

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Cooperative Institutes

FROM: John Cortinas, Ph.D.
Chairman, NOAA Cooperative Institute Committee

Michael Nelson
Director, NOAA Grants Management Division

SUBJECT: Cooperative Institute Committee Memorandum #2:
Guidance for Submitting a Continuation Request for
NOAA Cooperative Institutes

On September 2, 2005, NOAA adopted a new policy on Cooperative Institutes (CIs) that requires all new CIs to be awarded through an open competition (http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~ames/NAOs/Chap_216/naos_216_107.html). As a first step to implement the new policy, NOAA adopted a plan for transitioning existing NOAA CIs and Joint Institutes (hereinafter CIs) under the new policy (Attachment A). The plan includes a schedule for the continuation of 18 existing CIs. This memorandum explains how NOAA will process continuation amendments of the cooperative agreements for the 18 existing CIs identified in Attachment A. Continuations may be approved by the NOAA Grants Officer (GO) for a period of up to five additional years beyond the end of the current expiration date of each CI cooperative agreement.

Process

At least seven months prior to the expiration date of the cooperative agreement, each CI shall submit an application to NOAA through Grants.gov for the continuation period approved in the transition plan.¹ (Any date that is later than seven months prior to the expiration of the date should be approved by the NOAA GO.) The Line Office (LO) CI Program Manager (listed at the end of this memorandum) or Federal Program Officer (FPO) for each CI award will review the continuation request, and, if satisfactory, recommend approval by the NOAA GO. The Grants.gov funding opportunity number and the deadline for submissions will be provided to the CIs by the LO CI Program Manager or FPO. Each recipient must submit the appropriate e-Federal forms through Grants.gov: SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b, CD-511, CD-512 (stays with the recipient) and SF-LLL (if the parent institution lobbies Congress) and mark the block for continuations.

For CIs requesting a continuation of the same research plan (research themes, projects and/or project description statements) that was described in the original award proposal, the application shall include a summary description of the continuation plan, budget, and

¹ For the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) CIs that typically receive annual renewals, the current process will continue only during the period listed in Table 1.

budget narrative for the additional award period. The summary description should clearly state the recipient's request to continue the current award for the approved continuation period under the scope of work, themes, and/or projects described in the original proposal. The budget should include an annual budget for each additional year along with the total budget for the continuation period.

The level of detail required for the budget depends on how the award is managed. For those CIs requesting an increase in the funding ceiling of their award (with no transfer of funding at this time) only summary budget information is required. The summary categories should correspond to the categories on the SF-424a along with a budget narrative that describes the basis for the estimate. The justification should include any available references to appropriate policies and practices used by the recipient for these expenses (web addresses are permitted). Proposals that add and/or change the original description of the theme(s) and/or projects will require the CI to submit additional information and may be subject to a peer review and may require a noncompetitive justification for the revised work. Prior to submitting any continuation request that proposes such a change, the CI should contact the LO CI Program Manager to discuss the need for these changes. These proposals should clearly state the new theme or research area and/or project and provide sufficient documentation that clearly identifies the recipient's rationale for adding or modifying the proposed theme(s) or research area(s).

For those CI awards that are not organized by themes and are requesting funding with this continuation request, a detailed budget, including the budget narrative should be submitted to correspond to the work proposed during the continuation period.

The approval of any new or modified theme(s) and/or project(s) may be subject to the outcome of a review by three merit reviewers, as required by the *DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Interim Manual* and approval by the LO CI Program Manager, the FPO, and the NOAA GO. Since NOAA is allowing these continuation requests only during the transition to a new CI policy, NOAA does not expect to approve many requests for new or additional themes and/or projects.

After a review by the LO CI Program Manager and approval of the continuation request by the NOAA GO, the ending date for each CI will be extended by an amendment (CD-451). We look forward to working with you during this transition period and appreciate your patience and understanding. Any general questions about this procedure should be sent to the LO contacts listed below. Specific questions related to your grant award documents can be directed to the NOAA Grants Officer at 301-713-0922.

LO Contacts:

NESDIS – Ingrid Guch, Ingrid.Guch@noaa.gov, 301-763-8127 x152
NMFS – Kathleen Jewett, Kathleen.Jewett@noaa.gov, 206-860-2308
OAR – John Cortinas, John.Cortinas@noaa.gov, 301-713-2465 x206

ATTACHMENT A