 2026

This publication also constitutes a long-term open call following and satisfying the competitive requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 4001 and § 4021. Any resulting award negotiations will comply with applicable laws, regulations, and statutes, as specified in the Research Solutions Opening.

1. VISION

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is an independent research and development agency within the U.S. Department of War (DoW). Established in response to the launch of Sputnik in 1957, DARPA stands as our Nation's commitment to never again face a strategic technical surprise. Working with innovators across government, academia, and industry, DARPA has repeatedly delivered on its mission by transforming seemingly impossible ideas into world-changing defense and U.S. national security capabilities. Many DARPA innovations have also become foundational to modern civilian life.

DARPA's mission is to create and prevent technological surprise for U.S. national security. The Agency achieves this by fostering a dynamic innovation ecosystem that engages government, academic, and industry partners. By cultivating a high-performance environment, DARPA empowers its collaborators to move rapidly, pursue bold ideas, and deliver transformative outcomes.

From transforming communications through the internet to revolutionizing prosthetics, DARPA's work has altered the trajectory of modern life. These breakthroughs are the result of deliberate acts of intellectual audacity, forged at the intersection of research excellence, strategic foresight, and national purpose. DARPA convenes leading scientists, engineers, and technical experts from academia, industry, and government to confront the Nation's hardest problems—those with no clear solutions, only bold hypotheses and the determination to explore them. Behind every breakthrough is a thinker who refused to accept limits. The question is not *whether it can be done*. The question is, *will you be the one who does it?*

This Research Solutions Opening (RSO) aims to strengthen the DARPA Program Manager (PM) community by engaging academic researchers capable of addressing DARPA's hard problems. PMs that are passionate about tackling the most complex technical challenges, pushing the boundaries of science and technology, and shaping the future of defense and innovation. Together, through this effort, we will pioneer revolutionary solutions, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and empower the brightest minds to make the impossible possible. This RSO also seeks to fund the independent research ideas of these passionate researchers. This RSO is limited to Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) candidates and proposals from accredited U.S. colleges and universities.

2. OVERVIEW INFORMATION

- **Federal agency name** – Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
- **Funding opportunity title** – DARPA Research Solutions Opening
- **Announcement type** – Initial Announcement
- **Funding opportunity number** – DARPA-PA-26-08
- **Assistance listing number** – Not Applicable
- **Dates/Time - All times are Eastern Time Zone (ET)**
    - Posting date: June 02, 2026
    - Abstract due date: Abstracts may be submitted on a rolling basis until 11:59 PM ET on the closing date.
    - Proposal due date: As per the Government request. Proposals will be requested after successful completion of abstract reviews and for timely abstract submissions.
    - Closing date: June 1, 2027
- **Submission Requirements – Submission of an abstract is required, and proposers must receive a written invitation from the Government to submit a full proposal prior to proposal submission. Proposals submitted without satisfying the following requirements will not be reviewed:**
    - Submission of an abstract; and
    - Receipt of a written request to submit a full proposal
- **Anticipated individual awards** – Multiple awards are anticipated.
- **Types of instruments that may be awarded** – Other Transaction (OT) for Research
- **NAICS code** – 541713, 541714, 541715
- **Agency point of contact:**
    - The Research Solutions Opening Coordinator for this effort may be reached at:
      DARPARSO@darpa.mil
      DARPA
      ATTN: DARPA-PA-26-08
      675 North Randolph Street
      Arlington, VA 22203-2114
- **Attachments:**
    - Attachment 1 – Written Abstract Instructions and Template
    - Attachment 2 – Oral Abstract Submission
    - Attachment 3 - Sample OT R - Streamlined-fixed

3. RESEARCH SOLUTIONS OPENING (RSO) AUTHORITY

This RSO is issued under the procurement authority of 10 U.S.C. § 4021, which authorizes the Government to enter into agreements with academia, industry, and other organizations to fund research and development (R&D) through Other Transactions (OTs) for research. This authority enables the execution of R&D projects as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 4001. The RSO allows for the award of an OT for Research, which includes statutorily driven cost-sharing requirements.

The Government will evaluate proposals submitted in response to this announcement through a scientific review process based on the evaluation criteria specified in the RSO. The Government reserves the right to award a single OT under 10 U.S.C. § 4021, make multiple awards, or make no award at all. In all cases, the Government Agreements Officer has sole discretion to negotiate all terms and conditions of the agreement with selected proposers. Only a Government Agreements Officer has the authority to enter into, administer, or modify OTs on behalf of the U.S. Government.

4. STRATEGY

I. PHASED RSO APPROACH

The RSO uses a two-phase solicitation process. Phase 1 requires the submission of an abstract in response to this solicitation. If invited to propose, Phase 2 requires the submission of a full proposal, consistent with the Government's abstract feedback and submission instructions, including the nomination of at least one researcher for consideration for a temporary assignment to DARPA under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program.

The IPA Mobility Program provides for the temporary assignment of personnel between the Federal Government and state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, and other eligible organizations. Under this RSO, the temporary assignments to DARPA are limited to personnel from accredited U.S. colleges and universities. These assignments are intended to be mutually beneficial, enhancing Government agencies' capabilities while providing academic participants with unique professional development opportunities.

- **Phase 1 – Submission and Evaluation of Abstracts under the Research Thrust Areas.** Submitters must submit an abstract addressing one or more of the research thrust areas identified in Section 4, Subsection II. Abstracts must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in Section 5, Subsection II of this RSO. DARPA will accept oral and written abstracts.

  Phase 1 abstracts must identify at least two (2) co-Principal Investigators (PIs) for the proposed research project. If invited to submit a full proposal, proposers must nominate at least one (1) co-PI as a candidate for consideration of a temporary assignment to DARPA under the IPA Mobility Program. Proposers are strongly encouraged to nominate multiple PIs as candidates for the DARPA under the IPA Mobility Program. In the event DARPA selects a candidate for a temporary assignment and enters into an IPA agreement

with the academic institution, the project's remaining PI(s) will lead the proposed research.

Following the evaluation of Phase 1 abstracts, the Government will notify submitters whether they are invited to submit a full proposal. Submitters whose abstracts are not selected will receive feedback from the Government.

Acceptance of an abstract and an invitation to participate in Phase 2 and submit a full proposal does not guarantee selection for award or funding of the proposed research project.

- **Phase 2 – Submission of Full Proposals and IPA Candidate Nominations.** Upon notification that an abstract has been selected for submission of a full proposal, the Government will send the submitter a written request for a full proposal, either written or oral. This request will include proposal preparation and submission instructions. DARPA will evaluate full proposals in accordance with the criteria in Section 5, Subsection 1.2.1.

  Proposers invited to participate in Phase 2 must follow the IPA Mobility Program submission requirements in Section 5, Subsection III, for all nominated IPA candidates.

  Selection of a proposed research project for funding does not obligate the Government to select any nominated IPA candidate for the temporary assignment at DARPA. Candidates selected to serve as a DARPA PM under the IPA Mobility Program will not manage or serve as a PI or co-PI on their home institution's proposed research project(s) funded by the Government.

II. RESEARCH THRUST AREAS

DARPA's technical offices maintain primary research thrust areas. Certain thrusts may span multiple offices by design to facilitate transition and collaboration across the Agency. This strategic overlap fosters innovation and ensures that breakthrough discoveries are effectively shared and transitioned to maximize impact.

All submitters must identify, in Attachment 1, the research thrust area and technical office under which they are submitting.

Biological Technologies Office (BTO)

BTO harnesses the fundamental principles of biology to address critical national security challenges. BTO operates at the intersection of disciplines, translating cutting-edge science into transformative capabilities. Its mission is to strengthen the Nation's biological defense and provide scalable advantages to the military by moving beyond traditional engineering paradigms to creating technologies with unprecedented functionality. BTO PMs are visionary leaders, driving discovery and innovation across the following topic areas:

- Synthetic Biology: BTO explores synthetic biology to create novel solutions to complex problems.

- Bio-Inspired Systems and Materials: Driven by inspiration from biology, BTO investigates self-assembling, self-organizing, and self-replicating systems to design advanced materials and constructs that fundamentally change how we build our world.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Biology Convergence: At the heart of the acceleration of these and other discoveries, BTO harnesses the convergence of AI and biology to command simulation and computation for prediction, modeling, and direction of complex biological phenomena as never before.
- Agricultural Defense: BTO develops transformative technologies to revolutionize agricultural defense systems by advancing rapid threat detection, predictive analytics, and adaptive response mechanisms. BTO addresses emerging challenges posed by natural and engineered threats to ensure the resilience of crops and the security of the Nation's food supply.

Collectively, BTO PMs will accelerate the pace of scientific breakthroughs while transforming U.S. capabilities to strengthen national security.

Defense Sciences Office (DSO)

The mission of the Defense Sciences Office (DSO) is to identify and spearhead the next generation of scientific discovery to fuel innovation in research and development for the DOW. DSO serves DARPA by developing and executing an aggressive and forward-leaning portfolio that expands the art of the possible across a broad set of technical areas. DSO aims to create strategic surprise advantage for the DOW by pushing technology toward its fundamental scientific limits.

DSO works to prevent technological surprise by understanding the path commercial research and development (R&D) is taking, anticipating that our adversaries will exploit available technology to develop new capabilities in the coming decades. In addition, DSO looks for transformative trends at the global scale and their potential impact on our nation.

DSO PMs are visionary leaders in their scientific domains who are interested in engaging with the R&D community to tackle complex challenges and develop impactful capabilities. DSO organizes its research portfolio into the following high-interest thrust areas:

- Materials, Manufacturing, and Energy Systems: Breaking the tensions between performance and efficiency for new materials, manufacturing flexibility, propulsion, and energy availability.
- Sensing, Measuring, and Affecting: Pushing the fundamental limits for orders-of-magnitude improvement in awareness, communications, and control.
- Math, Computation, and Processing: Enabling quantum and reimagining classical computing for enhanced efficiency and new capabilities.
- Complex, Dynamic, and Intelligent Systems: Revolutionizing scientific methods for harnessing complex and adaptive systems, from materials to human-AI ecosystems.

Information Processing Techniques Office (IPTO)

IPTO creates groundbreaking science and delivers future capabilities in the informational and computational domains to create strategic surprise for adversaries and maintain enduring advantage for U.S. national security. IPTO PMs have exceptional R&D backgrounds in artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity (cyber), and resilient megasystems. IPTO's current research thrust areas include:

- AI: IPTO's AI research thrust area emphasizes issues of great concern when using AI for mission and safety-critical defense applications. Areas of interest include robust and trustworthy AI systems, resilience against adversarial attack, and AI technologies capable of detecting, countering, and defeating adversary AI-enabled systems.
- Cyber: IPTO's cyber research thrust area focuses on applying AI and advanced computational techniques to enable both offensive and defensive cyber operations. Areas of emphasis include autonomous threat agents, automated vulnerability discovery and remediation, automated binary analysis and repair, and privacy-enhancing technologies.
- Resilient Megasystems: IPTO's research thrust area for resilient megasystems addresses the need for U.S. critical infrastructure to operate with high levels of assurance under dynamic and contested conditions. IPTO's work in megasystems emphasizes innovative approaches to the efficient development, deployment, and sustainment of software systems with superior quality attributes such as security, reliability, recoverability, and maintainability.

Through these research thrust areas, IPTO seeks to develop transformative computational capabilities that strengthen national security and ensure technological superiority in increasingly complex operational environments.

Multi X Office (MXO)

MXO aims to disrupt the development and use of technology by applying physical sciences broadly and in unconventional ways to deliver innovative capabilities. Technologically, this development requires multi-scale and multi-disciplinary innovations. Operationally, MXO technology enables multi-function and multi-domain applications. MXO PMs explore materials at the atomic, molecular, and cellular scales to develop novel components, tools, and processes with the potential to reshape the battlespace and economies of the future. MXO's current research thrust areas include:

- Tools and processes for indigenous development: Domestic processes, tools, and material supply chains are essential to enable the United States to design, build, and scale critical technologies at home.
- Materials and components to expand foundations: Materials, devices, and their integration serve as the foundation of the modern battlespace, but this electronics-centric foundation is increasingly vulnerable to disruption and exploitation. The office seeks to establish new technological beyond electronics foundations that enable systems to be resilient, secure, and resistant to adversarial attacks.
- New modalities to achieve mission effects: Sensing, orienting, computing, and communicating underpin effective operations in the modern battlespace. The office is

interested in ideas that expand beyond a single modality-based approach to enable reliable, uninterrupted mission effects in future conflicts.

MXO's research thrusts involve going beyond incremental improvements to existing technologies and seeking fundamental scientific breakthroughs that can create new capabilities and reshape entire industries.

Tactical Technology Office (TTO)

TTO reimagines every aspect of military hardware design, development, testing, manufacturing, and sustainment – with a focus on rapid, affordable, and scalable deployment – to create and prevent technological surprise. TTO PMs enhance the Nation's ability to rapidly build, adapt, and sustain capabilities for the joint force. They are innovative visionaries developing and managing programs in the following research thrust areas:

- Naval Architecture: Advanced maritime platform design concepts to enhance survivability, performance, and operational flexibility.
- Aerospace Platforms: Novel air and space system architectures that enable transformative operational capabilities.
- Future Propulsion Systems: Breakthrough propulsion technologies to increase speed, endurance, efficiency, and mission effectiveness.
- Advanced Autonomy: Autonomous and semi-autonomous systems to enhance operational adaptability, resilience, and decision superiority.
- Accelerated Design Processes: Innovative engineering, modeling, and digital design methodologies that compress development timelines.
- Resilient Systems: Technologies that ensure survivability, adaptability, and sustained performance in contested and uncertain operational environments.
- Cutting-edge Munitions: Next-generation precision, scalable, and adaptive munitions that deliver operational effectiveness.

Through these efforts, TTO advances revolutionary hardware capabilities that strengthen national defense and ensure enduring technological advantage.

III. ELIGIBILITY

This announcement seeks to leverage the revolutionary research capabilities and technical expertise available at U.S. colleges and universities to identify and support innovative research ideas for topics not currently addressed by existing DARPA solicitations. Current DARPA solicitations can be found at https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities.

Principal Investigators (PIs) and co-PIs who do not have an existing signed IPA Mobility Program Agreement in place with DARPA or any other entity are eligible to apply.

To be eligible for an OT Research award, proposers must satisfy the following requirements:

- Proposers must be determined responsible by the Government Agreements Officer. Proposers must not be suspended or debarred from receiving an award from the Federal

Government, nor be prohibited by Presidential Executive Order and/or law from receiving an award.

- Proposers must register in the prescribed Government invoicing system, Wide Area Workflow, prior to award. Registration information is available at: https://wawf.eb.mil/xhtml/unauth/registration/notice.xhtml.

The Government may verify the proposer's eligibility at any stage of the solicitation and award process.

5. RSO PROGRAM INFORMATION

I. Funding Opportunity Description

DARPA is issuing this RSO to invite submissions of innovative basic research concepts aligned with the thrust areas identified in Section 4, Subsection II of this solicitation. DARPA anticipates funding a limited number of proposals submitted under this RSO.

Research efforts that primarily result in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice are specifically excluded from consideration. Proposed research should investigate innovative approaches that enable revolutionary advances in science, devices, or systems.

To avoid submitting proposals that duplicate existing activities or are responsive to other current DARPA solicitations, potential proposers are strongly encouraged to review current DARPA programs and funding opportunities, which are listed at https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities. DARPA solicitations are also posted on the Government-wide System for Acquisition Management (SAM) website, accessible through the Contract Opportunities link at https://sam.gov/.

The following information is for those wishing to respond to this RSO.

Given the limited funding available under this RSO, not all proposals considered "Selectable" during the scientific review process will be awarded an OT for Research.

This announcement allows for a single award instrument type: OT for Research. Additional information regarding proposal instructions, general terms and conditions, and the OT award instrument is available at the following resources:

- **Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions:** https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/proposer-general-terms
- **Other Transactions:** https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/proposer-transactions

II. Abstract and Proposal Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

1.1. ABSTRACTS

The Government seeks to reduce the administrative burden associated with responding to this solicitation while recognizing the significant time and resources required for institutions to develop robust, comprehensive proposals.

Accordingly, submission of a written or oral abstract is required before submission of a full proposal under Phase 2 of this RSO. Submission of an abstract provides potential proposers with the opportunity to receive feedback from the Government before investing resources in preparing a full proposal. The specific evaluation criteria for reviewing abstract submissions are available below(Section 5, Subsection II, 1.1.3).

NOTE: DARPA will not reimburse any costs associated with the preparation or submission of abstracts.

1.1.1. PHASE 1: ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Prior to submitting a full proposal under Phase 2, an abstract must first be submitted in accordance with the requirements described below. The abstract submission process allows DARPA to assess whether the proposed concept is: (1) applicable to the objectives of this RSO; and (2) of current technical interest to DARPA.

For purposes of this RSO, applicability means that the proposed concept:

- Is relevant to one or more of the research thrust areas described in Section 4 of the RSO.
- Aligns with DARPA's current investment portfolio.
- Falls within the technical expertise and programmatic interests of a DARPA Program Manager.
- Investigates an innovative approach that enables revolutionary advances, rather than primarily result in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice.
- Represents research that has not already been completed (i.e., the research element is complete, but manufacturing/fabrication funds are required).
- Has not previously received or is not currently receiving funding from DARPA or another Government agency for substantially the same technical concept, or received a positive funding decision for the proposed concept. Current DARPA programs can be found at https://www.darpa.mil/research/programs.

Abstracts determined to be not applicable to the RSO, as defined above, or outside the thrust areas, may be removed from further consideration.

All abstracts must provide sufficient technical detail to enable assessment of scientific validity, technical feasibility, and relevance to the RSO. Abstracts must also comply with all formatting, content, and submission requirements specified in the solicitation. Submitters will be notified in writing if their abstract is removed from consideration.

1.1.2. ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GENERAL GUIDELINES

Abstract submitters should not include elaborate brochures, promotional materials, or marketing materials; only include information directly relevant to the submission requirements and evaluation criteria stated in this RSO.

The use of a diagram(s) or figure(s) to convey the essence of the proposed solution is encouraged.

Submitters are responsible for clearly identifying proprietary information. Submissions containing proprietary information must have the cover page and each page containing such information clearly marked with an appropriate legend, such as "Proprietary" or "Company Proprietary."

NOTE: The marking "Confidential" is a classification marking used to control the dissemination of U.S. Government National Security Information as dictated in Executive Order 13526 and should not be used to identify proprietary business information.

Written abstracts and the required Attachment 2 oral abstract submissions must be submitted electronically through DARPA's Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT) website (https://baa.darpa.mil). See the Unclassified Submission Instructions on the Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions webpage for instructions on using and accessing BAAT. **Submissions transmitted through mediums or channels other than BAAT, or submitted after the deadline specified in this RSO, will not be considered, reviewed, or evaluated.**

a. Written Abstracts

Written abstracts should not exceed four (4) single-sided 8.5" by 11" written pages using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins all sides. Footnotes and text inside graphics are not required to be in 12-point font; however, all text must be legible. Submitters must comply with the instructions in Attachment 1-Written Abstract Instructions and Templates.

b. Oral Abstracts

Submitters electing to provide an oral abstract in response to this RSO must first submit the information required in Attachment 2 through the DARPA BAAT system at https://baa.darpa.mil.

Upon receipt and review of the required materials, the Government will schedule a time for the oral abstract presentation. Oral abstracts will be limited to:

- 15 minutes in duration; and
- An additional 10 minutes will be allotted for questions from the Government review panel.

Attachment 2 submission materials must be received no later than the due date specified in Section 2 of this solicitation.

1.1.3. ABSTRACT EVALUATION CRITERIA

All abstracts, written and oral, will be evaluated using the following criteria, listed in descending order of importance: (a) Overall Scientific and Technical Merit, and (b) Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission.

a. OVERALL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MERIT:

The proposed technical approach is innovative, feasible, achievable, and complete. The proposed technical team has the expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks. The task descriptions and associated technical elements proposed are complete and presented in a logical sequence. The abstract identifies major technical risks, and proposed mitigation efforts are clearly defined and feasible. The abstract explains the proposed technical approach(es) that will be employed and provides justification as to why the approach(es) is feasible.

- **Technical Comprehension:** The abstract demonstrates the submitter's technical understanding and capabilities. The proposed technical approach is accurate, and key technical challenge(s) and key risk(s) are identified.
- **Technical Ability:** The abstract demonstrates the ability to execute the proposed effort, if selected, and the proposed team comprises the technical expertise necessary to achieve the project goals.
- **ROM:** The abstract demonstrates a realistic price and is supported by the technical details. The ROM is presented in a logical sequence, and major technical risks and proposed mitigation efforts are clearly defined and feasible as represented in the ROM.

b. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION AND RELEVANCE TO THE DARPA MISSION:

The potential contributions of the proposed effort strengthen the U.S. national security technology base and support DARPA's mission to make pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent technological surprise. The submitter clearly articulates how the proposed effort will contribute to U.S. national security and enhance the Nation's technological capabilities. The submitter demonstrates a plan and the capabilities to execute the effort.

1.1.4. ABSTRACT FEEDBACK

DARPA anticipates issuing notification letters via email to the designated Technical and Administrative point(s) of contact for applicable submissions within 30 calendar days after abstract submission. Each letter will communicate one of the following outcomes:

a. PROPOSAL REQUEST LETTER

Selected submitters will be invited to submit a full proposal or participate in an oral presentation. The invitation (i.e., proposal request letter) may include instructions consistent with those provided in Subsection 1.2 below, including technical refinement, proposal preparation requirements, and submission deadline.

Only submitters who receive a proposal request letter are authorized to proceed to the proposal phase. Receipt of a proposal request letter does not guarantee award of a resultant agreement, or selection of any nominated IPA candidate.

b. NON-SELECTION NOTIFICATION

Submitters whose abstracts are not selected to advance to Phase 2 (full proposal) will be notified in writing. Non-selected submitters are not permitted to submit a full proposal or provide an oral proposal. A non-selection letter may include limited feedback regarding the decision.

1.2. PHASE 2: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

If an abstract is determined to be selectable during Phase 1, the Government will send the submitter a written request to provide a written or oral full proposal. The Government's request will include detailed instructions regarding proposal format, content requirements, and submission instructions. The Government reserves the right to identify specific challenges, scope refinements, and deliverables requirements that must be addressed in the written or oral full proposal, as specified in the proposal request letter.

1.2.1. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Written and oral full proposals submitted in response to the Government's request will be evaluated using the following criteria, listed in ***descending order of importance***. The request for proposal letter may specify additional or tailored evaluation criteria that the proposer must address in the full proposal.

a. OVERALL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MERIT:

The proposed technical approach is innovative, feasible, achievable, and complete. The proposed technical team has the expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks. The task descriptions and associated technical elements provided are complete and presented in a logical sequence, with all proposed deliverables clearly defined, so that a final technical outcome that achieves the goal can be expected as a result of the award. The proposal identifies major technical risks, and planned mitigation efforts are clearly defined and feasible. The proposal clearly explains the technical approach(es) that will be employed and provides sufficient technical justification as to why the approach(es) is feasible. The proposal includes the nomination of at least one candidate for consideration under the DARPA IPA Mobility Program.

b. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION AND RELEVANCE TO DARPA MISSION:

The potential contributions of the proposed effort bolster the U.S. national security technology base and support DARPA's mission to make pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent technological surprise.

The proposer clearly demonstrates their plans and technical capabilities to contribute to U.S. national security and U.S. technological capabilities. The evaluation will consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to transition proposed technologies to U.S. national security applications and to U.S. industry. The evaluation will consider the proposer's history of transitioning or plans to transition technologies to foreign governments or to companies that are foreign-owned, controlled, or influenced. The evaluation will also consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to assist its employees and agents to be eligible to participate in the U.S. national security environment.

In addition, the evaluation will consider the proposed technology transition strategy and the extent to which the proposed intellectual property (IP) rights may impact the Government's ability to transition the technology, as applicable.

c. PRICE, VALUE, AND COST ANALYSIS:

The proposed price, value, or costs are realistic for the technical and management approach proposed and accurately reflect the technical goals and objectives of the solicitation. The proposed price, value, or costs are consistent with the proposer's Task Description Document (TDD) and reflect a sufficient understanding of the price, value, or costs and level of effort needed to accomplish the proposed technical approach successfully. The price, value, or costs for the technical and management approach is substantiated by the details provided in the proposal (e.g., the type and number of labor hours proposed per task, the costs associated with the types and quantities of materials, equipment, and fabrication, travel costs, and any other applicable costs, and the basis for the estimates). DARPA expects proposers to leverage all available relevant prior research in order to obtain the maximum benefit from the available funding. For efforts with a likelihood of commercial application, appropriate direct cost sharing may be a positive factor in the evaluation as an indicator of transition potential.

DARPA recognizes that undue emphasis on price/cost may incentivize proposers to offer low-risk concepts with minimal uncertainty or to staff the effort with junior personnel to be in a more competitive posture. DARPA discourages such strategies.

Unless otherwise specified in this announcement, for general information on how DARPA typically reviews and evaluates proposals through the scientific review process, please visit Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions. If DARPA elects to fund only portions

of a proposal, negotiations may be initiated with the proposer to define the scope and terms of any resulting agreement.

The Government further reserves the right to:

- Request any additional documentation as necessary once a proposal is selected for funding; and/or

- Fund a proposal in phases, including using option periods or pre-priced options for continued performance, where such an approach is determined to be in the Government's best interest during the proposal evaluation and selection phase.

III. Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program Candidates

1.1. BACKGROUND

The IPA Mobility Program provides for the temporary assignment of personnel between the Federal Government and eligible organizations, including state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, and other qualifying entities. (See 5 U.S.C. §§ 3371-3375).

For purposes of this RSO, eligibility is limited to IPA candidates from accredited U.S. colleges and universities.

DARPA seeks exceptional researchers for temporary assignment to the Agency as Program Managers (PMs) under the IPA Mobility Program. Candidates selected as IPA PMs will serve an initial temporary assignment at DARPA for two (2) years, with the possibility of an extension to four (4) years, subject to Government approval.

DARPA PMs are visionary leaders whose experience spans industry, government, and academia. They conceive, plan, and oversee the high-risk, high-reward R&D efforts for which the Agency is widely recognized. PMs oversee portfolios of ambitious and technically rigorous R&D programs, guiding collaboration among world-class researchers and engineers across academia, government, and industry. Through proactive engagement with military stakeholders, PMs establish critical feedback loops between DARPA and the warfighters we serve. PMs are responsible for establishing aggressive program objectives, defining measurable technical milestones, assessing progress, and driving programs toward transformative outcomes. PMs have an audacious responsibility, and DARPA provides substantial support to enable PMs to execute these responsibilities effectively during their fixed tenure.

1.2. KEY QUALIFICATIONS

There is no single or specific profile for a successful DARPA PM. Successful IPA PM candidates typically demonstrate exceptional technical achievement, a record of innovation, and the ability to conceive and execute game-changing ideas with strategic impact. To thrive at DARPA, PMs must be able to:

- Operate decisively in highly dynamic technical environments;
- Manage significant programmatic and technical risk;
- Exercise sound technical judgment under uncertainty; and
- Execute with urgency to maximize impact during their fixed tenure.

IPA candidates should possess deep expertise and a background of focused research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or other critical technical disciplines relevant to addressing current and emerging U.S. national security challenges.

As an Agency within the U.S. Department of War (DoW), DARPA requires PMs to be **U.S. citizens and eligible to obtain and maintain an active U.S. Government security clearance**.

Temporary assignments under the IPA Mobility Program are based at DARPA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

1.3. IPA CANDIDATE NOMINATION PROCESS

As stated in Section 4, proposers invited to submit a Phase 2 written or oral full proposal must nominate at least one (1) co-PI candidate for consideration under the DARPA IPA Mobility Program. Nomination of multiple PIs is strongly encouraged.

Candidates nominated to serve as PMs in the IPA Mobility Program will submit the following information as attachments to the Phase 2 proposal:

- Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Cover letter
- Preliminary proposal for a new project concept that does not contain any classified information and follows The Heilmeier Catechism. This preliminary concept proposal is separate from the full proposal submitted under Phase 2 of this announcement.

DARPA will evaluate IPA candidate nominations independently from the scientific review of research proposals submitted under Section 5 above.

The scientific review and funding determination of the proposed research effort, and the evaluation and selection of IPA candidates for the DARPA IPA Mobility Program are separate processes. Selection under one process does not imply or guarantee selection under the other.

Selection of a research proposal for funding does not guarantee selection of any nominated candidate for the IPA assignment. Likewise, the selection of an IPA candidate does not guarantee the award of a research proposal.

Candidates selected to serve as DARPA PMs under the IPA Mobility Program will not manage or serve as a PI or co-PI on their home institution's research efforts funded by the Government during the period of their DARPA assignment.

6. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This announcement, stated attachments, and websites incorporated by reference constitute the entire solicitation. In the event of a discrepancy between the announcement, its attachments, or its website, the announcement takes precedence.

Performance under this RSO is limited to U.S. colleges and universities.

The scientific review of proposal submissions described in Section 5 above and the potential selection of candidates for the DARPA IPA Mobility Program will be conducted entirely separately, and neither process will affect the outcome of the other. Selection for funding and selection for the IPA Mobility Program are not guaranteed.

Minority Serving Institutions, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, are encouraged to submit in accordance with the RSO; however, no portion of this announcement will be set aside for these organizations' participation due to the impracticality of reserving discrete or severable areas of this research for exclusive competition among these entities.

DARPA encourages technical solutions or concepts from all responsible U.S. colleges and universities capable of satisfying the Government's needs. To ensure fair competition across the ecosystem, DARPA normally prohibits contractors/performers concurrently providing Systems Engineering Technical Assistance (SETA), Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS), or similar support services and being a technical performer, from proposing unless the DARPA Deputy Director grants a written waiver. DARPA extends this prohibition to University-Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs) and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), including Military service labs. **These entities are not eligible to propose for this RSO, as the award is limited to U.S. colleges and universities with eligible IPA candidates.**

Disclosure of Information and Compliance with Safeguarding Covered Defense Information Controls

The following information and requirements apply to all solicitations and resulting awards. However, the definition of "controlled technical information" clearly exempts work considered fundamental research and, therefore, even though included in the agreement, will not apply if the work is fundamental research.

Proposers should implement the security requirements specified by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-171, "Protecting Controlled Unclassified Information in Non-federal Information Systems and Organizations" (see https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-171r2.pdf) and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 8582.01, "Security of Non-DoD Information Systems Processing Unclassified Nonpublic DoD Information," that are in effect at the time the solicitation is issued.

For awards where the work is considered fundamental research, the contractor (i.e., performer) will not have to implement the aforementioned requirements and safeguards.

However, should the nature of the work change during performance of the award, work not considered fundamental research will be subject to these requirements.

As of the date of publication of this solicitation, the Government may consider proposed concepts submitted in response to this solicitation as fundamental research. For additional information on fundamental research, please refer to the Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions.

DARPA's Fundamental Research Risk-Based Security Review Process is an adaptive risk management security program designed to protect the critical technology and performer intellectual property associated with DARPA-funded research projects by identifying the potential vectors of undue foreign influence. DARPA will conduct risk assessments for all proposed Principal Investigators and Senior/Key Personnel selected for negotiation of a fundamental research OT award. This risk assessment process is conducted independently of DARPA's scientific review process and will be adjudicated prior to final award determination. For additional information regarding this process, please refer to the Proposer Instructions: Other Transactions page.

Proposed efforts may involve Human Subjects Research (HSR) and/or animal use. Proposers anticipating the involvement of human subjects or animals in the performance of proposed research must comply with the approval procedures detailed at https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/humanresearch to include providing all information and documentation specified therein as required for proposal submission.

Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) and Controlled Technical Information (CTI) on Non-DoW Information Systems

As of the date of publication of this solicitation, all proposal submissions are anticipated to be unclassified (i.e., no classified submissions will be accepted) and will not contain CUI. Submitters/Proposers anticipating submission of materials containing CUI must consult the Agency point of contact identified in Section 2 (Overview Information) prior to submission of abstract and/or proposal.

For unclassified abstracts/proposals containing CUI, submitters/proposers are responsible for ensuring that all personnel and information systems processing CUI security requirements are in place.

If an unclassified submission contains, or is suspected of containing, CUI as defined by Executive Order 13556 and 32 C.F.R. Part 2002, the information must be appropriately and conspicuously marked CUI in accordance with DoDI 5200.48, "Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)." Proposers submitting proposals involving the pursuit and protection of DARPA information designated as CUI must have, or be able to acquire prior to contract award, an information system authorized to process CUI information in accordance with NIST SP 800-171 and DoDI 8582.01.

Further information on CUI identification, marking, protecting, and control, to include processing on Non-DoW Information Systems, is incorporated herein and can be found at www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/additional-baa.

DARPAConnect offers free resources to potential performers to help them navigate DARPA, including "Understanding DARPA Award Vehicles and Solicitations," "Making the Most of Proposers Days," and "Tips for DARPA Proposal Success." Join DARPAConnect at www.DARPAConnect.us to leverage on-demand learning and networking resources.

DARPA has streamlined its solicitation process and welcomes feedback on this new format. Please send any comments to DARPAsolicitations@darpa.mil.