

**USAID's CBP Grant Round 3-Phase I-Letter of Interest
Questions and Answers (Q&A)
October 27, 2020**

Administrative

Question 1: Will applicants have access to the webinar recordings or presentation slides?

Answer 1: For applicants interested in obtaining a copy of the LOI Webinar presentation, please email us with your request at RFA.childblindness@intsci.com.

Question 2: Where do applicants access the application form and when?

Answer 2: The LOI application form is located under Attachment A at the end of the RFA solicitation, which is currently available on CBP's webpage in PDF format. At this time, CBP is not able to provide the application form in a different format (i.e. Microsoft Word). Applicants are therefore to replicate the application form to the best of their ability, and to follow all instructions (i.e. margins, font size and type, etc.) specified in the RFA.

Question 3: Can you confirm that electronic copies of in-country registration certificates for organizations are acceptable?

Answer 3: Yes. CBP will accept electronic copies of in-country registration certificates.

Question 4: Can you explain more about DUNS and SAM numbers for Non-US organizations? Are these required for all applications to USAID's CBP funding regardless of the applicant's country of origin?

Answer 4: While DUNS and SAM registrations are not required during this initial LOI phase, CBP strongly encourages applicants to complete both registrations as soon as possible. Organizations who are selected to proceed to Phase II-Full Applications will be required to obtain a DUNS number and provide it as a part of the Full Application. Applicants who are selected to proceed to Phase III-Negotiations will be required to complete their SAM registration.

Please refer to the following guidance materials. Please note that you must first obtain a DUNS number (and a NCAGE number for non-US applicants) in order to complete SAM.gov registration. Again, please refer to the resources below for details.

Obtain a DUNS number: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

Register in SAM.gov:

https://www.sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf

Question 5: What is the timeline for processing an application?

Answer 5: The overall grant application and approval process can take up to 8-12 months to complete. For this current grant round, CBP hopes to begin issuing awards as early as summer 2021. For general timelines related to each individual phase, please refer to the RFA solicitation.

General

Question 6: What is CBP?

Answer 6: CBP is a U.S. Congressionally-funded grants program that provides eye health services to children and vulnerable populations throughout the world. The current program is managed by prime contractor, Integrative Sciences LLC, with technical support from the subcontractor, International Eye Foundation. The program utilizes a Grants Under Contract (GUC) mechanism to provide funding to U.S.-based and Non-U.S. based NGOs. The annual grants cycle includes the release of a Request for Applications, review and selection of projects for funding, monitoring and evaluation of project activities, and targeted organizational capacity building. For more information, please refer to CBP's webpage:

<https://www.usaid.gov/childblindness>

Question 7: Is there any link available in the USAID website for organizations applying for the first time?

Answer 7: No, there is no separate link for applicants applying for the first time. All applicants must apply to the RFA solicitation on CBP's webpage:

<https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1864/usaid-child-blindness-program-grant-round-2-request-applications>

For additional guidance, CBP has compiled recommendations and lessons observed from previous application rounds: <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1864/usaid%E2%80%99s-cbp-important-request-application-rfa-guidance>

Question 8: Is this grant exclusively for child populations only?

Answer 8: USAID's CBP primary focus is pediatric eye health programming. However, CBP understands that it is also beneficial to provide services to other related populations, such as parents and teachers. Applicants are encouraged to focus on children to the greatest extent practical, and provide clear justification for any residual beneficiaries where applicable..

Question 9: What is the age range of the school children who should be screened in schools?

Answer 9: CBP follows USAID's definition, which includes children between 0 and 19 years of age. CBP has also previously funded programs including adult learners and special needs persons older than 19.

Question 10: Can an organization submit more than one proposal? Is there a restriction on the number of applications that can come from the same organization?

Answer 10: A single organization can submit multiple applications, and there is no restriction on how many applications an organization can put forward. However, applications submitted must be “unique” from one another. We discourage submission of “identical” programs in multiple geographies, and instead request that interventions be contextualized on a country level to address the specific needs of individual populations.

Question 11: Is it possible for CBP to approve more than one grant for one country?

Answer 11: Yes. In previous grant rounds, CBP has awarded multiple grants to different organizations in the same country. However, CBP may be unable to approve multiple grants in a special notification country.

Question 12: Please clarify the funding thresholds for U.S.-based organizations, Non-U.S. based organizations, and special notification countries.

Answer 12: For US-based organizations, CBP may award up to \$100,000 for a grant. For Non-US based organizations, CBP may award up to \$350,000 for a grant. CBP also notes that if your application is selected to move forward, the budget amount you initially propose is subject to change, depending on the type of grant that will be issued and geography in the case of special notification countries.

Special Note: For applications above \$250,000, such programs can only be funded through a “cost-reimbursable” grant mechanism. Applicants who do not have experience managing these more administratively complex mechanisms are encouraged to limit their applications to \$250,000 or less. Grants under \$250,000 can be awarded using a more streamlined Fixed Amount Award (FAA) mechanism, designed in part for less experienced organizations.

Question 13: Does cost-reimbursable award mean that all expenses are paid up front by the applicant organization first and then be reimbursed by USAID?

Answer 13: Yes. CBP cost-reimbursable awards will not include advance payments. Instead, grantees will be expected to submit quarterly and annual financial reporting for approval and reimbursement purposes.

Question 14: For Fixed Amount Awards (FAA), can you explain how much accounting/financial reporting the international NGO needs to have? Also, if we’re applying for FAAs, how should the budget be formatted?

Answer 14: FAAs are predominantly focused on completion of actual milestone activities and program deliverables. They do not involve substantial accounting/financial reporting. If you are applying for an FAA, the funding threshold is \$250,000, but otherwise the budget format will remain the same. Please use the budget template included in the LOI application form.

Question 15: For a US-based organization, the maximum grant is \$100,000 and this amount more often than not would be utilized just to set up the program in case it’s not an existing program. Is there a provision that you can re-apply for the same project again through CBP?

Answer 15: CBP does allow for existing grants to apply for continuation/follow-on funding. Please reach out to CBP at rfa.childblindness@intsci.com in order to discuss in more detail.

Question 16: Our last application was unsuccessful because of calculation errors in our budget. Can we submit an application for the same project, with some planned changes for this round?

Answer 16: You may not submit an application that has been copied and pasted from a previous round. CBP will only accept new applications, therefore applicants are strongly encouraged to make modifications where needed to keep their applications novel in nature, even in cases where an applicant wishes to submit a similar application focused on the same geography or technical focus.

Question 17: Pediatric ophthalmology is a relatively new service in our country. Are local missions aware of this call and its importance to the intended beneficiaries?

Answer 17: It differs from mission to mission, which is why it is especially important for you to make a clear and compelling argument for your program.

Eligibility

Question 18: How can an applicant find out if their proposed country of implementation is eligible to apply for a CBP grant?

Answer 18: The U.S. Dept. of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) maintains an active database of U.S. sanctions in foreign countries. Please use the following as a resource to help determine if your proposed country of implementation is eligible
<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information>

Question 19: For international organizations, does eligibility include the ability to accept foreign funds?

Answer 19: If your organization cannot accept foreign funds, you cannot receive a grant from CBP. Prior to applying, please verify that you are registered in the country of implementation, that you have the capacity and experience to implement activities in-country, and that your organization can receive foreign funds in accordance with local laws and regulations.

Question 20: Could you please clarify whether a U.S.-based NGO with registered country offices are eligible to submit a grant for \$350,000?

Answer 20: No. Simply having registered field offices in another country is not insufficient to apply above the \$100,000 threshold. However, if a US-based organization has a local affiliate that is legally and institutionally separate from the US-based organization, with its own board of directors, bi-laws, registrations, and independent organizational leadership and financial systems, then yes, that local affiliate could apply for above the \$100,000 threshold. These cases are rare,

and in all such instances, the burden of proof is on the applicant to demonstrate such legal and institutional distinctions. Failure to do so may result in rejection of the application.

Question 21: We are interested in applying for this grant in refugee camps in which we receive funding from another U.S. government source. Can you kindly confirm that we can apply for this grant in the refugee camps and that other USG funding doesn't preclude our eligibility to apply for this opportunity?

Answer 21: As long as you are proposing a new intervention and not co-financing an activity outlined under an existing USG-funded program, you may apply for a CBP grant. Activities that duplicate the activities of other USG-supported programs will not be eligible for funding. It is up to you as the applicant to make this determination. Also, because you are targeting refugee camps, your application may be subject to additional requirements and levels of review.

Question 22: Will a hospital doing a programme similar to this be able to apply for this grant?

Answer 22: Please review the specific eligibility criteria outlined in the RFA. Note, CBP does not fund public hospitals or governmental institutions, so if you are either one of these examples your organization is ineligible to apply.

Question 23: The LOI states that the applicant must "be registered in the proposed country(s) of operation with the relevant government entities to carry out the work proposed in the LOI, in accordance with local law. Exceptions may be granted only in cases where NGO registration is not required by local law." Does proof of registration in process meet the requirement?

Answer 23: Prior to submitting the LOI, the applicant must be registered in the proposed country of implementation, in accordance with local law. You are required to provide proof of registration as part of the LOI application.

Question 24: Regarding registration requirements on page 17 of the RFA, would the applicant's headquarters be considered the country of implementation for virtual training? In other words, if we are based and registered in the United States and plan to develop a virtual training run in the US but targeting providers in a country where we are not registered, would this be allowable?

Answer 24: Conducting virtual activities in a country where your organization is not currently registered presents potential risks. Every country's laws are different. However, if all activities are to be implemented virtually in the country of implementation, there may be an opportunity for CBP to fund that activity. Applicants in such cases are strongly encouraged to provide their US registration, and any additional information in support of their LOI.

Partnership/Co-Applicants

Question 25: Are applications involving multiple organizations, with one organization serving as a lead partner and other(s) serving as a partner/subgrantee, permitted by CBP during this round? Or, is CBP now requiring that applications must be submitted by a single organization, and discouraging consortiums that may involve the transfer of CBP grant funds between partners?

Answer 25: No. Joint proposals will not be accepted. CBP encourages collaboration, but cannot presently provide a grant to any organization that is planning on issuing a subaward to an implementing partner organization. Applications are encouraged to design programs they can implement directly, with limited support from external sources where necessary (such as technical consultants, etc.).

Question 26: Are joint proposals from organizations in two different countries acceptable? Specifically, for our project, it would be a US university who is designing the program and a foreign NGO who is implementing the program.

Answer 26: No. Please refer to Question and Answer (directly above). An application must be submitted by a single organization that can implement activities on their own AND who has the capacity and experience to operate in the proposed country of implementation.

Question 27: If the applicant is not registered in the country of proposed implementation but the partner organization is registered, does that meet the requirement?

Answer 27: No. You are not eligible to apply for a CBP grant if you are not registered in the proposed country of implementation (see question #24 for a possible exception to this rule). If your partner organization is registered in the country, CBP recommends they be the one to apply for the grant.

Question 28: As a regional eye NGO, can we work with our societies but as main implementers?

Answer 28: CBP will need additional information to provide a clear answer. Generally speaking, if you are legally registered to operate in-country, you are eligible to apply. However, the specifics of your program design and organizational structure will also be reviewed. Please be sure to provide sufficient information regarding your structure and intended program to enable CBP to make the appropriate determinations on eligibility.

Question 29: We keep hearing NGO but the application instruction document also lists private organizations. Would a US-based private sector organization working with an NGO in Mexico be eligible?

Answer 29: NGO simply means non-governmental organization, which includes for-profit companies, non-profit organizations, etc. A U.S.-based private sector organization is able to apply for a CBP grant, but the proposed budget cannot include any line items for income. CBP will not, however, accept applications that are co-implemented by two organizations - the organization applying for the grant needs to be registered in the country of implementation and able to singularly implement activities.

Question 30: We are planning to focus our proposal on the theme of “Establish and Strengthen Low Vision Services” and this requires collaboration with eye hospitals for identification and referral of children with low vision. We will pay the personnel for their service and will budget that in our request. Is this collaboration seen as a red flag that will diminish our chances of grant award?

Answer 30: CBP encourages collaboration, so long as you are not issuing any subawards to partner organizations. Again, the more details you can provide CBP regarding your proposed intervention and the organizational structure, the better guidance we can provide regarding eligibility and feasibility should your LOI be selected for further consideration.

Special Notification Countries

Question 31: Are the special notification countries listed in FY2019 eligible or not eligible to apply?

Answer 31: Yes, all countries not under active US government sanctions or presidential or congressional directives prohibiting foreign assistance are eligible for CBP programming.

Question 32: If I am proposing to implement a program in a special notification country, should I write my proposal for \$350,000 or \$215,000?

Answer 32: If you are proposing a program in a special notification country, CBP recommends you limit your application to \$200,000.

Question 33: Besides the link to the FY2019 House Bill provided in the webinar slides, are there other resources with more information on the implications of a special notification country for this application? In other words, how do we know if all special notification countries have the same limitations?

Answer 33: Unfortunately, CBP does not have access to additional information regarding special notification countries. The requirements and procedures involved in processing applications from special notification countries is largely outside of CBP’s control. Applicants are encouraged to do their own research regarding eligibility for US foreign assistance in their proposed country of implementation.

Technical Narrative

Question 34: What is CBP’s projected screening target for this year?

Answer 34: CBP does not have yearly targets. Our five-year life of program target is to screen a total of 4 million children.

Question 35: Is there a set percentage of the children who should benefit from a program intervention in order to be considered for a grant? For example, if 100 people benefitted from the intervention, how many of these should be children?

Answer 35: No. There is no specific ratio of how many children should benefit. However, since this is USAID's Child Blindness Program, the majority of beneficiaries (and focus of should be children).

Question 36: In the thematic area of expand and treat refractive error, what is considered "large-scale"?

Answer 36: There is no absolute criteria for "large scale." Generally, CBP is looking for programs that are scaled relative to the size and capacity of your organization, the geographic context of the country where you will be implementing activities, and your technical approach. In your LOI, you should clearly address how your activities can be replicated and expanded in the future. The targets you propose should be ambitious but practical. Please also carefully consider how you can proactively fulfill your proposed targets within the context of COVID-19.

Again, CBP is seeking to reach practical, yet ambitious targets over the coming 2-3 years so we encourage applicants to think critically about what is achievable and propose their most promising concepts.

Question 37: Could you please provide an explanation of how you are defining 'direct implementation'? Specifically, our organizational strategy and registration with the national government requires us to work closely with government institutions for strengthening of existing systems and our approach to direct implementation would include reimbursing government health care providers the costs of employing optometrists and provision of clinical ophthalmic services to undertake community screening in underserved communities, thus expanding and strengthening eye health services. Would this approach be acceptable to the CBP?

Answer 37: Direct implementation means activities are being managed and implemented by your organization, and not some other entity. CBP recognizes the importance of collaboration with host-country governments, particularly in the area of health. However, we strongly encourage applicants to submit LOIs where the vast majority of activities can be completed by your own organization.

Question 38: Do we need to include only one thematic priority or multiple?

Answer 38: At minimum, you must address one thematic priority in the RFA solicitation. If you decide to address multiple thematic priorities, please ensure that your approach is comprehensive and strategically planned. Your goals, objectives, and activities should all be clearly linked.

Question 39: Can you expand a bit more on the review/scoring criteria? Besides addressing one primary theme and all cross-cutting themes, what else should applicants focus on to make a strong case?

Answer 39: Explain "what" your activities are but also address "how" you will achieve them. CBP is looking for clear linkages between program goals, objectives, and activities. Your application will be more competitive if you can clearly identify your knowledge gaps, explain

your learning objectives, and demonstrate how you have achieved learning by the end of the program.

Question 40: If you are strong in say “expand outreach and referral programs” as a thematic area, are you expected to budget for corrective surgery where the children will be referred to ensure surgery is conducted (if you are not strong in this as an organization)?

Answer 40: CBP encourages you to emphasize your strengths in outreach and referral interventions and also address how you can build capacity in other areas, including but not limited to surgery. The stronger you can connect your technical activities and demonstrate a continuum of care, the more competitive your application will be.

Question 41: Is it better to submit multiple applications for different aspects of a program that will serve the same geographic area and/or population (e.g. school screenings, training nurses to screen for eye diseases) or to bundle them together?

Answer 41: CBP encourages comprehensive programs with clearly established links between project goals, objectives and activities. However, if you feel that the individual components of your application are different in nature and can be logically separated into separate but whole programs, you may apply for multiple grants.

Question 42: If the plans that we initially submit end up having to undergo amendments at a later date as the result of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, will our application still be considered?

Answer 42: Yes. CBP understands there is much uncertainty and that activities proposed now may be subject to change as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve. However, please bear in mind that any changes you propose need to be within the scope of your original application. For example, if you originally propose to implement a school screening program, you cannot change your interventions to an entirely different topic such as ROP.

Question 43: Are key personnel required to be included in the LOI or is it up to the applicant’s discretion if they wish to include this information?

Answer 43: Key personnel are an important part of the LOI. You are not required to name the specific individuals involved, but please discuss the roles themselves and how they add value to your program. CBP reviews key personnel within the context of program sustainability (i.e. having existing personnel implement activities vs. hiring new positions).

Question 44: Is it possible to submit a proposal that includes schools of optometry in public universities of three different countries?

Answer 44: Without additional context, it is difficult to answer this question in full, but typically, CBP does not work with public universities unless it is within the context of conducting research or training. However, CBP welcomes your application if the universities will be providing large-scale child eye health screenings and addressing a continuum of care.

Question 45: Can screening for school teachers be addressed for this program as well?

Answer 45: Yes. CBP supports programs that incorporate screening for school teachers, but this type of intervention must be within the context of screening students as well.

Question 46: The webinar mentioned about three age groups namely <14, 14-20 and >20 years. We understand that a priority for the grant is to focus on children; however, some of our programs try to address the continuum of care and provide a full spectrum for all these age groups. Will we be at a disadvantage if we propose an idea which addresses all the age groups (instead of just children)?

Answer 46: To clarify, USAID's definition of children includes persons between 0 and 19 years. CBP seeks proposals that target children. If your intervention benefits others (teachers, parents), that is acceptable, but cannot be the primary focus of your LOI.

Question 47: Do you have to have a training institution for the personnel in your country before you can go into training?

Answer 47: CBP is not aware of any restrictions in relation to this.

Question 48: Can this grant be used for some specific childhood infections disease of rare entity? Can this grant support a proposal related to childhood tumors? Or should it be more focused on school screening and ROP?

Answer 48: Please note that CBP does not fund programs for vitamin A deficiency, onchocerciasis, or trachoma. While CBP values programs that address ROP and retinoblastoma, please keep in mind that these tend to reach a smaller population. For this current grant round, CBP is looking to fund large-scale programs that provide eye health services to those in need and incorporate the continuum of care.

Question 49: Can we consider low vision rehabilitation services and early intervention for this GR3 RFA?

Answer 49: Yes, so long as the services are for children.

Question 50: If our organization is focused on supporting public schools in education and less on eye care and is now looking to support the program under this grant, would the organization still have a strong chance in being selected?

Answer 50: CBP is primarily focused on funding programs that provide comprehensive eye health services to children. Education can be integrated within the context of eye health, but CBP recommends you prioritize eye health interventions in order to be more competitive.

Budget

Question 51: What is the ratio of programme cost to personnel and administrative costs in the budget? Are there any set thresholds for certain line items in the budget?

Answer 51: There is no set ratio of program costs to personnel/administrative costs, and there are also no set thresholds for specific line items in the budget. CBP is generally looking for a balance among these costs, though it largely depends on what activities you are proposing. If there are distortions between cost categories, please be sure to justify this in your application.

Question 52: Is it acceptable to purchase high cost items like a vehicle to be used by the project implementers for the project?

Answer 52: Generally, CBP is not looking to specifically fund high cost items like vehicles. Vehicles are defined as restricted goods, and are therefore subject to additional requirements and levels of review. CBP has funded vehicles in previous programs, but prefers to limit these costs and strongly recommends that applicants consider alternative methods where possible, such as rentals.

However, CBP will consider funding high cost items like equipment if deemed necessary and advantageous to program implementation. Please note that equipment is also subject to additional requirements and levels of review.

Question 53: You mentioned in the background that “applications must also factor in the COVID-19 pandemic and other critical constraints”, but page 9 of the RFA indicates that PPE is a “restricted good”, per federal regulations. What do we do if we need to get PPE for our program (e.g. mask, gloves, disposable, etc.)?

Answer 53: PPE is an allowable cost as of May 2020. Should your LOI be selected to move to Phase II-Full Application, you will have to provide specific details in your application about what PPE you will be purchasing in the more detailed budget exercise at that time.

Question 54: Can we include costs for transportation of children to service centers?

Answer 54: Yes, you can include transportation costs in your budget.

Cost share

Question 55: If our project cost comes more than that can be given by USAID, can we find a local source of funding to complete it?

Answer 55: Yes. If it is necessary for you to include cost-share in order to implement your activities, you may do so. However, CBP recommends limiting cost-share amounts to the extent practical. Fulfilling the requirements for cost share are rather complex and present a risk to the applicant if they are unable to issue it as proposed.

Question 56: Is it considered cost-share if we use money from a separate grant to also work on parts of the CBP project?

Answer 56: If you bring in money from another source to support this CBP grant, it is possible that such funds could be counted as eligible cost-share (subject to CBP review and approval). However, you may not use the funding if it is coming from another US government program.

Question 57: Can you clarify about shared costs in the budget? I noticed that shared costs were not to be included so does this mean that applicant organization contribution to a project is not shared/identified in the grant submission?

Answer 57: Cost share is not a requirement. CBP does not evaluate proposals based on cost-share whatsoever. CBP is seeking applications in which the majority of funds can be holistically covered through USAID. Fulfilling the requirements for cost share are rather complex and present a risk to the applicant if they are unable to issue it as proposed.