FY 2024 SHA Research Needs

Response to Administrative & Technical Questions

Updated 2/05/2025

Administrative Questions:

Question A1: *Is there a budget limit for proposals?*

Answer: No. However, cost will be factor in the proposal selection process. Most projects selected for funding are $75K – $150K. If a research need requires a long study period and/or a large scope-of-work, it may be justifiable to include a budget above this range.

Question A2: *Will SHA select only one proposal for each research topic or multiple?*

Answer: In general only one proposal will be selected for each research topic. However, in cases where it is deemed to be advantageous to SHA to pursue more than one proposed research plan, multiple selections may occur. That will not be determined until the proposal review phase and will also depend on funding availability.

Question A3: *Can a researcher submit multiple proposals for one research topic?*

Answer: No. Researchers may submit a proposal for more than one research topic but should not submit multiple proposals for the same topic.

Question A4: *Can proposals include a Co-PI or should the Co-PI be listed as part of the Research Team?*

Answer: Yes. While SHA only accepts proposal with one principal investigator, a Co-PI is acceptable if 1.) their percentage of time is <u>significantly less</u> than the PI; 2.) their contribution to the project is meaningful and clear in the proposal; and 3.) the PI agrees to maintain project oversight and accepts responsibility for all work being delivered. Please also list the Co-PI as a member of the Research Team.

Question A5: *Is a team composed of two universities and a consultant admissible? Does the PI need to carry out at least 50% of the work?*

Answer: Yes, this is allowable. Should the proposal be selected, SHA would issue the notice-to-proceed to the PI. The 2nd university and consultant

would both be subs to the PI and therefore, limited to no more than 50% of the direct costs on the proposed budget.

Question A6:	*How long is the study period for SHA research projects?*
Answer:	Unless otherwise specified in the RFP, the study period for the research is flexible and should be based on the scope-of-work proposed. However, a 12-18 month time frame is generally desirable.

Question A7:	*Are there restrictions for font size and page margins?*
Answer:	No, there is no restriction on font size or page margins. SHA accepts proposals that communicate a straightforward and professional image.

Question A8:	*Does the proposal need to be routed through the university's research administration office?*
Answer:	When responding to an RFP, a proposal is not required to be routed through the research administration office. After being selected, the final proposal would have to be routed through the research administration office. PIs should always check with their individual universities for their specific policy.

Question A9:	*Is an appendix allowed and will it count towards the page count?*
Answer:	Yes to both. An appendix can be included and it will count towards the ten page limit.

Question A10:	*Would a full-time faculty who is not on a tenure-track qualify as a PI?*
Answer:	Yes, a research professor not on tenure-track qualifies, assuming he/she has the right expertise.

Question A11:	*What is the appropriate indirect cost rate?*
Answer:	The indirect cost rate is determined by the agreement between SHA and state universities. For example, the indirect cost rate is 26% for the University of Maryland, College Park, and Morgan State University. Please check with your university's office of sponsored research if additional information is needed.

Question A12:	*Is there a limit for labor expenses in the budget?*

Answer: Please see QuestionA1 for answer on the total budget. SHA does not have a limit on labor expenses.

Question A13:   *When budgeting for a subcontractor, can we include salary in it? Is there a limit on percentage?*

Answer: Yes, you can include a subcontractor and salary. Their role should be clearly identified in the proposal. Should a subcontractor be included, the PI must complete at least 50% of the work (i.e. direct costs) You can find more information on Page 7 of the [Guidelines for Proposals](#).

Question A14:   *Will one proposal be definitely selected for each RFP topic? Is it possible that all proposals for a topic are rejected?*

Answer: At SHA, we assess each proposal submitted for the best fit for our objectives and outcomes. we will strive to select one proposal for each RFP topic; however, yes, it is possible that all proposals for a given topic may be rejected. If all proposals are evaluated and rejected as not meeting the research need, SHA reserves the right to:

- ·   revise the research need to clarify the expected outcomes/deliverables,
- ·   reduce the expected outcomes/deliverables,
- ·   readvertise the research need in a separate RFP, and/or
- ·   delete the research need from the available projects.

It is our expectation that all research needs will have a proposal that fits.

Question A15:   *Can a consulting company, not a university employee, be the lead of a proposal?*

Answer: No, a consulting company may not be the lead on a proposal submitted through the university. A consultant company may be a subcontractor or Co-PI, but their percentage of the work must be significantly less than the PI and is limited to no more than 50% of the direct costs on the proposed budget.

Question A16:   *The [Guidelines for Proposals](#) document indicates that proposals may be delivered as an emailed PDF file using the email address research@mdot.maryland.gov. Can PIs hand deliver proposals?*

Answer: *No.* The proposer is required to submit electronically, it must be 10-pages and received with the electronic date/time stamp before the deadline. If it is electronically date/time stamped outside of the deadline, the proposal will not be accepted.

Technical Questions:

General Question#1

For research that requires field work, if a research team has candidate sites in mind, is there a viable mechanism to confirm suitability and/or access to these sites for our research plan with an representative?

Answer

MDOT SHA recommends including the suggested candidate sites in the proposal and adding a statement that the locations are subject to change pending input and approval from MDOT SHA. Once proposals are selected there will be an opportunity to discuss and finalize the scope-of-work (including details like field sites) with technical staff.

RFP #01:   The Influence of Rubber Modified Asphalt on Pavements Performance

Question: No questions received

Answer:

RFP #02:   Designing the Low Carbon Asphalt Mixtures and Monitor Performance in the Field

Question: No questions received

Answer:

RFP #03:   Virtual Weigh System (VWS) Current State of Practice and Technology

Question:

Answer: No questions received

RFP #04:   Establish an Administration-Wide Data Science Program at SHA

Question: No questions received

Answer:

RFP #05:   Traveler Information for Rural Maryland

Question: No questions received

Answer:

RFP #06:   Assessment of Litter Hot Spot Areas for Targeted Reduction in Prince George's County

Question: No questions received

Answer:

RFP #07:   Improving Internal Communication with SHA Employees

Question   No questions received

Answer