

**AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),
Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA)**

TITLE: International Environmental Governance Capacity Building

ACTION: Request for Applications

RFA NUMBER: EPA-OITA-2023-001

Assistance Listing No: 66.931

IMPORTANT DATES

January 17, 2023	RFA OPENS
March 1, 2023	RFA CLOSSES – APPLICATIONS DUE
May 1, 2023	ANTICIPATED NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION
July 1, 2023	ANTICIPATED AWARD

Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>) no later than **March 1, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)** in order to be considered for funding.

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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION</u>	3
A. Summary	3
B. Background	3
C. Scope of Work	4
D. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures	12
E. Statutory Authority	13
II. AWARD INFORMATION	14
A. What is the amount of funding available?	14
B. Partial Funding	14
C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?	14
D. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?	14
E. Funding Type	14
III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	15
A. Eligible Entities	15
B. Voluntary Cost Sharing/Matching Funds and Leveraged Resources	16
C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria	16
D. Ineligible Costs or Activities and Other Considerations	16
<u>IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION</u>	17
A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures	17
B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix A)	18
C. Content of Application Submission	18
D. Submission Date and Times	18
V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	19
A. Evaluation Criteria	19
B. Review and Selection Process	21
C. Other Factors	22
VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	22
A. Award Notices	22
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	22
C. Reporting Requirement	23
D. Disputes	23
VII. AGENCY CONTACTS	23
APPENDIX A – Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions	25
APPENDIX B – Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content	28
APPENDIX C – Further Information Regarding Contracts, Subawards and Participant Support Costs	39

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. SUMMARY: This notice announces a Request for Applications (RFA) through an open competition for EPA funds for one award. The anticipated total award for the five-year period of performance is \$7 million which will be provided incrementally. EPA is soliciting applications for a collaborative program that would enhance environmental governance capacity of institutions—environmental and/or related functions—in support of United States Government Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in several regions—Central America and the Caribbean, South America, the Middle East and North Africa, and/or other bilateral initiatives, including but not limited to, EPA’s collaboration with Mexico, China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Sub-Saharan Africa, Ukraine, and Brazil.

The overall objective of this cooperative agreement is to assist institutions in strengthening their legal, technical, research, analytical, program implementation capacity, policies, and procedures for more effective environmental governance through the exchange of expert knowledge, information, strategies, and tools. The proposed program will provide capacity building through the development and implementation of projects in areas, including but not limited to: *water resource management — surface and groundwater, drinking water, and wastewater management — solid waste management, air quality management, greenhouse gases (GHG), black carbon, emergency response capacity, environmental impact assessments (EIA), public participation including environmental justice and equity, and environmental enforcement and compliance.*

Applications for this program should focus on: 1) experience providing expert technical environmental capacity building through activities such as workshops, meetings, virtual conferences, study tours, trainings, tools and technology transfer; 2) experience partnering with USG agencies in delivering capacity building and technical assistance; and 3) familiarity with issues involved in providing international technical capacity building. When appropriate, projects under this cooperative agreement, should be designed to be replicated — in different regions/countries around the world. The proposals for this program should also explain how the program implementation, management, and logistics will be coordinated with key regional/national stakeholders. General information about EPA’s international programs can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation>.

The awarding instrument will be a cooperative agreement. There is no cost share or matching requirement for these funds. Selection of the recipient will be based on the evaluation of the eligible proposals; once selected, the Applicant will receive instructions to submit a full proposal package. EPA reserves the right to reject all applicants and make no award from this competition.

B. Background

The funding for this cooperative agreement in part originates from the framework of several U.S. Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)—such as the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), U.S.-Chile FTA, U.S.-Jordan FTA, U.S.-Morocco FTA, among others — and partly from other sources (e.g., Africa and Brazil bilateral work). The collective focus of these efforts is to:

- Strengthen the capacity of foreign counterpart authorities to advance policies, develop and implement effective environmental and natural resource management strategies, exchange information and/or provide technical assistance to enhance environmental governance (e.g., enforcement and compliance)
- Strengthen public engagement and information on environmental matters (e.g., public participation and environmental justice and equity)
- Strengthen the technical capacity for analytical work on environmental quality management that could support regulatory institutions' decision-making processes (e.g., air quality management, GHGs, black carbon, and transboundary pollution)
- Promote training activities and exchange experiences on the concepts, methodologies, mechanisms, and tools for effective environmental management, and development of strategies to promote good environmental governance (e.g., air pollution, chemicals management, marine litter, solid waste management, water management, and sound science).

C. Scope of Work

The purpose of this solicitation is to improve environmental governance in regions/countries – that are engaged in an FTA with the U.S. or cooperate with the U.S. through other bilateral environmental initiative(s). Improving environmental governance may be accomplished through the exchange of expert knowledge of environmental quality management strategies, tools, information, and programs. The overarching component under this cooperative agreement is good environmental governance. The spectrum of the capacity building activities expected to be performed supports the following environmental areas, including but not limited to: *(1) water resources management —; (2) solid waste management; (3) air quality management; (4) emergency response capacity; (5) environmental impact assessments (EIA); (6) public participation/social inclusion; environmental justice and equity; and (7) environmental enforcement and compliance.*

1. Water Resources Management

a. Surface and Groundwater – Sufficient water quality and quantity are a resource challenge in many countries. EPA collaborates with foreign counterparts to develop and enhance capacity to assess surface and groundwater pollution, develop or enhance laws and regulations to protect and restore the quality of water sources, and to develop watershed management plans and approaches. Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Technical capacity on surface and groundwater quality assessments;
- Technical assistance on regulation development/enhancement; and
- Technical assistance on watershed management strategies/tools.

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFA are:

- Lack of regulation enforcement;
- Lack of lab equipment and technical capacity to conduct appropriate quality analysis; and
- Lack/limited intergovernmental communications among regulatory entities with some level of jurisdiction over surface and groundwater management.

b. Drinking Water – The provision of clean and safe drinking water continues to be a major challenge for developing countries and has significant impacts on public health, particularly ~~that of~~ on vulnerable groups such as children and the poor. EPA works with countries and regions to build capacity of government authorities, utilities, and others in providing clean and safe drinking water. Approaches such as enabling the development and enforcement of laws, regulations, and standards, improving the operations of drinking water quality laboratories for lab certification and management, and inclusion of the public in drinking water quality decisions have been proven to improve drinking water quality.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Technical capacity on drinking water quality assessments;
- Technical capacity on drinking water laboratory assessments;
- Technical assistance on regulation development, enhancement, and enforcement; and
- Technical assistance on drinking water treatment plants

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of regulation enforcement;
- Lack of lab equipment and technical capacity to conduct appropriate quality analysis; and
- Lack/limited intergovernmental communications among regulatory entities with some level of jurisdiction on surface and groundwater management.

c. Wastewater Management: Access to ~~clean drinking water and~~ adequate sanitation is still limited in many regions/countries around the world. The impact of serious infectious diseases associated with exposure to ~~the daily~~ discharge of untreated or partially treated wastewater continues to impact many communities around the world. EPA is working with countries in regions like Central America, to harmonize environmental standards and regulations at regional levels for better domestic and industrial wastewater management. In anticipation of an increased frequency of extreme weather events in the future due to climate change, governments on all levels must improve wastewater urban management, infrastructure, and the systems (i.e. pipes, tanks) that deliver and maintain clean water and manage waste disposal.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Implement and/or replicate the wastewater regulation methodology;
- Provide wastewater consultations to ensure key stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of ~~the~~ model wastewater regulations;
- Provide quality assurance technical workshops (wastewater treatment plants inspection training and sampling equipment/training evaluation);
- Provide technical capacity building assistance for the enhancement of water quality laboratories in order to establish reference labs (i.e., lab equipment set-up, operation, maintenance, and data management);

- Provide recommendations for equipment procurement (for water quality labs). Procurement of any equipment to enhance existing water quality lab capabilities will be based on availability of funds

Some countries/regions have started the process of drafting/amending regulations addressing water quality. On wastewater management, some countries have identified priorities out of the basic elements of implementation and are pursuing modifications. Some of the modifications and/or enhancements include: the development of a database of dischargers, permit writing and issuance, identifying and establishing use of best available technology, developing regulation on biosolids, developing a train-the-trainer module for inspectors, and enhancing their enforcement and compliance mechanisms. The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of regulation enforcement;
- Lack of lab equipment and technical capacity to conduct appropriate water quality analysis; and
- Lack/limited intergovernmental communications among regulatory entities with some level of jurisdiction on wastewater management.

2. Solid Waste Management – The development, implementation, enforcement and compliance, and technical capacity needs for solid waste management presents a significant challenge for regulatory institutions in many countries. The lack of regulations or inadequate enforcement creates a legacy of open dumps, jeopardizing human health and environmental quality. Through EPA's exchange of technical knowledge with other countries (e.g., CAFTA-DR countries: El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Dominican Republic), on solid waste management, some commonalities have been identified, for example: weak infrastructure to properly manage solid waste, not enough technical capabilities within the regulatory institutions — especially at the municipal level—and environmental health risks for communities.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Solid waste management regulatory development and/or review;
- Solid waste sanitary landfill inspection protocol and audits training;
- Approaches to move countries towards Sustainable Material Management (SMM);
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle implementation strategies/tools; and
- Marine litter management.

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of/weak solid waste regulation implementation and enforcement; and
- Lack of/weak technical capacity and infrastructure.

3. Air Quality Management – Air emissions inventories, air quality monitoring, modeling, emission reduction strategies and policies, implementation and enforcement, and public outreach are key steps towards cleaner air. This environmental area requires an understanding of air quality management tools, as well as the steps/processes to develop a successful air quality management

program that includes monitoring, modeling, an air emissions inventory, and an air quality index (AQI). Equally important is similar capacity to assess, measure, monitor, model, and mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases and black carbon.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Conduct, if needed, an assessment on the country/region's air quality management capabilities and make programmatic recommendations based on findings;
- Provide technical training on air quality management, including monitoring and modeling;
- Provide technical training on the development of emissions inventories;
- Provide technical training on the development of an air quality index; and
- Provide recommendations for equipment procurement for air quality labs and monitoring (procurement of any equipment to enhance existing air quality lab capabilities will be based on availability of funds).

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- The lack of air quality regulations enforcement;
- The lack of knowledge of the impact of air quality on public health in the country/region;
- Concerns about sharing air quality information with the public; and
- The political buy-in on the development of an Air Quality Index.

4. Emergency Response Capacity – Hazardous substances that can harm human health or the environment can occur because of natural disasters or accidental releases from industry and other regulated sources. Many EPA counterpart countries are beginning to develop capacity for emergency preparedness and response. EPA shares information with foreign counterparts regarding experiences and expertise in emergency preparedness, response, laws and regulations, operations, and protocols, as well as equipment and capabilities for response to environmental emergencies.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Technical assistance on regulatory framework assessment;
- Technical assessment equipment and capacity for response to environmental emergencies;
- Technical training on emergency preparedness and response; and
- Technical assistance on evaluation of operations and protocol.

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of or not enforced regulatory framework;
- Lack of technical capacity to implement emergency response protocols; and
- Lack of technical capacity to respond to environmental emergencies.

5. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – When appropriately implemented by countries, EIA provides a unique opportunity to integrate environmental, economic, and social concerns, both long and short term, to avoid and mitigate potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. The benefit of EIA is the ability of governments to set conditions for approval (e.g., for site selection, construction, operation, and closure), to plan for infrastructure needs and land use, and to monitor impacts and compliance. It is an open process involving the public and stakeholders that leads to better identification of future economic, social, and environmental costs, maximize potential benefits, and enhance future monitoring. EIA Review is the independent review by governments to implement minimum requirements for EIA content and analysis and, in most countries, EIA review supports decision-making and mitigation commitments.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Build capacity for all parties involved in the EIA process through appropriate training, based on internationally accepted principles and practices, and EPA’s training experience;
- Share tools (e.g., Public Participation in the EIA Process Guide) and information to make the EIA process more effective and efficient, and improve environmental and social performance for new development in priority sectors; and

Recommend improvements to those selected by the country(ies) to improve the EIA process and legal frameworks. The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of technical capacity to develop and review EIA within key stakeholders (e.g., Ministries of Environment);
- Limited cooperation on EIA review across government;
- Limited transparency and effective stakeholder participation and conflict resolution practice;
- Limited accountability for results by both stakeholders and governments;
- Limited resources for implementation and program improvement; and
- EIA backlogs which can unnecessarily hinder economic growth.

6. Public Participation/Social Inclusion – Public participation contributes to better decisions because decisionmakers have more complete information – in the form of additional facts, values, and perspectives obtained through public input – to bring to bear on the decision process. As a result, decision-makers can incorporate the best information and expertise from all stakeholders. Decisions are more implementable and sustainable because the decision considers the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including underserved communities, and stakeholders better understand and are more invested in the outcomes. As a result, decisions that are informed by public participation processes are seen as more legitimate and are less subject to challenge. Decisionmakers who fully understand stakeholder interests also become better communicators, able to explain decisions and decision rationale in terms stakeholders understand and in ways that relate to stakeholders’ values and concerns.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds for this environmental area, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Build capacity for all parties involved in the public participation process through appropriate training based on EPA's experience and the Public Participation Toolkit (guide can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide>)
- Share tools and information to make the public participation and the process more effective and efficient; and
- Recommend improvements and support (e.g., training/strategies development), based on the availability of funds, to improve public participation in environmental decision-making.

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFP are:

- Lack of technical capacity for meaningful public participation and within key stakeholders (e.g., Ministries of Environment);
- Limited cooperation on public participation across government; and
- Limited civil society engagement, especially underserved communities, in environmental decision-making.

7. Environmental Enforcement and Compliance – Without effective environmental enforcement, countries experience low levels of compliance, nullifying the objectives of developing environmental laws and regulations. For an enforcement program to be effective, there must be adequate resources and staffing throughout the compliance continuum to ensure the enforceability of the developing laws and regulations, promote compliance, provide compliance assistance to the regulated community, conduct compliance monitoring to detect violations, prosecute violators in the appropriate forum that may be discovered, and efficiently resolve instances of noncompliance with appropriate remedies and sanctions where necessary. Many countries are trying to build their enforcement capacity by increasing staffing in the environmental ministries and elsewhere, developing their policy framework, and training inspectors, prosecutors, and program managers responsible for the planning and execution of compliance and enforcement resources.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds for this environmental area, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Provide technical capacity—building upon EPA's efforts in other countries—on best practices and tools toward the investigation and resolution of environmental violations, both criminal and administrative;
- Increase the capacity of judges to adjudicate environmental cases, based on EPA's experience in Chile and Central America.
- Provide technical capacity for wastewater treatment system inspectors

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFA are:

- Lack of staff and/or technical capacity within the regulatory institutions for effective environmental enforcement.

8. Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities:

Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Leaders from around the world are recognizing the disproportionate environmental, public health, cultural, economic, and other impacts facing vulnerable and underserved communities, including indigenous communities. These impacts are a result of several factors, including the lack of meaningful public involvement/engagement processes and fair treatment, ineffective environmental laws/policies, and enforcement/compliance, etc. They are also a result of the effects of climate change and other environmental impacts facing vulnerable and underserved communities (e.g., flooding, heat islands, wildfires, food insecurity, illegal dumping, water insecurity, lead exposure, hazardous waste contamination). Many of these communities seek solutions to mitigate and promote environmental and public health protection, resiliency/adaptation.

Applicants should be able to provide, in close collaboration with EPA and subject to the availability of funds for this environmental area, the following technical capacity in any or all designated regions/countries:

- Develop a policy dialogue of like-minded countries that are working to promote environmental justice domestically to identify common challenges and available tools to address them.
- Launch and make available an electronic forum for the sharing of successfully used strategies and best practices to address the environmental and public health concerns of vulnerable and underserved communities to advance the principles of environmental justice and equity for the possible reapplication by other communities throughout the world.
- Create a virtual platform (e.g., use Zoom, Teams, etc.) and webinar series to promote information exchange and capacity building. Post the webinars for easy public access.
- Build a community of practice center (virtual) of experts working on environmental justice who can share their experiences and provide help to community leaders seeking ways to effectively advance good governance practices/environmental justice principles within their respective countries.
- Develop EJ pilot projects (a project lab) to demonstrate the effective use of EJ tools and approaches like, Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS - <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-06/documents/cps-manual-12-27-06.pdf>) or Model, Colleges and Underserved Communities Partnership Program (CUPP - <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/collegeunderserved-community-partnership-program>)
- Sharing U.S. experience using mechanisms to promote environmental justice (e.g., advisory councils, interagency working groups, grants, community technical assistance platforms, university, and community partnerships).

- Development and promotion of EJ promising practices in EIA and enforcement, building off the experience in the U.S. with the NEPA promising practices for EJ document.

The challenges expected to be addressed through this RFA are:

- Lack of understanding of the term environmental justice;
- Lack of technical capacity for effective environmental justice and within key governmental programs;
- Limited cooperation on environmental justice across government; and
- Limited engagement of underserved communities in the environmental decision-making process

EPA will evaluate environmental justice issues under criterion 4 of Section V.A. of this RFA. For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “underserved communities” means people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations, and other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those who possess pre-existing medical conditions.

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse cumulative impacts (human health, environmental, climate-related, and others) that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Adverse impacts may be the result of industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions and include the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

In addressing these criteria, as applicable, applicants should describe how the project benefits these communities and/or populations including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the adverse impacts described above. Additionally, applicants should describe the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.

Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from EPA’s EJSCREEN tool/<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen> (or other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to help characterize and describe the affected communities/populations and area(s). Data from other sources (e.g., studies, census, and third-party reports) should also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. Instructions, resources, and tutorials on how to use EJSCREEN are included at the hyperlink above.

D. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures

- 1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1 of the EPA 2022-2026 Strategic Plan: Tackle the Climate Crisis; Objective 1.1 Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change; and Goal 2 - Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights; Objective 2.3 - Strengthen Civil Rights Enforcement in Communities with Environmental Justice Concerns. For more information see: <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan> .

EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results 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. Anticipated 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 or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

According to the definitions above, expected **outputs** from the activities funded under this solicitation may include but are not limited to the following anticipated outputs:

- Number of countries developing/amending/enforcing environmental policies including but not limited to drinking water, wastewater management, solid waste, management, GHG, transboundary pollution, and air pollution management;
- Number of people trained;
- Number of countries with active public participation processes for environmental matters;
- Increased—within regulatory institutions and other related key stakeholders — capacity on environmental enforcement and compliance

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI.C. “Reporting Requirement,” of this RFA.

- 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 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.

Expected **outcomes** from projects funded under this solicitation may include but are not limited to the following:

- Enhanced technical capacity for countries to be able to develop/enhance environmental regulatory and enforcement (e.g., increase awareness, policy development, update and/or implementation of regulations, behavioral change) in the areas of drinking water, wastewater management, solid waste management, air pollution management; GHG, and
- Enhanced technical capacity to enhance air quality monitoring; and
- Increased public participation/social inclusion awareness in environmental matters
- Increased knowledge of governments on the value and importance of integrating the principle of environmental justice, or others similar, to ensure equal environmental and public health protection under the law, and work to ensure vulnerable and underserved communities are not neglected or overlooked.

4. Performance Measures. The Applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. Additional details on reporting requirements are included in Section VI.C. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

- Overseeing subrecipients, and/or contractors and vendors, if applicable;
- Tracking and reporting project progress on expenditures and purchases; and
- Tracking, measuring, and reporting accomplishments and proposed timelines/milestones.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What is the measurable short term, medium-term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

E. Statutory Authority

The statutory authorities for this action are the Clean Water Act, Section 104, 33 U.S.C. 1254; Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001, 42 U.S.C. 6981; Clean Air Act, Section 103, 42 U.S.C. 7403; Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10, 15 U.S.C. 2609; Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442 (a) and (c), 42 U.S.C. 300j-1 (a)(1); and National Environmental Policy Act Section 102(2)(F) 42 U.S.C. 4332.

E. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation 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 contact the EPA point of contact listed in this solicitation (usually in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$7 million. Award amounts are expected to range from \$ 750,000 to \$7 million. Funding is dependent upon agency appropriations, funding availability, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

The amount of federal funding requested by an Applicant must not exceed \$7 million.

B. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application was evaluated and selected for award, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates awarding one under this announcement, subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

In addition, EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than anticipated.

D. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is expected to begin on **July 1, 2023**, with an estimated completion date of **July 1, 2028**.

E. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects will be in the form of a cooperative agreement.

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- Close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

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.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.931 applications will be accepted from states (including the District of Columbia); local governments; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian tribes; international organizations; public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, and laboratories; and other public or private non-profit institutions.

Consistent with the definition of *Nonprofit organization*, at 2 CFR 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand the operation of the organization. Note that 2 CFR Part 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a "nonprofit organization(s)" as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status, such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from

taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

B. Voluntary Cost Sharing/Matching Funds and Leveraged Resources

No cost sharing/matching funds or leveraged resources are required as a condition of eligibility under this competition.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission, will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible applicants (see Section III.A. of this RFA) that meet all these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking criteria in Section V. of this RFA. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration due to the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Application Content and Submission

- a.** Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and application content requirements set forth in Section IV. and Appendices A and B or else they will be rejected.
- b.** Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV.A. 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.D. of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely and properly submitted.

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 <https://www.grants.gov/> or relevant <https://sam.gov/content/home> 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.

- 2.** Applications must support Goal 1 of EPA 2022 -2026 Strategic Plan: Tackle the Climate Crisis; Objective 1.1 Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change; and Goal 2- Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights; Objective 2.3- Strengthen Civil Rights Enforcement in Communities with Environmental Justice Concerns. of EPA's Strategic Plan described in Section I.C.1.

D. Ineligible Costs or Activities and Other Considerations

Any of the following may lead to a portion or all the application not being reviewed:

- 1. Ineligible Costs or Activities.** If an application is submitted that has ineligible items, tasks, or activities, that portion of the application will not be reviewed and will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Activities must meet the following requirements from Section I.C. to be eligible for funding:
 - a. 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. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages more than the page limitation will not be reviewed.
 - b. Applications cannot include any costs that are included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed grant, as required under 2 CFR 200.306(b)(5). If these costs are included in an application, the activities associated with these costs will not be reviewed or selected for funding.
 - c. All applicants must have personnel and/or access to partners proficient in languages including but not limited to: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic – verbal and written – to communicate effectively with the counterparts, EPA, and other key stakeholders, and to communicate results and write reports, including a final case study report and related documents. Applicants not demonstrating proficiency in those languages will not be considered.
 - d. Applications must be submitted in English, or they will not be accepted
- 2. Other Considerations:**
 - a. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C. with respect to the project narrative, pages more than the page limitation will not be reviewed. The page limit of the project narrative is [20] pages.
 - b. Applicants can submit no more than the total number of applications listed in Section I.B. If an Applicant submits more applications than what is listed, EPA will contact the Applicant to determine which application(s) to withdraw.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

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

Applicants must apply electronically through <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html> under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined [here](#). Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with

submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in section Appendix A. under *Technical Issues with Submission*.

B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix A)

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than **March 1, 2023, 11:59 PM Eastern Time**.

See Appendix A for full [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) application submission instructions.

C. Content of Application Submission

The application package **must** include all of the following materials, except those listed under 3. Optional Attachments

- 1. Grant Application Forms** (All Required). Please complete the forms as appropriate.
 - a. Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*.
 - b. Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
 - c. EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
 - d. EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*
 - e. Project Narrative Attachment Form (See Section IV.C.2. below for additional information)
- 2. Project Narrative Attachment Form – see Appendix B** (Required, part of the 20-page limit). Applicants must use the Project Narrative Attachment form in Grants.gov. The project narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C., the requirements in Section I, and address the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.A. The project narrative cannot exceed a maximum of (20) single-spaced typewritten pages, including the summary page, workplan, and budget table and detail. Excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials identified below can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit. The project narrative must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format and content as defined in Appendix B.
- 3. Optional Attachments.** These are optional and are not included in the 20-page limit. Use the Other Attachments form in Grants.gov.
 - Letter of Support/Partnership
 - Resumes

D. Submission Date and Times

The closing date and time for submission of applications is **March 1, 2023, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET)**. Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

Only eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C. of this RFA will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in Appendix B.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Total Possible Points	100
1. <u>Project Summary and Approach:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent and quality of the applicant's project summary and overall approach. Specifically, EPA will evaluate the extent and quality of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. (15 points) The overall proposed project, consistent with Section I.B.; and B. (10 points) How the proposed project will support or benefit the public or advance scientific knowledge through the exchange of technical information and the relationship of the proposed project to the seriousness, extent, and urgency of the environmental problems toward which the project is directed. C. (10 points) How the application demonstrates the anticipated public benefits to be derived from the project and describe the degree to which the project can be expected to produce results that will have general application to national pollution control problems. 	35
2. <u>Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. (10 points) The extent and quality to which the Applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in Section I.C.2. and 3. B. (5 points) The effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.C. of this announcement. C. (5 points) The reasonableness of the proposed timeline including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project's goals and objectives by project end. 	20

<p>3. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. (5 points) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement B. (5 points) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C. of the announcement, 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; C. (5 points) Staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. <p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under items A. and B. of this criterion, EPA 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 the Applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for sub-criteria A. and B. (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the Applicant does not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these sub-criteria.</i></p>	15
<p>4. <u>Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. (10 points) The quality and extent to which the project benefits people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations (and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions) that have been and/or are currently affected by disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts (including the 	10

<p>accompanying economic challenges of such impacts), including these communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing these adverse impacts.</p> <p>B. (5 points) The extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations (see A above), especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.</p>	5
<p>5. Budget: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent and quality to which:</p> <p>A. (5 points) The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type in the proper budget category for each activity the Applicant is requesting funding.</p> <p>B. (5 points) Costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes; and</p> <p>C. (5 points) The Applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls will ensure that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.</p> <p>An applicant’s SF-424, SF-424A and budget detail must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (see Section III.B.). Applicants must precisely describe in their budget detail how they will account for any required or voluntary cost share/match, if applicable. Leveraged resources should not be included in the budget forms but should be discussed in the narrative portion of the budget detail; see Appendix B.</p>	15

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold eligibility factors listed in Section III.C. of this RFA. Only those applications which meet all the threshold eligibility factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each application will be given a numerical score and will be rank ordered by the review panel. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA selection official based on these reviews and rankings. Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA headquarters selection official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the EPA evaluation team and the other factors listed in Section V.C. below.

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse cumulative impacts (human health, environmental, climate-related, and others) that have affected and/or currently affect

people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Adverse impacts may be the result of industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions and include the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

C. Other Factors

In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic diversity of funds (i.e., reimbursable, or appropriated funds). Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA award official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

A. Award Notices

Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

- 1. Successful Applicants:** EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic or postal mail within **60** days of the closing date of this RFA. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application, or the project contact listed in the application. 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 Grants & Interagency Management Division (GIAMD).

Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer 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 the applicant. The award notice, signed by the EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g. work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

- 2. Unsuccessful Applicants:** EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail within 60 days of the closing date of this RFA. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-and-guidance-grants>

C. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next quarter and a summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be submitted to EPA within 120 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report must include summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational, or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after the grants are awarded. Award recipients may be provided with additional information and guidance on reporting performance measures and project progress after award.

D. 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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/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 that the Federal Register 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.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Orlando Gonzalez
OIA, Mail Code- 2650R
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington DC, 20004
EMAIL: Gonzalez.orlando@epa.gov

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or email to the contact person listed above.

APPENDIX A – Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions

1. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using [login.gov](https://sam.gov/login) to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm ET.

2. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#) instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](#) and [Learning Workspace - User Roles and Workspace Actions](#) for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. 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 application submission deadline.

Contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. 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. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

3. Application Submission Process

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and click the red "Apply" button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization's EBiz point of contact or contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

4. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than **March 1, 2023, by 11:59 p.m. ET**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

5. Technical Issues with Submission

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

1. Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.

2. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.

3. Send an email with the funding opportunity number (EPA-OITA-2023-001) in the subject line to Gonzalez.orlando@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:

- a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
- b. Description of the issue
- c. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

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

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](#) or relevant [SAM.gov](#) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

6. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement, as described in Section IV.C. of the RFA:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*.
2. Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
3. EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
4. EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form (See Section IV.C.2. for additional information)

Optional Documents:

Use the Other Attachment Form in Grants.gov for the following optional documents:

- Letters of Support/Partnership (Other Attachments Form)
- Resumes (Other Attachments Form)

APPENDIX B – Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content

Instructions: The project narrative must substantially comply with the instructions, format, and content described below. It must also address the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. The project narrative, including the cover page, workplan, and budget table and detail, must not exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced typewritten pages. Pages more than the 20-page limit will not be reviewed.

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit. Supporting materials should also be submitted using the Optional Attachments form.

Applicants should ensure that their project narratives are written clearly using understandable terms. Doing so will help ensure that the evaluation team members understand the purpose, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Applicants are not required, but are highly encouraged, to use the project narrative, including cover page, format below.

I. Cover Page:

The cover page should not exceed one page. The cover page should include the following information:

- **Project Title** – one descriptive sentence only
- **Project Location:** List the primary location(s) where the benefits of the project will be realized.
- **Applicant Information** ○ Applicant organization ○ Address
○ Primary contact name, phone number, and e-mail address ○
UEI number
- **Budget Summary:** Include the following table:

EPA Funding Requested	Voluntary Cost Share, if Applicable	Total Project Cost
TBD	N/A	TBD

As noted in Section II.A. of the RFA, while each application can request up to the full funding amount of \$7 million, the total amount of requested funding needs to be commensurate with the applicant's proposed activities.

- **Project Period:** Provide beginning and ending dates.
- **Short Project Description:** Briefly describe your project in one to three sentences only, especially noting the expected outputs and outcomes.

II. Workplan:

Applicants must ensure that the workplan addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below which

correspond with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. The workplan should be written clearly using understandable terms.

Section 1- Project Summary and Approach (35 total possible points from Section V.A. of the RFA)

This section should contain a detailed project description of the following information:

a. Overall Project (15 possible points)

Provide a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B. (Scope of Work) of the RFA. Include details of every activity for which the Applicant is seeking funding. This section should include details about how the activities will meet the goal of the program.

Applications should only include information in Section 1.a. of their workplan that will not be covered by another section of their workplan.

b. Project Significance (10 possible points)

Describe the extent of the environmental problem the proposed project will address. Provide details of how the proposed project will address these problems.

c. Anticipated Public Benefits (10 possible points)

Qualitatively describe the anticipated public benefits from the proposed project. Note that the expected outputs and outcomes will be included in Section 2 – Environmental Results.

Section 2 - Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures (20 total possible points from Section V.A. of the RFA)

a. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (10 possible points)

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.C. of the RFA. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, the Applicant is encouraged to include a table such as the following:

b. Performance Measures and Plan (5 possible points)

Applicants should describe the proposed performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.C. of the RFA and Section.3. a. of this appendix.

c. Timeline and Milestones (5 possible points)

The Applicant should include a detailed timeline for the project including milestones for specific tasks, such as bidding, procurement, installation, and reports, along with estimated dates. Applicants should include scheduled time for quarterly and final report preparation into the project timeline.

Section 3- Environmental Justice (15 total possible points from Section V.A. of the RFA)

a. Environmental Justice Issues and Environmental Health Disparities (15 possible points)

This section of the workplan should include a detailed discussion of how the proposed project will promote environmental justice. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Applicants should describe how the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse cumulative impacts (human health, environmental, climate-related and others) that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Adverse impacts may be the result of industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions and include the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

As applicable, applicants should demonstrate how the project benefits these communities and/or populations including those in the communities/populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the adverse impacts described above. Additionally, applicants should describe the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.

NOTE: Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations, and vulnerable populations including those identified above. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.

Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include:

- Differential proximity and exposure to environmental hazards;
- Greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to genetic predisposition, age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or poor nutrition);
- Unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (e.g., subsistence fishing or farming);

- Cumulative effects from multiple stressors;
- Reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes due to language barriers, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources; and
- Degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from EPA's [EJSCREEN](#) tool (or other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to help characterize and describe the affected communities/populations and area(s). Data from other sources (e.g., studies, census, and third-party reports) should also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. Instructions, resources, and tutorials on how to use EJSCREEN are included at the hyperlink above.

Section 4- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 total possible points from Section V.A. of the RFA)

a. Past Performance (5 possible points)

Submit a list of up to three federally funded assistance agreements that the Applicant is performing or has performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts. EPA assistance agreements are preferred. These assistance agreements should be awards directly to the applicant. For each of the agreements, include:

- Project title
- Assistance agreement number
- Federal funding agency and assistance listing number (formally known as the CFDA number)
- Brief description of the agreement – no more than two sentences

Include a discussion of whether, and if so how, the Applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements.

b. Reporting Requirements (5 possible points)

For each of the assistance agreements listed, the Applicant should describe their history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreement(s). This should include: whether the Applicant submitted acceptable final reports under those agreements; the extent to which the Applicant adequately and timely reported on its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if progress was not being made, whether the Applicant adequately reported why not.

Note: In evaluating applicants under the past performance factors in Section V of the RFA, EPA will consider the information provided by the Applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information

provided 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 factors, which is half of the total points available for these sub-criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. If the Applicant does not provide any response for these items, a score of 0 for these factors may be received.

- c. Staff Expertise** (5 possible points) Include information on the applicant's organization, including a description of the staff's knowledge, expertise, qualifications, and resources and/or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the proposed project's goals. Biographical sketches, including resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers and any other key personnel can be included as an optional project team biography attachment, as listed in Section IV.C.6. of the RFA; the optional attachment does not count towards the 15-page limit of the project narrative.

Section 5- Budget (15 total possible points from Section V.A. of the RFA)

This section of the project narrative is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a discussion of the applicant's approach to ensuring proper management of grant/cooperative agreement funds, a detailed budget narrative, as well as the itemized budget table below. An applicant's budget table and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal voluntary cost share, if applicable. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. Additional guidance for developing the applicant's budget is available in [RAIN-2019-G02, "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance"](#)

a. Budget Detail (5 possible points)

Whether the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds.

Applicants should provide a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should use the instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table below to complete the detailed budget section of the project narrative. The budget detail and the budget table should be included in the project narrative and count towards the maximum 20-page limit. Additional budget documents, excluding the SF-424 and SF-424A forms, or project narratives pages more than the page limitation will not be reviewed, as listed in Section III.D. of the RFA. Applicants should include applicable rows of costs for each budget category in their budget table to accurately reflect the proposed project budget. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, installation or labor supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs (i.e., subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. For applicants proposing to implement a participant support cost or rebate program, the rebates are appropriately listed under the other budget category as "Participant Support Costs." See Appendix C for more information on participant support costs and [RAIN-2018-G05, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs"](#).

- **Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (paid employees of the Applicant organization as reflected in payroll tax records). If the Applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost-share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards or non-employee program participants (e.g., interns or volunteers), which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.
- **Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included.** Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits may include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. If the applicant’s fringe rate does not include the cost of leave, and the Applicant intends to charge leave to the agreement, it must provide supplemental information describing its proposed method(s) for determining and equitably distributing these costs.
- **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-state and out-of-state, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g., inspections); related to proposed project activities (e.g., attendance at meetings); or to a technical training or workshop that supports effective implementation of the project activities. Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including consultants), which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards and non-employee program participants (e.g., trainees), which are included in the “Other” category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the Applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by EPA’s Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.
- **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment

operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts that are not included in the purchase price for the equipment. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.1, “Equipment.” The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project. If installation costs are included in the equipment costs, labor expenses shall be itemized with the detailed number of hours charged and the hourly wage. If the Applicant has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than \$5,000, then that threshold takes precedence.

- **Supplies - “Supplies” means all tangible personal property other than “equipment.”** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.
- **Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consultant services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-subaward-frequent-questions> has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. EPA does not require applicants to identify specific contractors. The Applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts more than \$3,500 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to <https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance> for EPA’s policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises. For EPA’s policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.
- **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; equipment service or maintenance contracts; printing or photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and

travel, subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment (such as a specified amount of funding for residential woodstove changeouts or truck owners to purchase cleaner trucks); and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the “Other” category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs in a separate line item. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05-r1>.

Subawards (e.g., subgrants) and participant support costs are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient even if the agreement is referred to as a contract. Rebates, subsidies, and similar one-time, lump-sum payments to program beneficiaries for purchase of eligible emission control technologies are considered participant support costs. Please refer to Appendix C for detailed guidance on funding projects and partnerships and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget. “Other” does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the “Other” category, and a description of the types of activities to be supported. Refer to <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-subaward-frequent-questions> for additional guidance.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:
 - Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
 - Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
 - Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
 - Direct Costs, less distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

Additional indirect cost guidance is available in <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02-r>.

Example Budget Table (Required, part of the 20-page limit)

Line Item & Itemized Cost	EPA Funding ¹	Non-Federal Cost Share ²
Personnel		

TOTAL PERSONNEL		
Fringe Benefits		
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS		
Travel		
TOTAL TRAVEL		
Equipment		
TOTAL EQUIPMENT		
Supplies		
TOTAL SUPPLIES		

1 EPA Funding amount must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.a and SF-424A in: cell 5(e) under Section A – Budget Summary; and Column (1) under Section B – Budget Categories.

2 Non-Federal Cost Share funding amount must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.b-e and SF424A in: cell 5(f) under Section A – Budget Summary; columns (2) and (3) under Section B – Budget Categories; and Section C – Non-Federal Resources.

Line Item & Itemized Cost	EPA Funding ¹	Non-Federal Cost Share ²
Contractual		
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL		
Other		
TOTAL OTHER		
Indirect Charges		
TOTAL INDIRECT		

TOTAL FUNDING		
<u>TOTAL PROJECT COST³</u>		

Note on Management Fees: When formulating budgets for applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges more than the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's cognizant federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the work plan.

b. Expenditure of Awarded Funds (5 possible points)

Applicants should provide a detailed written description of the applicant's approach procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

c. Reasonableness of Costs (5 possible points)

EPA will evaluate the reasonableness of the applicant's budget based on the applicant's narrative description of the budget and detailed breakout of requested funding for each work component or task. Provide a detailed description of every itemized cost, including how every cost relates to the project narrative and specific emission reduction activities. Instructions for what to include in the Budget Detail are described in Section 5.a. of this Appendix above.

Applicants must itemize the cost categories as listed below and the SF-424A form: personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, contractional costs, other direct costs (subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. Round up to the nearest dollar and do not use any cents.

For applicants that provide a voluntary cost share/match or leveraged resources as described in Section III.B. of the RFA and Section 5 of this appendix, the budget narrative must include a detailed description of how the Applicant will obtain the cost share and leveraged resources and how the cost share funding and leveraged resources will be used. Proposed voluntary cost share included in the budget detail must also be included on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Leveraged resources should not be included in the SF-424 or SF-424A.

Recipients may issue subawards, contracts, or participant support costs to implement projects. Please refer to Appendix C for detailed guidance on these funding options and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget.

Section 6 - Attachments (As listed in Section IV.C. of the RFA; this information does not count towards the project narrative 20-page limit):

Project Team Biographies: Optional. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers, and any other key personnel. If submitted, this should be referenced under Section 5.C. of the workplan.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: Optional. The Applicant will be required to submit this agreement if their application is selected for funding.

Partnership Letters: If applicable, letters of support that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from a variety of project partners are encouraged. Letters should specifically indicate how project partners and supporting organizations will participate in or directly assist in the design and performance of the project, or how obtaining support from project partners will allow the Applicant to perform the project more effectively.

Letters should be addressed to the Applicant organization and included as attachments to the application. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA.

APPENDIX C – Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs

I. Background

The Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) includes a separate row for “contractual” costs and “other” costs. As noted in Appendix B, the “other” cost category on the SF-424A should be used to cover both subawards and participant support costs. This appendix helps clarify these differences. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in RAIN-2018-G05 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05-r1>, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”

II. Contracts

As described in 2 CFR 200.331, a contract is for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the recipient’s own use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor. Characteristics indicative of a procurement relationship between the recipient and a contractor are when the contractor:

- Provides the goods and services within normal business operations;
- Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers;
- Normally operates in a competitive environment;
- Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the federal program;
- Is not subject to compliance requirements of the federal program because of the agreement, though similar requirements may apply for other reasons.

Grant recipients that enter into procurement contracts, must comply with the applicable procurement provisions in 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327.

III. Subawards

Under 2 CFR 200.1, subrecipient means a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a grantee to carry out part of a federal program but does not include program beneficiaries receiving participant support costs; see Section IV. of this appendix below. Grant recipients may make subawards to subrecipients to carry out a portion of the grant project; in such case, the grant recipient is also known as a “pass-through entity.” Subawards establish a financial assistance relationship under which the subrecipient’s employees and contractors implement programs and projects to accomplish the goals and objectives of the grant. It is important to bear in mind that subrecipients are subject to the same federal requirements as the pass-through entity.

Under this competition, a non-federal entity is eligible to receive a subaward even if it is not eligible to receive a grant from EPA directly. While there may be some situations in which a subaward to an individual may be appropriate, those situations are rare.

Subrecipients only receive reimbursement for their actual direct or approved indirect costs and do not “profit” from the transaction. For-profit entities participating in grant activities are typically contractors rather than subrecipients.

EPA’s Award Official must approve subawards to for-profit entities and individuals on the basis of either a precise description of the subaward in the EPA approved budget and project narrative, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

The applicant’s project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed subawards and include cost estimates for subawards as line items under the “Other” budget category in the SF-424A; see Section 6 in Appendix B. Should a recipient decide to make a subaward that was not described in the approved project narrative and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from EPA’s Award Official for the subaward.

If a recipient chooses to pass funds from its grant to other entities through subawards, the recipient must comply with applicable subaward provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, the EPA Subaward Policy, and EPA’s National Term and Condition for Subawards. Note that under 2 CFR 200.331 through 200.333, there are extensive requirements for subrecipient monitoring and management that apply to pass-through entities.

Many of the federal administrative grant regulations in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, as well as the grant terms and conditions in the assistance agreement, “flow down” to subrecipients receiving a subaward. Such requirements need to be identified in the written subaward agreement between the recipient and the subrecipient. Additionally, if a subrecipient intends to procure goods or services using targeted airshed grant funds, the subrecipient must comply with the applicable federal procurement standards in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 as these requirements also “flow down” to subrecipients.

There is no requirement for recipients to compete subawards under this RFA; however, passthrough entities may choose to select subrecipients competitively provided this practice is consistent with applicable statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of their targeted airshed grant.

Recipients may use the subaward template contained in Appendix D of EPA’s Subaward Policy to assist them in complying with the “subaward content” requirements; however, EPA does not mandate the use of this template.

IV. Participant Support Costs

Recipients may provide participant support costs (PSCs) to program beneficiaries to enable beneficiaries to participate in the recipient’s program or project. PSCs include rebates, subsidies, stipends, or other payments to program beneficiaries by a grantee, subrecipient, or

contractor. For example, PSCs might be used for the purchase of eligible technologies. Program beneficiaries, rather than the grant recipient, would own the new technology.

PSCs differ from subawards in that the beneficiary is participating in the grant recipient's project or program instead of implementing their own project or program. Program beneficiaries may include but are not limited to individual owner/operators, private or public fleet owners, or residents in the applicable area; however, program beneficiaries are not employees, contractors or subrecipients of the grant recipient.

Recipients may also use PSCs to make purchases on behalf of program beneficiaries. In some situations, this approach allows grant recipients to achieve economies of scale and/or take advantage of existing purchase contracts. Competitive procurement requirements apply to the grant recipient when the recipient takes this approach.

The federal administrative grant regulations in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, as well as the grant terms and conditions in the recipient's grant agreement, generally do not "flow down" to program beneficiaries receiving PSCs except those costs must be reasonable and incurred within the grant project period. Requirements for compliance with civil rights laws and ensuring that program beneficiaries are eligible to receive federal financial assistance are applicable as explained in EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05-r1>). In addition, program beneficiaries must abide by requirements to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes.

If a grantee, subrecipient, or contractor is issuing PSCs, it must have a written agreement in place. The written agreement should not be structured as a subaward agreement and should not refer to program beneficiaries as subrecipients consistent with 2 CFR 200.1, "Subrecipient." In addition, the written agreement should not include language requiring the program beneficiary to comply with the federal grant regulations at 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, or the terms and conditions found in the award between the EPA and the recipient, other than requiring that the costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable. The written agreement should also include the following:

- A description of the activities and amounts that will be supported by the PSCs;
- The program and/or statutory requirements that the program beneficiary must abide by in order to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes;
- Specify which party will have title to the technologies (e.g., vehicles, engines, equipment and/or appliances), if any, purchased with PSCs;
- Source documentation requirements to ensure proper accounting of the PSCs; and
- Any reporting that must be submitted by the program beneficiary.

EPA's Award Official must approve PSCs on the basis of either a precise description of the PSCs in the EPA approved budget and work plan, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis. The applicant's project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed PSCs and include cost estimates for PSCs as line items under the "Other"

budget category. Should a recipient decide to issue PSCs that were not described in the approved work plan and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from EPA's Award Official. Moreover, after a grant is awarded, should a recipient decide to modify the amount approved (upwards or downwards) for PSCs, prior written approval from EPA's Award Official is also required.

When creating budgets, applicants/recipients must exclude PSCs from Modified Total Direct Costs for calculation of indirect costs as required by 2 CFR 200.1, "Modified Total Direct Costs."

Resources:

RAIN-2018-G05, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs."

(<https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05-r1>)

Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance>

Grants Policy Issuance 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients, with attachments, includes:

- EPA Subaward Policy
- Appendix A: Distinctions Between Subrecipients and Contractors
- Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards
- Appendix C: Model Programmatic Subaward Reporting Requirement
- Appendix D: Subaward Agreement Template

https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/documents/gpi-16-01-subaward-policy_attachments.pdf