



Request for Proposals to Support the Army's Education and Outreach Program (AEOP) eCYBERMISSION Competition, in collaboration with the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)

Proposals Due: May 22nd, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. EST

Administered and managed by the Army Education Outreach Program (AEOP) Consortium
Lead Organization: Battelle Memorial Institute

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Background & Objectives

AEOP offers our nation's youth and teachers a collaborative, cohesive portfolio of opportunities that effectively engage future workforce generations in meaningful, real-world STEM experiences, competitions and paid internships. From elementary school through graduate school, students of all proficiency levels, interests, social and economic backgrounds are encouraged to participate in real-world STEM experiences while also engaging with Army-sponsored mentors. Information about the programs can be found on the [AEOP website](#).

The AEOP Vision, Mission and Priorities are as follows:

Vision: A diverse, agile, highly competent STEM talent pool, representative of our nation's demographics to supply Army workforce initiatives.

Mission: Offer students and teachers a collaborative, cohesive, portfolio of Army-sponsored STEM programs that effectively engage, inspire, and attract the next generation of STEM talent through K-through college programs and expose them to DoD STEM careers.

Priorities: (aligned with Federal STEM Strategic Plan)

- *STEM Literate Citizenry:* broaden, deepen, and diversify the pool of STEM talent in support of our Defense Industrial Base.
- *STEM Savvy Educators:* support and empower educators with unique Army Research and Technology resources.
- Develop and *implement a cohesive, coordinated, and sustainable STEM education outreach infrastructure* across the Army.

Battelle is the lead organization for the AEOP Consortium that includes representatives from academia, industry, non-profit organizations and government. Existing Consortium members are the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), National Science Teaching Association (NSTA), Technology Student Association (TSA), Tennessee Technological University (TTU), Widmeyer Communications, North Carolina State University, and MetriKs Amerique.

The consortium works to promote and enhance AEOP. We expect applicants to visit the [AEOP website](#) and familiarize themselves with the board range of programming AEOP offers.

Purpose

The U.S. Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP) through its cooperative agreement (COA) with Battelle is seeking a new and innovative partnership with businesses and organizations that have similar STEM goals, specifically serving students from underserved populations¹ (U2) and military dependents. Through these partnerships and by sharing

¹ To meet the definition of underserved, students must meet at least 2 of the following criteria: low-income (FARMS); belong to racial or ethnic minority that is historically underrepresented in STEM (HUR) (i.e., Alaska Natives, Native Americans, Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders); disabled (ADA); speak English as a second language (ELLs); first-generation college (1stGEN); attend a rural,

information, leveraging strong STEM networks, and building on already existing relationships, AEOP can provide more enriching STEM opportunities for students.

The intent of this funding is straightforward: to increase participation in the eCYBERMISSION program managed by NSTA, with a strategy that directly engages underserved students, families and teachers and targets military dependents to dramatically increase the likelihood of having a diverse participation in this competitive program that reflects our nations demographics.

eCYBERMISSION is a web-based science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competition for students in grades 6 – 9 that enables all students to recognize real-life applications of STEM. Teams of three or four students are instructed to ask questions (for science) or define problems (for engineering) and then construct explanations (for science) or design solutions (for engineering) based on identified problems in their community.

The competition allows teachers to incorporate scientific and engineering practices, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and Language Arts in the classroom and also includes information on how the competition aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) (<http://static.nsta.org/ecybermission-files/NGSS.pdf>) and Common Core Math and Language Arts Standards (<http://static.nsta.org/ecybermission-files/CommonCoreCM.pdf>).

Procedures are in place for students to interact with scientists and engineers from the Army through virtual chats and/or discussion forums to obtain help as they prepare their projects.

Battelle will accept proposals from businesses, organizations and associations with a history of operating initiatives focused on STEM education competitions with a proven track-record of delivering measurable results. It is our intent that the selected business, organization or association will utilize and promote the materials developed by NSTA for the eCYBERMISSION program and use multiple access points (email, social channels or established connections) to specifically target underserved populations and military dependents in support of the AEOP eCYBERMISSION.

Through this strategic outreach initiative RFP to support eCYBERMISSION, the AEOP expects the awardee to:

- Promote and increase participation in the AEOP portfolio of programs.
- Become well versed in eCYBERMISSION programming and information to actively answer questions and engage in eCYBERMISSION communication efforts.
- Create and distribute creative marketing materials that target underserved populations and military dependents that lead stakeholders to eCYBERMISSION and the AEOP portfolio of programs.
- Distribute eCYBERMISSION/AEOP materials and information when relevant at organization's STEM engagements to include but not limited to summer STEM camps, academies, STEM competitions, assemblies, parent nights, and teacher orientations.
- Utilize existing networks to promote participation and support of eCYBERMISSION

frontier, or other Federal targeted outreach school (GEO); and/or be a female in certain STEM fields (Gender) (e.g., physical science, computer science, mathematics, or engineering).

Program Guidelines

Distribution of Funds and Eligibility Requirements

Applicants may apply for an award of up to \$500,000 for one year or up to 18 months. Awardees may apply for additional funding after successful completion of their initial award. Proposals may be submitted from entities representing businesses, nonprofit organizations, a single Local Education Agency, a consortium of schools, post-secondary entities, and STEM-oriented and/or innovative business. Guidelines for the proposal narrative and budget are noted in the section, "Preparation of Proposal."

Eligible Activities

Applicants must address the following:

1. Increase the number of U/2 and military dependent students participating in AEOP/eCYBERMISSION.
2. Offer both print and digital distribution of resources to drive contest participants to AEOP/eCYBERMISSION.
3. Offer digital promotion and utilize social media sites to advocate on behalf of AEOP/eCYBERMISSION
4. Offer direct mail, email and print distributions to target both student and teacher populations
5. Create marketing, instructional and promotional materials to assist in eCYBERMISSION's growth and student/teacher participation.

Proposal Preparation

All proposals must be submitted online. Required attachments must be formatted as described below. Any exceptions or deviations taken to the terms and conditions must be noted in the proposal. The Review Team appreciates clear, concise, complete, carefully written, and proofread proposals that meet all guidelines.

1. Proposal Cover Letter

Please include signature(s) of the Principal Partners(s) of the Lead Applicant and the signature of the Institutional Representative of the Fiscal Agent(s) who has the authority to accept and expend grant monies. The cover letter should describe the commitment being made by the partner(s). (1 page limit)

2. Summary

Provide a brief (250 word maximum) summary of the proposed project. It should not be an abstract of the proposal, but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded.

3. Proposal Narrative

A. Project

1. Identify project's goal and specific methods to be used to support the eCYBERMISSION program.
2. Identify the target student population (grade-levels, underserved/under-represented, military dependents) and the organization's experience in working to locate the target population. Must include expected number of student participants. (250 word limit)
3. List overall project goals and objectives. Goals and objectives must be measurable. The objectives should pinpoint what the applicant plans to do and expects to achieve. Objectives should be relatively few and listed in approximate order of priority or importance. Remember that what is stated as the applicant's objectives set the framework and tone for judging what the applicant plans to achieve. *Applicant must include objectives related to increasing participation in eCYBERMISSION.* (250 word limit)
4. Describe the project. Provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken with timeline. Descriptions must include details about the content and structure of the proposed project, how project goals and objectives will be achieved and measured, and length of project. (750 word limit)

B. AEOP Priorities

Explain how the proposed project will engage, inspire, and attract the next generation of STEM talent, particularly U2 populations and military dependents, by specifically increasing participation in the eCYBERMISSION program within the AEOP portfolio. (250 word limit)

C. Experience

The proposal should describe the organization's previous successful STEM education experience and expertise in student engagement to ensure their ability to call upon content expertise needed by the project. (250 word limit)

D. Principal Partners and Key Personnel

List all participants and their roles including the specific contributions of the organization and its level of commitment during the grant period. Additionally, applicants should explain how those individuals relate to one another and to the principal investigator and/or project director. Resumes or CVs of key personnel can be attached in the Appendix. (250 word limit)

E. Work Plan (Scope of Work)

The proposed work plan should specify the major activities to meet the stated goals and objectives with a set of corresponding tasks, timeline, and key personnel that will cover all the activities needed to establish the project. Included in the proposed work plan, the Grantee must show willingness and capacity to participate with the AEOP Consortium. *If awarded a grant, the grantee will work with Battelle to establish a Scope of Work with deliverables from the work plan to establish the basis of the award contract. (1 page limit)

F. Sustainability

The proposed work must show evidence of capacity and commitment to sustain the project and participate with AEOP during and after the grant period. (300 word limit)

G. Project Budget/Narrative ([See this Budget Template](#))

- Please include an itemized budget reflecting requested support and any cost-sharing and/or in-kind support. Must use Budget Template form and attach as PDF. Personnel rates and hours must be included.
- All costs included in the budget must be directly related to the proposed AEOP project. The funding amounts in your Budget Narrative should match the funding amounts on your Budget Form.
- Specify cost-sharing or in-kind contributions (i.e., university in-kind support, school district support, leveraged funds from other state and national sources, etc). Cost-share is not a requirement for proposal submission.
- Cost per participant (entire budget/number of expected student participants).
- Note - Indirect costs, to a maximum of **10 percent** of the TDC, may be charged.
- Include a narrative that explains each budget line item for your budget request. Your budget must be consistent with your proposed activities, and your Budget Narrative must justify your proposed expenditure. (No word limit).

H. Attachments

Proposal applicants may include additional information to enhance their proposal. Information may include resumes, budget details, examples of experience, or data. The information in the Attachment section must be referenced within the proposal narrative. The Attachment should not exceed 5 pages and be uploaded as one PDF file.

Evaluation Criteria

All applications will be screened to ensure the applicant is eligible and the proposal is compliant with the request. The partnership resulting from this RFP will be awarded to the responsible offeror whose offer conforms to this solicitation and is most advantageous to the Consortium, with cost and the below evaluation factors considered.

A review panel consisting of members from the AEOP Consortium will review applications. Reviewers will score the applications, basing their scoring decisions and funding recommendations on the evaluation criteria specified in this grant program announcement. The following criteria are used to score proposals. Proposals must address all evaluation criteria.

A. Project Design

1. Target population: Describes target student population including relevant demographic information. Target student population is aligned to AEOP priorities of U2 and military dependents. Has prior experience recruiting and retaining target population.
2. Goals and objectives: Goals and objectives are measurable and relevant to project activities.
3. Project description: Description of the project with key components detailing innovative design features and practices that lead to increased participation in the eCYBERMISSION program within the AEOP portfolio. The project description provides sufficient details about the proposed project so that the reviewers have a clear picture of its scope.

B. AEOP Priorities – Details how the project will support AEOP priorities of engaging ALL students, especially U2 populations and military dependents, in real-world STEM experiences and directly increase the number of students participating in the eCYBERMISSION program within the AEOP portfolio. Explain how this project will promote the entire portfolio of AEOP opportunities.

C. Experience – The application describes the applicant's prior experience working in STEM and/or with programs within the AEOP portfolio. Experience described includes leadership, content knowledge, and capacity to deliver on the results promised. Experience in successful previous implementation of similar grants/contracts will be viewed favorably.

D. Principal Partners and Key Personnel – The emphasis of this grant is partnership and/or collaboration. The intent of the funds is to drive more participation in the AEOP eCYBERMISSION program, but learning from the Grantee's success will also benefit the AEOP consortium. This section of the grant application describes whom the partners are, what assets they bring to the project, and their level of commitment as defined by length of commitment, fiscal resources, dedicated staff, etc. Points awarded based on strength of the organization, partners and capacity to deliver results. For example, does the Grantee have a vested interest in the success of the project outside of grant dollars?

E. Work Plan – The work plan will require goals and milestones. In its simplest form, it will describe who does what and when. A fully developed work plan that demonstrates how the partner organization will increase participation in AEOP/eCYBERMISSION and will allow the reviewer to understand the work that will take place and how it will be accomplished with benchmarks and milestones. The work outlined in the plan should also be achievable within the timeframe allotted and demonstrate a willingness and capacity to participate in the AEOP's work.

F. Sustainability – This section describes the Grantee’s vision for sustainability and gives a detailed plan on how sustainability will be achieved. Applications that reflect thoughtfulness in terms of the financial obligations and the effort it will take to ensure partners are fully engaged for the long-term will be viewed favorably. Additionally, how does this project demonstrate the capacity to import and export innovations from their project to consortium members. A commitment to sharing knowledge gained and importing/exporting best practices must be evident in the design of the project.

G. Project Budget/Narrative – Documentation of how the budget will be apportioned and prioritized and the acknowledgement of any matching investments or commitments from private or community partners. The resources that will be needed to conduct the start-up of activities are specified and separated to indicate costs for the project, including personnel, time, and budget and a plan for long-term sustainability. The staffing pattern clearly links responsibilities/levels of efforts to project tasks. Any collaborative effort (including subcontracts) with other organizations is clearly identified. The budget includes justifications and explanations for the amount requested, and the estimated costs must be reasonable considering the anticipated results. Description of how the budget aligns with the overall project goals and activities including how funds are prioritized, and how existing or in-kind resources are being repurposed to ensure a dynamic project structure.

Proposal Submission Deadlines

Date	Activity
May 15, 2020	Due: Email notification of intent to apply to johnsonsa@battelle.org by 5 p.m. EST (required)
May 22, 2020	Due: Final Proposals due by 5 p.m. EST. All proposals must be submitted as one PDF document to: Jennifer Knisley at knisley@battelle.org
June 1, 2020	Awards announced
June 8, 2020	Start date

Contact Information

David Burns	Stephanie Johnson	Alphonsus Baggett
Program Director, AEOP Cooperative Agreement at Battelle	Program Manager, AEOP Cooperative Agreement at Battelle	eCYBERMISSION Project Manager, National Science Teaching Association
V: 859.322.7431	V: 614.424.4841	
Email: burnsd@battelle.org	Email: johnsonsa@battelle.org	Email: abaggett@nsta.org