AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2020 Request for Applications for Accelerating Restoration of Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-20-03

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.466

08/11/2020	Issuance of RFA
09/25/2020	Application Submission Deadline (see Section IV for more information)
10/23/2020	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
11/16/2020	Approximate data for applicant(s) to submit revised federal cooperative agreement application
12/14/2020	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all applications that are submitted via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm EST on **September 25, 2020** and consider any applications submitted after the due date as ineligible. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV.).

COVID-19 Update: EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the **Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19** clause in Section IV of EPA's Solicitation Clauses.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) for eligible applicants to administer a program to accelerate implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the most effective basins within the Chesapeake Bay watershed of Pennsylvania. The intent of this RFA is to assist the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in achieving its 2025 water quality goals under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and its Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership includes federal agencies, the seven watershed jurisdictions, and many non-federal organizations. The seven watershed jurisdictions are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. However, work funded under this RFA will support BMP implementation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The funding to support this project is a result of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Appropriation[1]

FUNDING/AWARDS: This RFA will cover two activities. Activity 1 and Activity 2 are expected to have budget and project periods up to **six years with funding in Years 2 through 6, contingent upon the availability of funding.** Both activities have an expected start date of **December 14, 2020**. CBPO plans to award **one to two cooperative agreements** under this RFA.

The total estimated funding for Activity 1 and Activity 2 with a six-year project period is approximately $20,370,672 with an estimated $3,395,112 available for the first year and each additional year thereafter, **contingent upon the availability of funding**. The estimated funding for Activity 1 is between $3,295,112 to $3,375,112 per year and the estimated funding for Activity 2 is between $20,000 to $100,000 per year. **There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.**

Applicants may apply for one or both activities described in Section I.B but must submit separately one application per activity. If an applicant submits more than one application per activity, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which one to review.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

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I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. *About the Chesapeake Bay Program*

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through many actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

[1] EPA's FY 2020 Appropriation is contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94) The specific language for the state-based implementation MEB grants is in the report language: H. Rept. 116-100.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; EPA, representing the federal government; and participating citizen, local government, and scientific and technical advisory groups.

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council). The Executive Council sets the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and uses its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection. The Executive Council also signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection.

The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisor to the Executive Council, accepting items for Executive Council consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The Management Board provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. It directs and coordinates all of the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their respective workgroups.

The membership of the GITs and the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection partnership.

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(b)(2), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (b)(2), the Chesapeake Bay Program Office is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office and Chesapeake Bay Program, both mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

2. *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*

On June 16, 2014, the Chesapeake Executive Council, CBP's governing body signed a new voluntary Chesapeake Bay agreement (referred to as *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* throughout this RFA) that will guide the CBP partnership's work into the future. For the first time, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia signed the agreement as full CBP partners in the overall effort. This agreement is one of the most comprehensive restoration plans developed for the Chesapeake region, providing greater transparency and accountability of all CBP partners. With 10 interrelated goals and 31 outcomes, this watershed-wide accord advances the restoration, conservation, and protection of all the lands and waters within the 64,000-square-mile watershed by promoting sound land use, environmental literacy, stewardship, and a diversity of engaged citizens. Additionally, the goals and outcomes aim to better protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats. The new

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement also recognizes the unique and vital role local governments play and how they are essential to the restoration effort.

This cooperative agreement will help fulfill the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* outcomes under several of the agreement's goals.

3. *The Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plans*

The EPA has established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a historic and comprehensive "pollution diet" to facilitate implementation of actions to restore clean water to the Chesapeake Bay and the watershed's streams, creeks and rivers.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL – the largest ever developed by EPA – identifies the levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia that are necessary to meet applicable state water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries and embayments. These pollutant limits were further divided by each of the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions and major river basins based on state-of-the-art modeling tools, extensive monitoring data, peer-reviewed science and close interaction with jurisdictional partners. Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are plans for how each of the Bay jurisdictions, in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations and planning targets. The Phase I WIPs were developed in 2010 by the jurisdictions to inform the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL wasteload and load allocations. The Phase II WIPs were developed in 2012 by the jurisdictions to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment planning targets based on updated information generated through the CBP partnership's Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. The goal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and supporting jurisdictional WIP process is to implement by 2025 all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction practices needed to fully restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers.

To support the development of the third phase of the WIPs, the CBP partnership conducted the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment. As part of this Midpoint Assessment, the CBP partnership updated and reviewed the latest science, data, models, and decision support tools to be used in estimating progress in nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions and identifying opportunities for further pollutant load reductions. The Phase III WIPs were developed by the jurisdictions in 2019 based on the results of the Midpoint Assessment, the Phase III WIP planning targets, new information provided by the Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model, and related updates of the Chesapeake Bay Airshed Models and the Chesapeake Water Quality and Sediment Transport Model. The Phase III WIPs provided information on the programs and actions the seven watershed jurisdictions intend to put in place and implement between 2019 and 2025 to meet their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL water quality goals. See https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-watershed-implementation-plans-wips for more information.

In December 2019, as part of its role under the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Accountability Framework, EPA released its evaluations of the jurisdictions' Phase III WIPs to determine if programs and practices will be in place by 2025 to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal waters. These evaluations noted key strengths and recommendations for enhancements in each of

the plans to strengthen confidence that the jurisdictions' respective water quality goals would be achieved by 2025. The evaluations also outlined specific EPA oversight in the form of financial, administrative, and technical assistance to support the jurisdictions' implementation of the Phase III WIPs. In addition, for Pennsylvania, specific BMPs were identified in its Phase III WIP evaluation to potentially help close the nitrogen gap. See https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/epa-evaluation-final-phase-iii-wips for more information.

4. ***Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Environmental Models***

Models of the Chesapeake Bay's airshed, watershed, estuary, and living resources have been developed by the partners and linked together over the past 30 years. The CBP partnership's suite of models assists in understanding the important processes affecting the health of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. These modeling tools provide the CBP partners with an understanding of the effect of various control strategies on pollutant levels and the level of nutrient and sediment load reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and achieve the applicable water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, underwater bay grasses and water clarity. By quantifying the management actions necessary to restore Chesapeake Bay habitats and the living resources dependent on those habitats, these integrated CBP partnership models provide guidance to environmental managers and citizens on where the most cost-effective reductions can be made so that controls are equitable and broadly supported.

Through the application of airshed, watershed, estuarine, and living resource modeling activities, the CBP partnership's state and local jurisdictional partners gain access to information that is used directly in decision-making for Chesapeake Bay environmental restoration efforts. Chesapeake Bay environmental models are developed, calibrated, verified, and applied through an expanding cooperative network of state, federal, regional and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutional partners. These partnership models help set the pace and direction of Chesapeake Bay restoration by providing information on water quality and biological resource responses to different management actions. One of the key modeling tools in this effort is the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST), which is a web-based tool that provides estimates of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment load reductions achieved by different combinations of BMPs in a particular geographical area. CAST also includes information on the cost of implementing various BMPs so that users can select the most cost-effective practices to reduce pollutant loads. See https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/About for more information.

5. ***Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP and Restoration of the Chesapeake Bay***

As an upstream jurisdiction in the nation's largest estuary, Pennsylvania has a significant impact on the Chesapeake Bay and much of its watershed and has a pivotal role in the ongoing restoration effort. The Susquehanna River provides about 50 percent of the freshwater flows to the estuary, about half of the nitrogen, and more than a quarter of the phosphorus. The Commonwealth faces a number of challenges in meeting its commitments to achieve the pollutant load reductions called for in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and agreed to by the CBP partnership, including limited resources to increase and accelerate implementation of BMPs – particularly in the agriculture sector.

According to its Phase III WIP, Pennsylvania only meets 75% of its numeric planning target for nitrogen by 2025, resulting in a 10-million-pound nitrogen gap. Pennsylvania is planning to achieve 92% of its nitrogen reductions in the agriculture sector and has initiated county-wide pilot efforts in Lancaster, York, Adams, and Franklin Counties to target the implementation of the most effective pollutant reduction practices in those locations with the largest opportunities for reducing pollutant loads. Achieving the projected water quality goals in these counties, including initiating additional efforts to close the nitrogen gap, will require increased coordination and collaboration with the agriculture sector, as well as increased and accelerated levels of BMP implementation.

6. Most Effective Basins in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

EPA's FY2020 Appropriations Conference Report language provides an increase in the Chesapeake Bay Program Budget for "state-based implementation in the most effective basins." The most effective basins to reduce the effects of excess nutrient loading to the Bay were determined considering two factors: cost effectiveness and load effectiveness. Cost effectiveness was considered as a factor to assure these additional funds result in state-based implementation of practices that achieve the greatest benefit to water quality overall. It was evaluated by reviewing what the jurisdictions have reported in their Phase III WIPs as the focus of their upcoming efforts and by evaluating the average cost per pound of reduction for BMP implementation by sector.

Past analyses of cost per pound of reduction have shown that reducing nitrogen is less costly by far than reducing phosphorus. Based on that fact, EPA determined that the focus would be to target nitrogen reductions in the watershed. Further, BMPs placed in the agricultural sector have been identified as the most cost effective BMPs.

Load effectiveness[2] is a measure of the ability of management practices implemented in each area (basin) to have a positive effect on dissolved oxygen in the Bay. Load effectiveness is the combination of three factors: land to water, delivery, and dissolved oxygen response. There are 383 basins identified in the entire watershed. Each basin was evaluated for its relative effectiveness (or degree of impact) based on the ability to deliver nitrogen to the Bay and cause change in Deep Channel Dissolved Oxygen of the Bay. This is consistent with how the CBP partnership has studied the dissolved oxygen needs for the most critical segments of the Bay. The following table lists Pennsylvania's most effective basins from greatest to least effective for nitrogen.

Table I: Pennsylvania's Most Effective Basins Ranked by Total Nitrogen (TN) Effectiveness

Rank	Jurisdiction	State Rivers	TN Effectiveness
1	PA	York Indian Rock Dam	23.68
2	PA	Black Creek	18.97
3	PA	Safe Harbor Dam	18.83

[2] Load effectiveness is the same measure known as relative effectiveness used to calculate allocations as described in Section 6.3 of the 2010 TMDL. It was also used to calculate Phase WIP III nitrogen planning targets in 2017.

4	PA	Codorus Creek	18.27
5	PA	Little Swatara Creek	17.67
6	PA	Chickens Creek	17.08
7	PA	Conestoga Creek	16.74
8	PA	Pequea Creek	16.09
9	PA	Deer Creek	15.55
10	PA	Catawissa Creek	15.42
11	PA	Mill Creek	15.30
12	PA	Shamokin Creek	15.26
13	PA	Codorus Creek West Branch	15.16
14	PA	Mahanoy Creek	15.12
15	PA	Nescopeck Creek	15.04
17	PA	Swatara Creek	14.89
18	PA	Roaring Creek	14.88
19	PA	Mahantango Creek	14.74
21	PA	Octoraro Creek	14.72
24	PA	Alvin R. Bush Dam	14.28
25	PA	Sinnemahoning Creek	14.18
26	PA	Middle Creek	14.12
27	PA	Cocalico Creek	14.04
28	PA	East Licking Creek	13.96
29	PA	Buffalo Creek	13.95
30	PA	Tuscarora Creek	13.93
32	PA	Larrys Creek	13.91
33	PA	Wiconisco Creek	13.87
35	PA	Codorus Creek South Branch	13.63
36	PA	Wills Creek	13.31
37	PA	Fishing Creek	13.31
38	PA	Juniata River	13.28

In addition, this map shows the most effective basins in Pennsylvania to reduce nitrogen in the agricultural sector:

https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational

B. Scope of Work

This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants for administering a program to implement priority agricultural BMPs in the most effective basins in Pennsylvania as reflected in Table 1 or on the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational. The successful applicant(s) will be expected to carry out agricultural BMP implementation projects for those projects that they have the expertise to

implement. While the CBP partnership is comprised of federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA will not directly benefit the federal partners.

CBPO plans to award **one or two cooperative agreements** under this RFA**.** The total estimated funding for Activity 1 and Activity 2 with a budget period and project period up to six years is approximately $20,370,672 with up to an estimated $3,395,112 available for the first year and each additional year thereafter, contingent upon the availability of funds. The estimated funding for Activity 1 is between $3,295,112 to $3,375,112 per year and the estimated funding for Activity 2 is between $20,000 to $100,000 per year. As stated above, there is no guarantee of funding beyond Year 1.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish one or both activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application, one per activity. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. Activity 1 and Activity 2 are each **six-year projects,** so each application must have a work plan, budget, and budget detail for the first year and an estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent five years.

Activity 1: Increasing and Accelerating BMP Implementation in Pennsylvania's Most-Effective Basins in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
Estimated Funding: $3,295,112 - $3,375,112 per year for up to six years

The successful applicant shall be responsible for the design, installation, and implementation of agricultural BMPs in Pennsylvania's most effective basins as reflected in Table 1 and on the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational. Consideration should also be given to those activities that will accelerate the pace of meeting Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP commitments, address co-benefits beyond just water quality improvements, and/or have the greatest impact on reducing nitrogen loads in the agricultural sector. All BMP projects and activities must be undertaken in Pennsylvania's most effective basins as reflected in Table 1 or on the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational. Funding may be directed towards those implementation projects that require engineering, design, and permitting costs in the proposed work. However, these funds should be minimally used to fund personnel costs.

In addition, the selected applicant will be expected to implement the following BMPs, or a subset thereof:

- Tillage Management - High, Low, Conservation
- Tree planting
- Wetland Restoration – Headwater or Floodplain
- Prescribed Grazing
- Manure Incorporation/Injection
- Manure Transport to lands for application at agronomic rates according to a nutrient management plan; to lands for reclamation purposes; or to manure treatment or waste to energy facilities
- Barnyard and Feedlot Runoff Abatement Controls

- Alternative Crops
- Retirement of Highly Erodible Land
- Cover Crops, not manured/not fertilized
- Cover Crop Traditional + Commodity
- Livestock Exclusion Measures, including stream fencing, stream crossings, off-stream watering, pasture fencing with forest and grass buffers
- Streamside/Riparian Forest and Grass Buffers in agricultural areas
- Forest and Grass Buffers including with exclusion fencing
- Implementation of Nutrient Management practices such as precision agriculture practices that ensure the right rate, timing, and placement of nutrients on cropland to minimize nutrient losses
- Implementation of Soil and Water Conservation Plans

The following are examples of the types of tasks required to administer subawards under this project. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to provide the requested support.

- Administer a program to make competitive subawards, including issuing RFAs, establishing guidelines for the program, coordinating the review and selection of the subrecipients, advertising the program, and assisting potential applicants with the subaward process.
- Track the outcomes and progress of the projects funded by the subawards and ensure that this information is reported to EPA.
- Disburse monies to subrecipients in a timely manner to reduce unliquidated obligations and as required by applicable grant regulations.
- Provide hands-on technical assistance, in consultation with EPA, to support the implementation of the subaward projects.
- Also, in consultation with EPA, ensure subaward activities meet the programmatic objectives of the cooperative agreement and support the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

Activity 2: Tracking, Verifying, and Reporting Progress on BMP Implementation
Estimated Funding: $20,000 – 100,000 per year for up to six years

The successful applicant shall be responsible for tracking, verifying, and reporting all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reducing practices that are implemented in Pennsylvania as a result of Activity 1 to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection by November 1 of each year, using CBP partnership-approved verification and reporting protocols. This shall include full documentation of the procedures that were followed in tracking, verifying, and reporting implementation on an annual basis and ensuring that progress is being attributed to Pennsylvania for the purposes of the Bay TMDL. EPA recommends using a tracking and verification reporting tool that is compatible with Pennsylvania's PracticeKeeper BMP Module.

The successful applicant shall work in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the successful applicant of Activity 1 (if different from the applicant under Activity 2) to understand and avoid overlap with other work being done in the

state's Phase III WIP and the Conowingo WIP for nutrient and sediment reductions. This collaborative work shall ensure that implementation is not double-counted in the tracking, verification, and reporting systems.

Applicants may consider the above projects under the two activities, as well as describe alternative approaches to the requested activities in this RFA.

Applicants should address the approach they plan to use to support projects that fall within the applicant's expertise for one or both activities. Applicants should also address their ability to carry out these projects (see sub-section V.B., Evaluation Criteria) for one or both activities.

The total estimated funding for the six-year activities **is $3,395,112 for the first year and each year thereafter. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, contributions from other state and federal agencies, partners, organizations, and other applicable considerations.**

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish the activities listed above and also described below, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activity is a multi-year project, so the application should have a work plan, budget, and budget narrative for the first and all subsequent years.

For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work included in the application must take place within **Pennsylvania's most-effective basins as reflected in Table 1 or on the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational**. The activities identified below are covered under this announcement.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, accessible at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements).

1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan

The overall objective of this competition is to provide technical, programmatic, and administrative support for the CBP partnership in support of the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted pollutant load reduction and other implementation actions toward reaching the goals and outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* under Section 117(d)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The activity to be funded under this announcement supports EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. The award made under this announcement will support Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment and Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water Goal of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

EPA Order 5700.7A1 also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above.

2. Outputs
The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected Activity 1 outputs from the projects to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- **Type, number, and location of BMPs to be implemented in the most effective basins as reflected in Table 1 or on the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational.**
- **Estimated nitrogen load reductions associated with planned and actual BMP implementation in Pennsylvania's most-effective basins.**

Expected Activity 2 outputs from the projects to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- **Tracking, verifying, and reporting of BMPs implemented under Activity 1, following CBP partnership-established protocols and procedures, to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on November 1 of each year.**

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs for each of the above two Activities, as specified in Section VI.C., Reporting, of this announcement.

3. Outcomes
The term "outcome" means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. **An example outcome under Activity 1 of this application could include the following:**

- **Increased nitrogen load reductions in Pennsylvania's most-effective basins in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

The cooperative agreement(s)authorized through EPA's FY 2020 appropriations, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116-94, which incorporated by reference conference committee language approving CBPO funding for "state-based implementation in the most effective basins." This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

E. Minority Serving Institutions:

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061). A list of these schools can be found at Historically Black Colleges and Universities at: https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/;

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities at https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities/;

3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at Hispanic-Serving Institutions at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idues/hsi-eligibles-2016.pdf;

4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(a)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions at https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1XVkOWKMDORm53pvU0L8EPsrJC94&msa=0&ie=UTF8&t=m&z=3&source=embed&ll=40.58644586187277%2C-148.28228249999984; and

5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at Predominately Black Institutions at https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1wlIi3j7gtlNq_w-0NKAb2bF2VmY&ie=UTF&msa=0&ll=37.35160769312532%2C-96.17229800000001&z=4.

II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The U.S. EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office plans to award one or two cooperative agreements under this RFA. Funding for Activity 1 and Activity 2 listed above with a budget period and project period up to six years is estimated to be up to $3,395,112 for the first year and each year thereafter, **depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.**

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or less than the estimated funding amounts above. **Funding for the activity depends on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations.**

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selection for awards will be made no later than five months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

The award(s) will be issued in the form of a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.317 and 2 C.F.R. 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. This participation is expected to include involvement through the various CBP Goal Implementation Teams and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.

C. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant or affect the basis upon which the

application or portion thereof was evaluated and selected for award and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. **No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year.** The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **December 14, 2020.**

E. Pre-Award Costs

Recipients may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.458 and 2 C.F.R. 1500.8. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared.

However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the application or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 3's grant official.

III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies are eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The CFDA Number 66.466 states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from five to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. This match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Applications that do not demonstrate how the five percent match will be met will be rejected.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.

3. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application(s) not being reviewed.

4. The project funded under this announcement must be linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.

5. For applications to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the application must take place within the **Pennsylvania's most-effective basins in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.** See Table 1 and **the map located at: https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/chesapeake-bay-effectiveness-rational** with the specific listing of Pennsylvania's most effective basins.

6. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.

7. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding amount listed in the range for the applicable activity will be rejected.

8. Applicants must address each component under the activity listed in Section I.B for which they apply. Applicants may apply for one or both of the activities described in Section I.B but must submit one application per activity. Each application must be separately submitted. Each application must address only one activity. If an applicant submits more than one application per activity, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which one to review.

9. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. You must submit a single-spaced project narrative of up to 15 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below. Excess pages will not be reviewed. The format for this application is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application. Applications that are not prepared in substantial compliance with the requirements in Appendix A will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance –** Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6.k of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6.k of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**

4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**

5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form –** The format for the project narrative and the budget narrative are contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application.

6. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form –** The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost.

Requirements for Project Narrative — See Appendix A

All application review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10, and the application must be submitted on 8.5" x 11" paper. Note that the **15** pages include all supporting materials such as resumes or *curriculum vitae* and letters of support. Documentation for the budget narrative, non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and the SF-424 and SF-424A forms are **not** included in the page limit.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Please review the Intergovernmental Review clause included as part of the EPA Solicitation Clauses. This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Allowable Costs
EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for cost sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles. During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the application (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

E. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51278
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding application content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative

submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2018, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2018 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2019, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2019.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

F. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through Grants.gov, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number) is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through Grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-20-03
or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page.

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **September 25, 2020 at 11:59 PM EST**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you accessed using the instructions above

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance**
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information**
3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form**
6. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form**

See Section IV. B. for additional instructions on preparing these materials.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

G. Technical Issues With Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the "Submit" button should be enabled. If the "Submit" button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the "submit" button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch, and a sign-in page will appear. Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.
A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub-awards under grants, and application assistance and communications, can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement indicating they have no conflict of interest.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below apply to this RFA.

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability, Scope and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on: a. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience in the proposed activity under Section I.B. (**20 points**) b. The quality of the application and how it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully achieve the relevant activities to support the CBP partners described in Section I.B. regardless if the application encompasses one of the examples provided or puts forth an alternative approach that achieves the goal of each respective activity. **(15 points)** c. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience working with and supporting multiple management agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholder collaborative efforts to provide technical and scientific expertise to enhance environmental protection decision-making. **(10 points)**	45

2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's: a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in their project narrative; **(6 points)** b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under assistance agreements identified in their project narrative, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable, final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; **(5 points)** c. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and **(5 points)** d. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. **(5 points)** Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a. and b. above--a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.	21
3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control costs for the relevant activity listed in Section I. Additionally, applicants who maximize project cost efficiency by minimizing personnel costs will receive a more favorable score in this criterion. (**10 points**)	10
4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to gather information and lessons learned from the project and transfer that documentation/information/ data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (**6 points**)	6

5. Seamless Transition: Applicants will be evaluated based on how well they can become fully functional in the roles described in the announcement once a cooperative agreement is awarded and how the applicant will bring about a "seamless" transition in the provision of the described support to the CBP partnership and its management structure. (**6 points**)	6
6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (**6 points**)	6
7. Environmental Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA. **(6 points)**.	6

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications for the activity to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. EPA expects to select one application for each activity described in Section I for funding. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

D. Additional Provisions

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These points and the other provisions that can be found at the website link https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **October 23, 2020** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to

bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. Any information about general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be found at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/

Combining Applications into One Award
If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/ activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities

Federal Requirements
An applicant whose application is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award. If the same applicant is selected for more than one activity, EPA may request that the applicant submit a revised application that includes the activities they are selected for and may choose to issue one award to the applicant with multiple activities. EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final cooperative agreement amount and work plan content prior to award consistent with agency policies.

Indirect costs (IDCs)

Indirect costs (IDCs) may be budgeted and charged by recipients of Federal assistance agreements in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. EPA's Indirect Cost Policy for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements (IDC Policy) implements the Federal regulations, and the following applies to all EPA assistance agreements, unless there are statutory or regulatory limits on IDCs.

In order for an assistance agreement recipient to use EPA funding for indirect costs, the IDC category of the recipient's assistance agreement award budget must include an amount for IDCs and at least one of the following must apply:

- With the exception of "exempt" agencies and Institutions of Higher Education as noted below, all recipients must have one of the following current (not expired) IDC rates, including IDC rates that have been extended by the cognizant agency:

    - Provisional;
    - Final;
    - Fixed rate with carry-forward;
    - Predetermined;
    - Ten percent *de minimis* rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f)
    - EPA-approved use of one of the following:
        - Ten percent *de minimis* as detailed in section 6.3 of the IDC Policy; or
        - Expired fixed rate with carry-forward as detailed in section 6.4.a. of the IDC Policy.
- "Exempt" state or local governmental departments or agencies are agencies that receive up to and including $35,000,000 in Federal funding per the department or agency's fiscal year, and must have an IDC rate proposal developed in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Appendix VII, with documentation maintained and available for audit.
- Institutions of Higher Education must use the IDC rate in place at the time of award for the life of the assistance agreement (unless the rate was provisional at time of award, in which case the rate will change once it becomes final). As provided by 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix III(C)(7), the term "life of the assistance agreement", means each competitive segment of the project. Additional information is available in the regulation.

IDCs incurred during any period of the assistance agreement that are not covered by the provisions above are not allowable costs and must not be drawn down by the recipient. Recipients may budget for IDCs pending approval of their IDC rate by the cognizant Federal agency or an exception granted by EPA under section 6.3 or 6.4 of the IDC Policy. However, recipients may not draw down IDCs until their rate is approved or EPA grants an exception.

The IDC Policy does not govern indirect rates for subrecipients or recipient procurement contractors under EPA assistance agreements. Pass-through entities are required to comply with 2 CFR 200.331(a)(4) when establishing indirect cost rates for subawards.

See the Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements for additional information.

Incurred Costs

Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended, and costs incurred in either the development of the application or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Section 1500.11, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to https://www.epa.gov/quality/epa-qar-2-epa-requirements-quality-management-plans, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model.

Deliverables
Awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of deliverables, providing items and due dates.

C. Reporting

Quarterly or semiannual progress reports, as determined by the federal project officer, will be required as a condition of this award.

D. Debriefings

Unsuccessful applicants interested in requesting a debriefing should refer to the procedures for debriefings in the Dispute Resolution Procedures, which can also be found at 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Please note that the FR notice referenced above refers to regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding this, the procedures for competition-related debriefings and disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have

been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

F. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email or fax at 410-267-5777 with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-20-03). All questions and answers will be posted on https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3.

VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your application, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*
https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201601/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf

Electronic copy of the *Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance*
https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
https://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial

Please visit the EPA Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-

bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized.

Appendix A

Project Narrative Format
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2020 Request for Applications (RFA) for
Pennsylvania Most Effective Basins Support
EPA-R3-CBP-20-03

The following information must be provided, or the application may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated.

A. **Project Narrative Format:** Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** the budget narrative, documentation of non-profit status, and forms 1 through 5 as listed in Section IV. F. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

i) Project title.
ii) Brief description of your organization.
iii) Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
iv) Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
v) Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
vi) DUNS number — See Section VI of RFA.

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement for the relevant activity;

ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project and your plan for tracking and measuring your progress towards achieving them.

1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Expected outputs from the activities to be funded under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

iii) Review Criteria: Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability Past Performance factor in V.B: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project as well as your staff's expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

B. Budget Narrative - Use the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget narrative breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of five percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for "Administrative Costs" under the Clean Water Act Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

1) EPA amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
2) 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount