Questions and Answers from 2019 P3 Informational Webinar

EPA's People, Prosperity, and the Planet (P3) Program is a student design competition, highlighting the use of scientific principles in creative innovative technology-based projects that achieve the mutual goals of improved quality of life, economic prosperity, and the protection of the planet – people, prosperity, and the planet. *Please note that the current solicitation serves as the official resource for this funding opportunity, and potential applicants should be familiar with the necessary requirements and documents for completing the application.* The solicitation can be found at www.epa.gov/p3.
For additional questions not addressed below, information about P3 program and application process, please contact Richard Callan at callan.richard@epa.gov or 202-564-4191.

Below are some questions from the October 15, 2019, P3 Informational Webinar.

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility:

Can a project address more than one research area?
What about projects that fit into multiple goal areas?
How do I select a subtopic?
The onus is on the applicant to choose one topic from the solicitation that is most relevant to their project focus.
Per the Solicitation: "Applicants should address one of the research areas (Air Quality, Safe and Sustainable Water Resources, Sustainable and Healthy Communities, Chemical Safety) listed below in their Phase I proposals. *Note that each application must be submitted using a single Funding Opportunity Number (FON).* Within the selected research area, applicants should select one of the listed topics to be the focus of their project. If applicants propose a project that does not address one of these topics, they may not be evaluated as highly during the relevancy review, and therefore may not be recommended for an award."

If the project is based domestically, can it be implemented internationally?
Per the Solicitation: "The P3 Program is intended to address domestic U.S. needs. For this reason, P3 projects should primarily perform their research in the U.S., and the benefits of the research should primarily accrue to the U.S." The research may also potentially have international implications, though it should primarily benefit the U.S.

Human Subjects:

Is there a requirement to have the Human Subjects Research Statement?
Yes. Even if your project does not include any human subjects research, your application must contain a statement to this fact. Consult the solicitation for exact wording for non-human subjects research.

Principal Investigator role and collaborations:

Can one Principal Investigator (PI) lead/submit multiple projects?
Yes. One PI can submit multiple proposals; however, it is extremely unlikely that a single PI would have

multiple projects funded in the same cycle due to the competitive nature of the program.

Can someone apply from an international institution?
No, international institutions are not eligible to receive P3 grants. Per the Solicitation: "Public and private institutions of higher education (limited to degree-granting institutions of higher education) located in the U.S. (includes eligible institutions of higher education located in U.S. territories and possessions) are eligible to apply to be the recipient of a grant to support teams of undergraduate and/or graduate students. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive assistance agreements from the EPA under this program." Collaboration with an international university is allowed.

Does the PI need to be a U.S. citizen?
Yes, faculty advisors/PIs must be U.S. citizens and/or lawfully admitted to U.S.

Can a post-doctoral associate serve as a PI?
The role of P.I. is typically undertaken by a faculty advisor.

Must the PI hold an appointment at the applicant institution? Can a student serve as a PI?
Yes, the PI must hold an appointment at the applicant institution. It is possible for the PI to change after the award has been made. A student cannot serve as the PI.

Can there be industrial, federal agencies partners or International partners?
Per the solicitation, "Partnerships are strongly encouraged and will be particularly important for the demonstration strategies. While formal partnerships need not be established prior to submitting the proposal, indicate any and all anticipated partnerships including the type of partner (educational institution, industry and/or NGOs). Formal letters of understanding or commitment from any and all partners should be submitted in support of the application, when available and appropriate and will be considered letters of intent/support as described in Section IV.C.9.a."

Per the solicitation, "The applicant institution may enter into an agreement with a Federal Agency to purchase or utilize unique supplies or services unavailable in the private sector to the extent authorized by law. Examples are purchase of satellite data, chemical reference standards, analyses, or use of instrumentation or other facilities not available elsewhere. A written justification for federal involvement must be included in the application. In addition, an appropriate form of assurance that documents the commitment, such as a letter of intent from the Federal Agency involved, should be included."

Team composition

Do the students need to be U.S. citizens?
No, international students can participate as well, provided they are in the U.S. legally and attend a U.S. institution of higher education.

How many students can be on a team? How many members per team we should have? How big the teams should be? What are the typical team sizes? How many people can there be in a team?

The teams should be comprised of at least two students, as this is not a grant program that provides funding for an individual student's research project. There is no maximum number for team members, and the final size of the team is up to the PI in charge.

Can the group be a mix of both graduate and undergraduate students? Is it important to have combination of undergraduate and graduate students?
Yes. The team can include both graduate and undergraduate students.

Is there requirement that team member must be current student?
The students on the teams supported by the institution receiving the grant must be enrolled in the college, university, or post-secondary educational institution they will be representing at the time the proposal is submitted.

Do students have to be from the same university as the PI?
The PI (faculty advisor) leads a student team from the academic institution receiving the grant. However, other institutions or subawardees can partner on the project along with students at that institution.

Can the team include secondary/high school students?
Secondary or high school students may certainly collaborate with the team on the research; however, they may not be reflected as an official team member. The team must be comprised of graduate and/or undergraduate students.

Can the students within the team change?
Yes. It is understood that the composition of a team could change over time as students graduate, change universities, etc.

Do you need to have a student team assembled at the time of submission? Or is it sufficient to have one student as the main contact? What about I have an idea but no team yet? can I still apply?
Per the Solicitation: "If student investigators are known at the time of the proposal, list them, indicate whether each student is an undergraduate or graduate student, and indicate the expertise they will contribute to the P3 team. If student investigators are not yet known, provide a brief explanation of how and when the P3 student team will be formed and the areas of expertise to be recruited for the team."

Do students have to have different majors in order to fulfill the interdisciplinary criteria? Can you comment on if a humanities or liberal arts research approach would be competitive?
Per the Solicitation: "Clearly identify the planned mix of disciplines to be represented on the team, including both the undergraduate and graduate student members and the PI and co-investigators/advisors." An "Interdisciplinary Team" is one containing students from different degree programs or departments, and preferably a mix of graduates and undergraduates.

Can there be Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on the team?
Yes. The application may include co-PIs or advisors who will significantly contribute to the project. However, the applications should be submitted with a single lead PI who will serve as the primary faculty advisor for the P3 student team.

Budget and funding

Is travel to the P3 Expo included within the $25,000 or is that paid separately?
All expenses related to the grant, including expo-related travel costs, must come from the amount your institution is awarded.

Can you please review if awarded funds must be portioned to University or EPA before use in research?
The funding is awarded to the academic institution which then portions the funds to the PI.

What date will funds be disbursed for winners of Phase 1 P3 grants?
We anticipate that Phase I grants will be awarded in Spring 2020 so that the projects align with the academic calendar.

Is it required that all students in the team have to get paid through the project or can they also volunteer?
Students can volunteer or get university credit. Per the RFA, some student support is provided by Phase I funds.

For estimating the budget, could you let us know where the expo will be?
Per the RFA, the National Student Design Expo will be held in a major East Coast city.

General Questions:

If you don't get the P3 this year, can you reapply next year?
Yes, a previously unsuccessful applicant can apply for the current solicitation. However, they are encouraged not to resubmit the same application.

Can a previous awardee apply for this round?
Yes, a previously awarded grantee can apply for the current solicitation.

Can a peer reviewer also submit a proposal in the same round?
No, but they may apply for other available funding opportunities and/or they can serve as a peer reviewer for another round should they choose to apply

Is there a format requirement such as page length?
Yes, the research plan should not exceed 12 pages. Refer to the solicitation.

Is it appropriate to address Phase II activities in the Phase I application?
Yes, keeping in mind page limitations.

Do the students write the proposal and then let the PI review it, or does the PI write the proposal and then the students work on the project?
This decision is left to the institution, but typically the PI writes the proposal based on research they are already conducting, or research they wish to undertake. What is important is that applicants prepare proposals robust enough to be competitive and relevant throughout the review process.

Is there a preference for rural environments? You mentioned that the communities who need the greatest impacts are given priority. What communities did you mean?
As per the Solicitation, "The P3 program aims to generate research outputs in the form of innovative, inherently benign, integrated, and interdisciplinary designs that will advance the scientific, technical, and policy knowledge necessary to enhance the human condition—e.g., in small, rural, tribal, and disadvantaged communities."

Are we expected to create and develop new technology or apply existing technology for our research? Can we utilize existing research, or do we have to conduct entirely new research?
Either. Proposed research should be responsive to the solicitation and follow the P3 approach.

Can projects be hypothesis driven or do they have to be applied?
Projects can be research focused/hypothesis driven but should clearly state how they will result in pollution prevention and/or control.

Does the technology/innovation need to be targeted toward/eventually used by the public, or it could be targeted towards researchers, i.e. a new software/technology for researchers in the field?
It would be up to your team to identify who receive the results or benefits of your technology/innovation. The technology/innovation should have clear outputs and outcomes related to sustainability and pollution prevention and/or control.