COVA CCI – Request for Proposals

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs

1. Why does COVA CCI require a match? (VRIC, 2019)

The General Assembly, through VRIC, has directed that all CCI funds have a 1:1 match. These matching requirements need to align to the four categories outlined in the CCI Blueprint: Research, Regional Innovation Ecosystem, Talent Pipeline, and Operations. For example: funds for a research project must be matched with other research efforts (federal and/or private).

2. What cannot be counted as matching funds? (VRIC, 2019)

Funds from VRIF, VBHRC, CHRB, CIT, Tobacco Commission, GO Virginia or Virginia Economic Development Partnership cannot be used as a match for CCI projects. CCI funds may be used as a match for grants from federal, foundation, and/or industry sources. No node-contributed funds that have already been committed as a match for any other program shall be offered as the basis for CCI matching funds.

3. What is allowable for CCI sponsored projects – use of funds? (VRIC, 2019)

- Cybersecurity and CPSS-focused experiential learning opportunities (internships, research experiences, etc.) for undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at public institutions; to the extent possible, matching funds for internships should be contributed by the employer hosting the intern (the VRIC work group expects that the employer would be a formal partner to the Node, so the contribution would count as Node-contributed funds)
- A program that informs and prepares undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in public institutions of higher education to obtain security clearances (program created once and then disseminated across all Nodes)

- Alignment of undergraduate cybersecurity and CPSS-focused degree program content across Node institutions and with industry needs (as described in the Blueprint)
- Expansion of curricula at the Cyber Range
- Expansion of programming at the Cyber Range for PK-12 teachers and community college faculty to promote its use
- Shared research resources, such as test beds, secure networks, etc., described in Node applications
- Cross-Node visiting researcher program
- Build-out of technology transfer office cybersecurity and CPSS expertise; expertise to be shared within the Node and/or across the Network
- Scouting for cybersecurity and CPSS inventions
- Patent costs for cybersecurity and CPSS inventions
- Customer discovery programs; NSF i-Corp-style and i-CAP programs for cybersecurity and CPSS-focused products of research
- Other support for commercialization of the products of Node-based cybersecurity and CPSS research
- Collaborative activities across Nodes related to institutional IT security, technology needs of researchers, mutual support agreements, incidence response, etc.

4. What is unallowable for CCI sponsored projects – use funds? (VRIC, 2019)

Any Node-contributed funds used for the following activities shall not be offered as the basis for CCI matching funds. CCI matching funds shall not be used for the following activities.
- Any activity restricted by law, regulation, policy, etc., for the use of state funds (e.g., alcohol, lobbying, etc.)
- Activities at private PK-12 schools
- Any costs associated with undergraduate degree growth
- Any costs associated with designing new undergraduate degree programs
- Costs of developing and delivering undergraduate capstone programs, except as part of the larger effort to align cyber and CPSS-focused undergraduate program content with industry needs listed under Allowable, above.
- Portion of salaries and benefits of faculty for time spent teaching undergraduates, including teaching cyber-related courses
- Fees for security clearances
- Programs for veterans to transition to cyber and CPSS careers (the Commonwealth has already funded programs such as these)
- Professional development for incumbent IT workers to gain cybersecurity proficiencies and certifications (the Commonwealth has already funded programs such as these)
- Develop post-baccalaureate certificate program for graduates who majored in other fields to gain proficiency in cybersecurity and CPSS
- Scaling of digital fluency across all undergraduate majors
- Scholarships for costs of attendance at institutions of higher education
- Stand-alone technology transfer office dedicated only to serving commercialization of Node research

5. What other restrictions or other allowable use of funds have been placed on CCI sponsored projects? (VRIC, 2019)

- CCI funds should be used to build capacity and develop platforms for multifaceted programs, rather than to fund individual research projects (in accordance with the recommendation of the CCI Leadership Council)

- *Talent Pipeline:* Before including a Talent Pipeline strategy and associated initiatives in the budget request, Nodes should ensure alignment with the VRIC work group's discussion explained under Node Strategic Plans, above.
- *Private Institutions of Higher Education (non-profit and for-profit):*
  - o Experiential Learning: No CCI funds may be used for payments to students enrolled in private institutions of higher education for experiential learning opportunities. Payments to those students from other sources shall not count as the basis for the match of CCI funds.
  - o If CCI funds are expended on shared infrastructure located at a public institution of higher education, then private institutions may also use those resources.
  - o Nodes may contract with private institutions to provide access to resources for faculty at, and students enrolled in, public institutions.
- *Public PK-12 School Systems:* VRIC work group members remind Nodes that PK-12 funding for activities similar to those described in Node applications has routinely been removed from the state budget by the General Assembly. Therefore, caution is advised in requesting funding for PK-12 activities.
  - o Developing cyber and CPSS-focused curricula and delivering it to PK-12 public school teachers is an allowable use of funds (created once and disseminated).
  - o Cyber and CPSS-focused research experiences at public institutions of higher education for PK-12 teachers is an allowable use of funds.
  - o Camps for kids, career exploration fairs and/or other programs that promote general tech sector careers (even those with a cybersecurity component) are usually an unallowable use of funds; however, VRIC will consider meaningful, rigorous, cyber- and CPSS-specific activities for PK-12 students on a case-by-case basis.
- *Virginia Space Grant Consortium:* The funds provided by the state to VSGC, including GO Virginia funds, shall not count as Node-contributed funds offered as the basis for CCI matching funds. Nodes may contract with VSCG to provide services to the Node.
- *Indirect Costs and/or Facilities & Administration Costs:* CCI funds shall not be used for facilities and administration costs (i.e., indirects). Nodes may offer unrecovered F&A as the basis for matching funds, separately calculated for each of the four broad categories.
- *Endowments:* CCI funds shall not be placed in an endowment; expenditures from an endowment may count as Node-contributed funds offered as the basis for CCI matching funds.

6. What is the difference between Cash Match and In-Kind Match?

Cash Match – The most common type of match, and the easiest to track, is cash match. Cash match is either the grantee organization's own funds or cash donations from other partner organizations. A cash match contribution is an actual cash contribution. Example, a business partner provides $10,000 in cash to support a research project.

In-Kind Match – In-Kind match contributions come from the grantee organization or from third party (partner organizations). In-kind match is typically in the form of the value of personnel, goods, and services, including direct and indirect costs. In-kind match must be documented as to where and how the match is calculated. Faculty release time is a common in-kind match. Example: A faculty member is working on a new curriculum as part of a CCI sponsored project. His time/effort spent on teaching similar curricula and receiving training on curriculum development can be counted as in-kind match.

7. Who submits the proposal when multiple institutions/organizations are working together?

All proposals must have a lead institution/organization identified. This institution will submit the final proposal on behalf of all partner institutions/organizations. The lead institution needs to ensure that all partners provide the required budget requirements and other documents as specified in the RFP. The proposal must also clearly identify the principal investigator(s) for the project.

8. Can faculty from institutions of higher learning outside of Virginia partner with COVA CCI institutions on projects?

The short answer is no. Since the objective of CCI is to build the research capacity and increase the cyber workforce in Virginia, faculty from institutions of higher learning outside of Virginia are not allowed to participate in CCI sponsored projects.

9. How are project budgets calculated?

The COVA CCI Project Budget Worksheet will be used to report the budget costs and to document know matching funds/cost share. Each institution of higher learning has their own guidance on formulating a project budget and these guidelines will be followed in calculating the overall project budget.

- Click her for the Norfolk State Office of Sponsored Programs. (NSU Office of Sponsored Programs)
- Click here for the Old Dominion University Research Foundation budget guidance. (ODU Guide to Creating Budgets)
- Click her for the William & Mary Officer of Sponsored Programs. (W&M Office of Sponsored Programs)

References

NSU Office of Sponsored Programs. (n.d.). Retrieved from Norfolk State University: https://www.nsu.edu/Academics/Faculty-and-Academic-Divisions/Schools-and-Colleges/School-of-Graduate-Studies-and-Research/Sponsored-Programs

ODU Guide to Creating Budgets. (n.d.). Retrieved from Old Dominion University Research Foundation: http://www.researchfoundation.odu.edu/grantscon/createbudget.html

VRIC. (2019, August 13). *VRIC Meetings.* Retrieved from SCHEV: https://www.schev.edu/docs/default-source/VRIC/2019-08-13/agenda-item-7b---cci---guidance-to-regional-nodes---requests-for-funding.pdf

W&M Office of Sponsored Programs. (n.d.). Retrieved from William & Mary: https://www.wm.edu/offices/sponsoredprograms/index.php