FAQs for Cyber NYC IRP’s Call for Proposals

Award Information

How much will a funded project receive?
Selected projects will be funded $80,000 with up to $20,000 in supplemental Google Cloud Platform (GCP) credits (GCP Credits Calculator). Funded projects will also have the option to be considered for renewal for a length of up to 3-years.

Can a funded project receive more than $80,000?
To manage all funded projects across the 4 institutions involved in Cyber NYC, each project should be funded at a standard rate of $80,000.

What is unrestricted gift funding?
Google provides funds to a university (not individual) with no return expectations to Google and no obligation that the university use it in any way. There can be no IP issues and no direct

Google Sponsor

What is a Google Sponsor’s role (unrestricted gift)?
Can I collaborate with my Google Sponsor on the project proposal?
Does my project require a Google Sponsor?
What can I expect from the Google Sponsor relationship?

Proposal Submissions

Can I submit a proposal if I’m currently affiliated with Google?
Can I collaborate with another institution affiliated with Cyber NYC IRP?
Can I submit a proposal if I’m not affiliated with a CS or Engineering Dept?

Proposal Reviews and Selections

When will I find out if my project was selected?
What is considered COI (Conflict of Interest) when reviewing a proposal?
If each institution will be reviewing a cross-institution proposal, what happens if it does not pass one of the involved institutional reviews?
Who can I contact if my question is not answered by a FAQ?
benefit back to Google. Google does typically designate a use in a gift letter (e.g., a faculty project) and this model is known as “Unrestricted-Designated”. Whether the university uses the money as designated is not enforceable by Google. Project is aimed to advance fundamental research with an aim to publish at top-tier avenues and/or release public artifacts with no strict timelines or delivery conditions.

Can projects be set up as a Sponsored Research Agreement?
No, not for awarded projects in 2023. Funding for this year’s projects have already been disbursed as unrestricted gift funding. This may be an option for subsequent years.

Google Sponsor

What is a Google Sponsor’s role (unrestricted gift)?
Sponsors serve as the liaison between PIs and Google. In summary, their responsibilities can include:
- Provide input to the PI on proposal (project) content.
- Act as point of contact for PI for questions related to Google or the project.
- Receive and share with Google colleagues copies of papers produced by the research.
- Invite the PI (and student) to visit Google to give a talk on research results (motivated by Sponsor).
- Support faculty referrals for affiliated grad students interested in internships or full-time positions.

Can I collaborate with my Google Sponsor on the project proposal?
Yes, and it’s encouraged to do so.

Does my project require a Google Sponsor?
It is highly recommended to have a Google Sponsor for your project, but it’s not required. You may submit a project proposal without a Google Sponsor - you should state in the Submission form when asked “No Sponsor” if this is the case. If you do not have a Sponsor by the time proposals are due, then an effort should be made to continue to connect with a Sponsor before the project begins.

What can I expect from the Google Sponsor relationship?
Google Sponsors are encouraged to:
- Connect via phone call or vc chat with the PI. Introductions should be made if there is no prior relationship.
- Share expectations of the relationship (excluding deliverables, results, or reports). Sponsors mainly support the PI by providing feedback on the project and encourage the PI to share their learnings.
- Check in regularly to discuss progress and to provide any guidance.
- Toward project end or year mark, plan to have a discussion on research results that may include: Learnings from both PI and Sponsor; Publications that resulted from the work; Open source artifacts or datasets that were released.
Finally, if the Sponsor determines the PI is a promising Google collaborator, they can express interest in future funding opportunities including providing a statement of support for continued project funding.

University Relations will send an exit survey to the PI and the Sponsor to learn more about the collaboration and research results. This will provide input to consideration for continued project funding and to impact reporting.

Proposal Submissions

Can I submit a proposal if I'm currently affiliated with Google?
No, if the PIs or proposed collaborators are affiliated with Google as a Visiting Researcher, Student Researcher, or employed at Google in any capacity, then this is a conflict of interest.

Can I collaborate with another institution affiliated with Cyber NYC IRP?
Yes, in the Submission form you will be asked “Are you collaborating with another institution involved in the Cyber NYC IRP?” You can then specify which institution(s) you are collaborating with. Additional considerations for cross-institution collaborators include:

- Each institution must have their own submission for the joint proposed work.
- Include a description for the cross-institution collaboration - What will each institution uniquely contribute to the research problem? Why is this collaboration better suited for joint collaboration? How will each institution organize the work in making progress on the research problem?

Can I submit a proposal if I’m not affiliated with a CS or Engineering Dept?
Yes, if your research is aligned with one of the Cybersecurity priority areas described in the call and it has computing aspects. The priority areas are:

- **Trusted Computing**: Trusting the outputs of a system requires trusting that the system’s inputs and behavior have not been tampered with. Trusted computing is a broad area comprising topics such as hardware enclaves, software tamper detection, zero-knowledge and concise proofs, privacy-preserving algorithms, and others.

- **Transformational AI for Trust**: Trust can be very hard to measure and quantify. This intersects with AI in several ways: explainability, resistance to adversarial inputs, privacy-preserving ML training and inference algorithms, secure AI hardware accelerators, and so on.

- **Post-quantum cryptography**: Quantum computers bring novel capabilities to the cybersecurity landscape. They can be used for novel attacks against classical security algorithms, but also create new security capabilities (particularly around secure communication). Research is needed in both areas: cryptosystems that run on classical computers but are resistant to quantum-based attacks, and quantum algorithms that are resistant to both classical and quantum attacks.

- **Human and Social Sciences**: Many of the most significant security failures involve humans and can often be attributed to poor design that fails to take the human factor into account. Few security solutions are likely to succeed without input from
psychologists and the social sciences and computer scientists, mathematicians and engineers.

- **Ethics in Research:** Research into cybersecurity topics can sometimes involve working with at risk populations, legally and politically charged topics, and other factors beyond just the technical. This creates the need for research frameworks that enable researchers to investigate these areas, while still maintaining high ethical standards, particularly when human subjects are a source of data.

**Proposal Reviews and Selections**

**When will I find out if my project was selected?**
PIs for successful proposals will be notified by late June.

**What is considered COI (Conflict of Interest) when reviewing a proposal?**
We recommend declining to review proposals where PIs or proposal collaborators are a family member, or you will benefit from funding. Do you have any relationship with the PI or collaborators, or were you involved with the proposal in any way? If so, you should decline reviewing.

**If each institution will be reviewing a cross-institution proposal, what happens if it does not pass one of the involved institutional reviews?**
Cross-institutional project proposals should pass all involved institutional reviews before moving to the award stage.

**Who can I contact if my question is not answered by a FAQ?**
Contact the institutional POC who sent out the call - it should also be stated in the call for proposals email.