

Frequently asked questions about the Petascale Computing Resource Allocations solicitation

The document for PRAC applicants says no additional information on Blue Waters will be released at this time. But it also suggests a Blue Waters consulting office is already in operation. What services are being offered by the consulting office?

The consulting office has been set up. Blue Waters staff at NCSA are responding to questions addressed to bwconsult@ncsa.uiuc.edu within the constraints of the publicly released information. NCSA and its partners will also be announcing workshops to be held this year in which issues related to sustained petascale performance will be discussed. Many of these issues do not require specific information on Blue Waters but will affect code development and porting to petascale systems.

PRAC awardees will be eligible to obtain additional information on Blue Waters from IBM under a non-disclosure agreement.

In a "Resource Required" paragraph on page 7 of NSF's PRAC solicitation, proposers are asked to estimate the "number of node hours required" for their calculations. To estimate this we need to have some idea how fast the proposed system will be. Can we make any assumption about processor/core clock speeds?

Information about processor/core clock speeds and architecture will be announced by IBM in the future. In your response to the NSF solicitation, please make your assumptions clear. Note that the publicly released information says that the system has SMP components should that be important for your algorithms.

The PRAC funding is for travel by either the project team visiting NCSA or for NCSA Blue Waters staff to visit project sites. Do you have advice about availability of NCSA staff for such travel?

It is difficult to give advice on travel at this time. The use of the travel funds for NCSA or awardee staff would be decided by the PI of the PRAC award. NCSA is planning twice yearly workshops starting in the fall of 2008. Some of the travel could be carried out in conjunction with those workshops.

One of the issues we are to address in the PRAC proposal is how we could take advantage of the Blue Waters team. How can we find out who is on the team?

The consulting office is in the initial stages of development. All current questions should be addressed to bwconsult@ncsa.uiuc.edu where staff will answer within the constraints of the publicly available information on Blue Waters.