

Core Facility Renovation, Repair and Improvement (G20) Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What is the ARRA, and how much funding is allocated for this G20 program?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (known as the Recovery Act) was passed by Congress in February 2009 to provide funds intended to help the economy recover. As part of the 10.4 billion allocated to the National Institutes of Health under this act, NCRR received, among other allocations, \$1 billion for construction and improvement of biomedical research facilities. This set of FAQs applies specifically to the G20 program entitled "Core Facility Renovation, Repair and Improvement," [RFA-RR-09-007](#).

2. For this Funding Opportunities Announcement (FOA), what qualifies as a core facility?

For this FOA, a core facility is defined as a centralized shared resource that provides access to instruments or technologies or services, as well as expert consultation to NIH investigators.

3. What organizations/institutions are eligible to apply to this FOA?

Domestic (non-foreign-based) organizations/institutions are eligible to apply including:

- Public/State-Controlled Institutions of Higher Education
- Private Institutions of Higher Education
- Hispanic-serving Institutions
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs)
- Alaska Native- and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions
- Nonprofits with 501(c) (3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)
- Nonprofits without 501(c) (3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)
- Regional Organizations
- Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Federally Recognized)
- Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organizations
- Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Other than Federally Recognized)

4. Are foreign organizations/institutions eligible to apply to this FOA?

No. Foreign organizations/institutions are not eligible to apply to this FOA.

Key Application Submission Dates

5. What is the earliest opening date for submitting an application to NIH through Grants.gov?

The earliest opening date for submitting an application is August 17, 2009, which is one month prior to the application due date. Applicants must download the SF424 (R&R) application forms and the

SF424 (R&R) Application Guide for this FOA through the "Apply for Grant Electronically" button in the RFA.

6. What is the receipt date?

The application due date is September 17, 2009. On-time submission requires that applications be successfully submitted to Grants.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. local time (of the applicant institution/organization).

7. Will additional materials be accepted after the receipt date?

No. All applications are expected to be complete when they are submitted. Additional materials will not be accepted.

Funding Information

8. When will funds be available?

Funds for design are immediately available for use upon receipt of the Notice of Award. However, funds for alteration and renovation (A&R) will not be released until final architectural drawings, specifications and updated cost estimates are approved by NCRR.

9. Will facilities and administrative (F&A) costs or continuation costs be awarded?

No.

10. Is institutional/organizational cost sharing required?

No. This program does not require cost sharing as defined in the current NIH Grants Policy Statement.

Types of Possible Projects

11. What types of improvement projects are appropriate for this FOA (RFA-RR-09-007)?

Support can be requested to alter and renovate the core facility, as well as to improve the general equipment in the core facility. In situations where similar core facilities exist in different departments at an organization/institution, these A&R or general equipment funds can be requested in support of centralizing these core facilities. Funds requested under this FOA can range from \$1 million to \$10 million.

12. Is new construction supported under this FOA (RFA-RR-09-007)?

No. New construction or projects that would change the footprint of an existing facility (e.g., relocation of exterior walls, roofs, floors, or the attachment of fire escapes) are not supported under this FOA.

How to Apply

13. How are applications submitted?

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov using the SF424 Research and Related (R&R) forms and the SF424 (R&R) application guide. Paper applications will not be accepted.

14. How many applications can an eligible institution/organization submit?

An institution is defined as an organization with a separate IPF code/EIN identifier. Each institution can submit no more than two applications under this FOA, provided each application is distinct. If an institution/organization submits more than two applications, then all applications from that institution/organization will be returned as nonresponsive.

15. Is a letter of intent required?

No. A letter of intent is not required for this funding opportunity.

16. Who is eligible to be designated as the project director/principal investigator (PD/PI)?

Any individual(s) with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the PD/PI is invited to work with his/her organization to develop an application for support. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are always encouraged to apply for NIH support. The PD/PI must be a highly placed institutional individual (e.g. dean, provost, center or institute director, etc.) who has responsibility for the allocation of space for biomedical and behavioral research and research training. Only one PD/PI may be designated on the application.

17. May the same PD/PI be listed for more than one application?

Yes. However, to minimize confusion, it is recommended that each application title be distinct if the same PD/PI submits more than one application in response to this FOA.

18. Are multiple PD/PIs allowed?

No. Only one PD/PI is allowed.

19. How should the project narrative be assembled?

The project narrative component should be constructed as a single document. Follow the instructions in [RFA-RR-09-007](#) for details concerning the upload procedures.

20. Is a project timeline required?

Yes. Timelines should show plans for completing the project within three years following the approval of designs.

21. Who should be included in the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Component?

The applicant should include information about the PD/PI, the core facility director, the project manager and any other key persons in this component. The G20 applications must specify a facilities person in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile component, or the applicant will receive the following error message: "A Facilities Person must be identified for this application. Please provide the information for this person after the PD/PI on the Senior/Key Person page. Specify a project role of 'Other' or 'Other Professional,' and an Other Project Role Category of 'Facilities Person.'"

22. If the project is only for equipment, are line drawings required?

Yes. Line drawings are required to demonstrate the appropriateness of the location of equipment placement and spaces.

23. Do the line drawings count toward the page limits?

No. The line drawings do not count toward the page limits.

24. Would it be useful to indicate who is responsible for providing project cost estimates?

Yes. The source of project cost estimates should be identified in the application.

Application Details

25. May equipment be purchased under this FOA?

Yes. This FOA provides for the purchase of general equipment for specialized groups of researchers. Specialized equipment over \$100,000 in cost cannot be requested as part of this FOA. Examples of allowable equipment are listed in [RFA-RR-09-007](#) and include autoclaves, dishwashers, cold rooms or other common equipment. However, specialized equipment that costs more than \$100,000 (e.g., mass spectrometers, confocal microscopes or magnetic resonance imagers) cannot be requested as part of this FOA.

26. Is movable equipment allowable in the Core Facility Renovation, Repair and Improvement FOA?

Yes. Movable equipment is allowable and should be relevant to the operation of the core and should serve an identified user group.

27. What information is needed for the purchase of equipment?

Applicants should provide a list and justification for all fixed equipment. Equipment should be relevant and should serve an identified user group. Information such as the manufacturer, model number, size, capacity, total cost and the location in the facility should be included.

28. Are vendor quotes necessary?

Yes. Vendor quotes need to be included in the "Other Attachment" section.

29. What do "green" technologies and design approaches involve in reference to this FOA?

Green technologies and design approaches relate to technologies and approaches that meet the needs of society in ways that can continue indefinitely into the future without damaging or depleting natural resources; reduce waste and pollution by changing patterns of production and consumption; use technologies and products that benefit the environment and protect the planet; use new means of generating energy and energy efficiency; and invent, design and apply chemical products and processes in ways that reduce or eliminate the use and generation of hazardous substances. Green building practices encompass a broad range of considerations, including — but not limited to — the choice of building materials and where a building is located.

30. Is green/sustainable design required?

Grantees are encouraged to implement the primary elements of green/sustainable design in federally funded facilities as listed in [RFA-RR-09-007](#). In addition, all improvements and repair projects that have a total project cost equal to or greater than \$10 million, and/or impact 40 percent or more of the overall floor area, must obtain certification from the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes System Certification Rating System.

31. What is "sustainability"?

Sustainability is the outcome of an integrated process of development and operation of a facility that incorporates a balance of life-cycle cost, environmental impact and occupant health and safety, security and productivity. References listed in the FOA may be useful in regard to green technologies and design approaches.

32. Why must information be collected on the number of American jobs created or maintained as a result of the improvement project, and what are the reporting requirements?

The funds to support this FOA have been made available under the Recovery Act, which became law in February 2009. The Recovery Act requires that the number of American jobs created or maintained and environmental impact as a result of the improvement project be reported to Congress. As a result, awardees will be required to submit special progress reports. Special progress reports will be required more frequently than every year and will be required after the award has terminated. Information provided in special progress reports will be made available to the public.

Application Review Procedures

33. What criteria will be considered in the review of the application?

Applications will be reviewed using the review criteria specified in [RFA-RR-09-007](#) Section V.

34. Who will review the application?

Applications that are complete and responsive to this FOA will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by an appropriate peer review group convened by NCRR, and in accordance with NIH peer review procedures. The review panel roster will be posted and available to applicants in the NIH eRA Commons and will appear on your summary statement. However, the names of the specific reviewers assigned to write the critiques for the applications remain confidential.

35. What happens during the scientific review process?

All applications undergo a selection process during which only those applications deemed to have the highest scientific and technical merit will be discussed and assigned an impact/priority score. All applications will receive a written summary statement and a second level of review by the National Advisory Research Resources Council.

36. How are applications scored?

After a separate discussion of each application that is to be scored, all voting members of the review committee assign a score. These scores are then averaged to provide a single score. Thus, the committee as a whole is responsible for the final review recommendation and impact/priority score for each application.

37. What factors will be considered in making funding decisions?

Applications submitted in response to this FOA will compete for available funds with all other recommended applications submitted in response to this FOA. The following factors will be considered in making funding decisions:

- Scientific merit of the proposed project as determined by peer review
- Availability of funds
- Relevance of the proposed project to program priorities
- Geographic distribution of awards
- Priorities specified in the Recovery Act, such as energy-efficient building and job creation

38. What is the summary statement?

The summary statement officially documents the outcome of the initial peer review recommendations. This document is provided to the National Advisory Research Resources Council for its recommendations and is used by NIH staff in making final funding decisions. The summary statement primarily consists of the peer reviewers' critiques and administrative information.

39. Who will have access to the impact/priority score and summary statement?

NIH staff and members of the National Advisory Research Resources Council will have access to the impact/priority score and summary statement. The PD/PI also will have access to these items through his/her NIH eRA Commons account.

40. When will the impact/priority score be available?

The impact/priority score will be released and posted in the NIH eRA Commons within three business days from the close of the meeting.

41. Who should be contacted prior to the application review?

The scientific review officer is the appropriate contact after the application has been submitted. Prior to submission, contact the program officer.

42. Who should be contacted after the review of the application?

If you have any questions after you receive your overall impact/priority score, contact the program officer for assistance.

43. After the peer review meeting, when is the best time to contact the program officer?

Although you may contact the program officer at any time, it is best to wait until you receive and review your summary statement.

Award Notification Process

44. Is there any formal notification of an award from NIH?

Yes. A formal notification in the form of a Notice of Award (NOA) will be provided to the applicant organization/institution.

45. Does selection of an application for award authorize the applicant to begin performance?

No. Any costs incurred before receipt of the NOA are at the recipient's risk. These costs may be reimbursed only to the extent considered allowable pre-award costs. See the Funding Restrictions Section IV.5 in the RFA.

46. What is the procedure following the Notice of Award receipt?

The institutional/organizational official must sign and return the Terms and Conditions of the Award to the Office of Grants Management, NCRR and must immediately begin the design phase of the award.

Contact Information

For further information about [RFA-RR-09-007](#) , contact:

Willie D. McCullough, Ph.D.
Division of Research Infrastructure
National Center for Research Resources
Democracy One, Room 940
6701 Democracy Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20892-4874
Telephone: (301) 435-0766
Fax: (301) 480-3770
E-mail: McCulloW@mail.nih.gov