US Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Compliance

Summary
The following list provides key information concerning this funding opportunity:

Federal Agency and Office Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), Office of Compliance (OC)

Funding Opportunity Title: Pesticide Inspector Residential Training (PIRT)

Announcement Type: Request for Applications (RFA) - Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-HQ-OECA-2023-001

Assistance Listing Number: 66.716 - Research, Development, Monitoring, Public Education, Outreach, Training, Demonstrations, and Studies

Dates: Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on September 1, 2023. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. The project period for the award resulting from this solicitation is estimated to begin in October 2024. The proposed project period is up to five (5) years.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA)/Office of Compliance (OC), is soliciting applications to implement the Pesticide Inspector Residential Training (PIRT) program from state, public nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals), other public institution/organization, federally recognized lndian Tribal governments, U.S. territories and possessions (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals), Native American organizations (includes lndian groups, cooperatives, corporations, partnerships, associations) for

fiscal year (FY) 2024 through (FY) 2028. Under this program OC will provide financial assistance on an annual basis to carry out a PIRT program. This pesticide-related training is intended for inspectors, scientists, supervisors, and managers of pesticide regulatory programs from state/tribes and U.S. territories working under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Cooperative Agreements with EPA throughout the U.S.

A. Background

PIRT courses have been conducted since 1994. Historically, the PIRT Coordinator sends a pesticide topics survey to the FIFRA community, who then vote for two of the topics they would like to see represented in the upcoming PIRTs. The state, tribe, or territory that volunteered to host the year's PIRT courses then selects which of the topics their PIRT course will cover. U.S. EPA provides all the funding for PIRT through a grant, utilizing State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) funds.

PIRT Steering Committee

The PIRT Steering Committee operates as a coordinating and information exchange group to help establish strategic direction and priorities as well as to recommend key training topics for pesticide inspectors. The committee is organized and managed by the PIRT Coordinator. The PIRT Coordinator is selected by the chief of the Pesticides, Waste, and Toxics Branch of EPA's OC. This employee serves as a permanent member of the committee. The Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP) liaison is also a permanent member of the committee. The steering committee is limited to 12 members, not including the PIRT Coordinator and PREP liaison. The PIRT Coordinator and PREP liaison are not considered members of the steering committee, but rather, advisors to the steering committee. The PIRT Coordinator helps coordinate decisions of the members of the steering committee.

The committee consists of a minimum of five individuals employed by State Lead Agencies (SLAs), territories, and federally recognized tribal governments representing a minimum of three different EPA Regions. There is also at least one EPA regional representative, exclusive of the PIRT Coordinator. These members are currently selected via a self-nomination process.
Slots are available for one representative from the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO), the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO), and one AAPCO Lab Committee Chair. These representatives are nominated by their respective executive boards.

The steering committee developed a PIRT Charter in 2016 to serve as a guidance document for PIRT hosts and steering committee members. Committee membership selection, rotation, and logistic guidelines are described. The main PIRT training logistics are also included.

PIRT Courses

PIRT plans to offer three to four (3-4) national courses annually and one (1) Tribal PIRT every other year (2024, 2026, & 2028). The primary focus of PIRT is two-fold, first to provide training on conducting agriculture pesticide inspections, information on new regulations, information on

new technologies and tools to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all pesticide inspections and second to train a core group of inspectors that can, in turn, train other inspectors in their state.

The courses, typically offered in an informal setting and/or educational environment, provide attendees an opportunity to learn and interact with their peers as well as federal counterparts. PIRT curriculum relies upon the expertise of both private and public sector individuals to offer course participants current perspectives on issues relevant to the regulation of pesticides. Prior to each course, states, tribes, and territories are asked to nominate individuals from their agencies for attendance. Courses usually include both classroom and field instruction.

B. Scope of Work

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the program is to provide pesticide educational training to inspectors and staff of states, tribes, and U.S. territories working under FIFRA cooperative agreements, to develop or enhance their ability to formulate and implement pesticide regulatory programs, and/or undertake new initiatives.

This program provides training to inspectors on how to conduct the different types of pesticide inspections as well as provide tips and necessary tools to instruct other inspectors on how to conduct inspections. PIRT is designed to facilitate open discussion and exchange of information and insights among each State Lead Agency, Tribal Pesticide Enforcement Program, and Territorial Lead Agency inspectors. This training program combines classroom lectures with practical application of demonstrated techniques including mock inspection to teach and promote investigative teamwork. Mock inspections afford the students the ability to practice the techniques and skills taught through classroom lecture in an applied real-life situation.

For this solicitation, the word “tribe” refers to federally recognized tribes, and any intertribal consortium defined as a partnership of two or more federally recognized tribes authorized by its membership to apply for, and receive, assistance under FIFRA. State and/or tribal employees not currently working under a FIFRA Cooperative Agreement may be eligible to attend PIRT courses based on need and/or space availability in the courses as determined by the PIRT steering committee or the PIRT coordinator (particularly the years a Tribal PIRT is held).

2. Objectives

EPA expects that the recipient will use funding provided under this solicitation to:

a. Provide high quality training to pesticide inspectors and staff of the states, tribes, and U.S. territories working under FIFRA Cooperative Agreements on a wide variety of pesticide issues. The PIRT courses will be three to four days long with a field component on one of those days. The specific type and format, in-person preferred, virtual, if necessary, of the PIRT courses to be offered annually will be determined by the PIRT Steering Committee.

b. Foster the building of networks and collaborative relationships among states, tribes, U.S. territories, EPA, and other federal and state agencies, to more effectively utilize limited resources aimed at implementing pesticide programs.

c. Provide a forum to learn about emerging pesticide issues that impact state, tribal, and US territory programs, and share effective strategies.

d. Quantitatively and qualitatively measure the success of the training provided according to training recipients to improve future programs.

e. Evaluate the PIRT steering committee selection and member process and determine the best course of action over the course of the cooperative agreement. The PIRT charter may need to be revised and/or updated to reflect any changes made.

3. Activities to Be Funded

Activities to be funded under this cooperative agreement support the purpose and objectives listed above and include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Assess the training needs of the PIRT clientele by summarizing needs expressed by participants on course evaluation forms and other methods. Assist in preparing any other summary information as requested by the PIRT Coordinator.

b. Undertake management of the PIRT Steering Committee and membership selection process from PIRT coordinator.

- Coordinate steering committee meetings to create course agendas or training approaches.
- Assemble a planning group, consisting of approximately seven to eight state/tribal and EPA employees for each course annually. The goal of the planning groups is to develop an appropriate curriculum for each course in accordance with the guidance from the PIRT Steering Committee. Planning groups generally meet once a week for several weeks until the planning is complete.

c. Conduct between three to four (3-4) National PIRTs a year plus one Tribal PIRT every other year, lasting three to four days for 25-30 participants per course. The locations of the training courses should vary within the United States to take advantage of different environments and types of pesticide usage across the country. For Tribal PIRTs, the preference is to work with a tribe/s who have a FIFRA cooperative agreement, if possible. Activities in support of the classroom training include:

- Retain appropriate training consultants and instructors based on course needs, trainer availability, and course budget. The course content will generally focus on pesticide programmatic issues (e.g., basic and new inspector skills, advanced inspector skills, urban FIFRA issues, agricultural use, and structural training) and pesticide compliance and enforcement issues. The course content may also include additional topics needed to support effective state and tribal pesticide programs such as risk communication

training, issues related to homeland security, laboratory issues, new regulatory programs, and emerging issues.
- Research and prepare for one field trip site per course. Field trips should, if possible, support a major theme of the overall course.
- Collect and collate course materials from instructors and presenters in a timely manner and arrange for their distribution prior to each course.
- Secure classroom space for all courses.
- Secure and pay for lodging for all course participants and develop a system of paying participants for per diem food expenses.
- Make arrangements for working lunches that allow participants additional time for further networking, rapport building, informal discussions on implementation issues, or new ideas.
- Arrange and pay for participant travel costs to and from the course.
- Confirm all logistical arrangements for trainer/instructor participation for all courses and arrange for payment as necessary.
- Establish a qualitative and quantitative evaluation system for participants and instructors to be used in developing future training.

d. Manage the nomination and selection process for each PIRT course.

e. Maintain PIRT-related information in a database using Access or other similar software. Appropriate fields for the database will be selected in conjunction with the PIRT Coordinator such that reports can be generated on various topics, such as attendee history, etc.

f. Design and maintain a PIRT Website. A website will be designed to communicate both historical and current information on PIRT course offerings, agendas, and course participants. The website will be updated as necessary to keep the information current and as new information becomes available.

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

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that applications and recipients of grants and cooperative agreements adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see Linking Assistance Agreements to Environmental Results https://www.epa.gov/grants/linking-assistance-agreements-environmental-results).

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

All applicants must support progress towards meeting EPA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Goal 7 – Ensure Safety of Chemicals for People and the Environment, and Objective 7.1: Ensure Chemical and Pesticide Safety which states, "Protect the health of families, communities, and ecosystems from the risks posed by chemicals and pesticides." To see EPA's Strategic Plan, visit 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, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-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 goals and objectives described above.

EPA's Office of Compliance works to address the safe use of pesticides by providing high quality training. Specifically, PIRT is an educational program, designed for state, territory, and tribal inspectors who conduct pesticide regulatory and enforcement programs, to provide practical up-to-date information on technical, policy, and management issues, as well as a wide array of cutting-edge pesticide topics. This training assists them to better serve the citizens of their states, tribes, and territories, by reducing chemical risks (exposure to pesticides) in their communities and in the environment. The training also assists with improved compliance monitoring and enforcement of both the state and federal pesticide laws.

2. Outputs

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

The anticipated outputs of this cooperative agreement are to successfully accomplish the activities listed in Section 1.B.3 as well as any additional activities proposed by the applicants.

Expected outputs include:

a. Conduct between three to four (3-4) National PIRTs a year plus one Tribal PIRT every other year, lasting three to four days for 25-30 participants per course.
b. Increased number of trained individuals in core FIFRA programmatic and compliance and enforcement activities as well as in new science and regulatory issues pertaining to pesticides. At least 95 state and tribal individuals should benefit directly, with the understanding that they will share their knowledge more broadly with their organizations;
c. Survey results that demonstrate a direct benefit from the trainings;
d. Electronic course materials for participants and electronic materials for distribution to organizations that did not attend; and
e. Training assessment tool for use in program evaluation and improvement.

Applicants should include any additional outputs they expect to achieve. Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI.D. "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 be quantitative and correlate with the objectives of PIRT. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outcomes include, but are not limited to:

a. Increased knowledge and enhanced capabilities of the states, tribes, and U.S. territories to implement quality pesticide regulatory programs, leading to better protection of human health and the environment.
b. Increased partnerships between states, tribes, U.S. territories, EPA, and other federal and state agencies involved in aspects of pesticide regulatory programs leading to increased efficiencies and use of resources. This can be demonstrated using a survey tool or similar method to capture partnerships that result from PIRT courses.

Applicants should include any additional outcomes they expect to achieve.

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.D. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs. The description of the performance measures will directly relate to the project's outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

a. Overall five-year and annual goals, objectives, outputs, (including projects, programs, and resources) and outcomes.
b. Regular reports that document all activities and efforts on project implementation, and track and measure progress achieved toward the outputs, outcomes, and milestones met in the overall five-year plan and each annual plan including customer satisfaction measures.
c. A final report that demonstrates the success of the program provides lessons learned, suggests how to carry the program forward and build on its success, and feedback from stakeholders on needed tools and resources.

D. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), 7 U.S.C. 136r which authorizes the Agency to issue assistance agreements for research, public education, training, monitoring, demonstration, and studies. This cooperative agreement will support FIFRA by enhancing the capabilities of state, tribe, and U.S. territory pesticide staff and managers through an increase of knowledge and networking

with other participants to implement quality regulatory programs. This will lead to better protection of human health and the environment.

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 in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated amount available for award under this announcement is up to $3,000,000, depending on availability of funds. EPA expects to provide an estimated $500,000 annually, for a total of up to $2,500,000 for five years (FY2024 through FY2028), depending on the Agency's budget, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. In FY2024, the first year of the cooperative agreement, EPA also expects to provide a one-time additional allocation of $500,000, which should be spread throughout the five-year cooperative agreement period. The maximum funding level requested for the first year of the project must not exceed $600,000. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding will be rejected.

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

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement subject to the availability of funds, quality of evaluated applications, and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selection decision.

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

C. Partial Funding

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

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

The estimated project period for the award resulting from this solicitation will begin in October 2024. The proposed project period is up to five (5) years.

E. What type of award(s) will EPA make resulting from this solicitation?

The funding for selected project(s) 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 this project 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(s);
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- review and approval of the substantive terms of subaward agreements; 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 FIFRA 20, applications will be accepted from the following eligible entities: state, public nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals), other public institution/organization, federally recognized lndian Tribal governments, U.S. territories and possessions (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals), Native American organizations (includes lndian groups, cooperatives, corporations, partnerships, associations). Funding for this grant will be provided from the Agency's State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) appropriation and is intended to support the implementation of state and tribal pesticide compliance and enforcement programs. Therefore, eligibility is limited to the entities listed above.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required, and voluntary cost sharing or leveraging, if proposed, will not be considered during the evaluation of applications. (See Section V.A. for Evaluation Criteria)

C. Threshold Eligibility Requirements

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III. a., b., and c. to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

a) Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

b) In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

c) Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. 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 submission outside of Grants.gov.

1. EPA will consider only one application from each eligible applicant including units of government and institutions of higher education (IHE). If EPA receives more than one application from an eligible applicant (e.g. different agencies of a governmental unit or different departments of the same IHE), EPA will refer the applications back to the applicant for a decision regarding which application the applicant wants EPA to consider. Applicants must be eligible to receive funding under this announcement. *(See Section III.A. Eligible Entities above).*

2. The proposed project period of performance must not exceed five years.

3. The maximum funding level requested for the first year of the project must not exceed $600,000. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding will be rejected.

4. Applications must support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 7, Objective 7.1; Ensure Chemical and Pesticide Safety. *(See Section I.C.).*

5. Submissions must contain specific outputs and outcomes and state how those will be measured and documented.

6. The application must address all of the objectives (Section I.B.2) and activities to be funded (Section I.B.3)

7. All in-person meetings (including conferences and workshops) must take place in the U.S.

D. Ineligible Costs or Activities

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

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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 Grants.gov 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 c. *Technical Issues with Submission* below.

B. 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 (1) 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 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 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 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 no later than September 1, 2023, 11:59 PM 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.

C. 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-HQ-OECA-2023-001 in the subject line to engle.kelly@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.

D. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Project Narrative, prepared as described in Section IV. E.

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments Form: Use this to submit other attachments, if applicable.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Kelly Engle at (202) 564-2059. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

E. Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content

The project narrative must contain all parts (1 through 3) described below, in sequential order as shown. Each page must be numbered, formatted for 8.5 x 11inch paper, single-spaced and text in 11-point font. Electronic files must be legible and in Adobe Acrobat PDF or MS Word for Windows. The project narrative cannot exceed the page limits identified below. Each page past the limit will not be considered. Federal forms, resumes and letters will not count toward any page limit.

1. Cover Page (Page 1- one-page limit). The cover page must list the following information with the letterhead for your organization: ·EPA funding opportunity number: [EPA-HQ-OECA-2023-001]

- Project Title:
- Project Coordinator:
- Organization Name and Address:
- Telephone No.: Fax No.: Email Address:
- Project Duration (anticipated start date and end no later than date):
- First Year Funding Request:
- Total Funding Request (for the entire project):

- UEI number:

2. Table of Contents (Page 2 – two-page limit): A table listing the different parts of the application and the page number on which each part begins.

3. Executive Summary (page 3 – three - page limit). A stand-alone, concise description of the project with objectives, outputs, and outcomes; and an assurance that your organization meets the eligibility factors, as listed in Section III (Eligibility Information).

4. Workplan (20 pages or less).
The narrative proposal workplan must directly and explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines in Sections I – III of this announcement (including the requirements in Section I. B. 2-3 and the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III) and all evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.

The Workplan must contain all parts in sequential order as shown below:

Project title

Part I. Project Scope and Approach

a. Project Scope, Goal and Objectives (*See Section I*)
Explain how the overall approach and plan will meet program objectives.
Describe a plan that includes the following:
- Purpose Statement - A one sentence description of what will be accomplished as a result of the project that benefits the public and potential audience(s) served.
- Stated goal and a numbered list of concisely written objectives linked to the purpose of the program that are specific, realistic and measurable.
  o How the goal and objectives are linked to EPA Strategic Plan Goal 7, Objective 7.1.

b. Project Design/Detailed Workplan
Describe in detail the approach and plan for providing pesticide educational training to inspectors and staff of states, tribes, and U.S. territories working under FIFRA Cooperative o Agreements, to develop or enhance their ability to formulate and implement pesticide regulatory programs, and/or undertake new initiatives. The detailed workplan should include:

- A well-conceived approach and plan to effectively provide high quality training to pesticide inspectors and staff of the states, tribes, and U.S. territories working under FIFRA Cooperative Agreements on a wide variety of pesticide issues.

- A list of outputs linked to expected outcomes, and the changes or benefits to human health and the environment that are anticipated.
  o Describe in detail the project activities to be funded (See Section I.B.3 for activities to be included at a minimum.)

- How lessons learned from previous or existing efforts will be used or considered for this project.
  - How the workplan builds upon or considers lessons learned from previous or existing efforts and how they will be used or considered to benefit this project.

- A clear and practical approach to evaluate performance.
  - Clearly describe the expected project outputs and outcomes and how progress towards achieving them will be tracked and measured, and how the project will be evaluated.

- A well-conceived approach for tracking and reporting progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes to EPA.
  - Regular reports that document all activities and efforts on project implementation, and track and measure progress achieved toward the outputs, outcomes and milestones met in the overall five-year plan and each annual plan including customer satisfaction measures.

c. Project Milestone Schedule

Provide a milestone schedule that:

- Covers each of the five years of the cooperative agreement, with a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks, and
- Includes an approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Part II. Outreach, Transferability, and Sustainability

a. Describe the applicant's history of working with a broad range of local, state, and national stakeholders.

b. Explain how the project design promotes meaningful involvement of partner organizations. Provide evidence of stakeholder participation and partnership in the project. Describe the potential collaborators, partnerships, coalitions and/or existing networks you offer to increase possibility of project success. State the roles these people or organizations will play in the project.

c. Outline how the project will be disseminated and promoted to ensure project information and outcomes are clearly presented and reach the intended audience and potential audiences.

d. Describe how the project will ensure that information and outcomes will be of use to other organizations and stakeholders so that the project may continue after EPA funding ends.

Part III. Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance

Clearly and specifically describe applicant resources available to support the project, including personnel and unbiased, accurate and up to date pesticide information.

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization managed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe each of the following:

(1) whether and how you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and
(2) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreements including whether you submitted adequately and timely reports on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and
(3) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them. Include the Project Officer's name, email address, and phone number of these past projects.

In evaluating applicants under these factors, 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 (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

Part IV. Budget Narrative

In addition to the SF-424A form, prepare an overall budget for allocation of $3,000,000 over five years. Prepare a detailed budget and narrative for the additional one-time funding for up to an estimated $500,000. Explain the need for funding under each of the appropriate budget categories as listed below. Include both federal and voluntary (non-federal) cost share/match if applicable. For each category, indicate which portions of the costs will be paid with EPA or voluntary cost share/match funds (if applicable). Link each task or activity from the project workplan to the associated resources needed to accomplish the activity.

Include sufficient detail for EPA to determine if the costs are eligible, allocable, reasonable, and allowable. Additional guidance for developing the applicant's budget is available in RAIN-2019-G01, "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance."

If recommended for funding, you will be required to submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate if your proposed budget includes indirect costs.

a. **Personnel** - Include only direct costs for salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project. Identify the personnel type by full or part-time employee. Consultants, contractors, or employees of other partner organizations are not "personnel".

b. **Travel** - Include the travel location(s), estimated number of trips, estimated total mileage, applicable reimbursement rate, and number of nights lodging required throughout the entire project period for your personnel only. (Travel for consultants, contractors, subawardees, or partner organizations goes in "Other Direct Costs".)

c. **Equipment** - Include only equipment proposed purchased as a direct cost. This does not include equipment to be leased/rented and service/maintenance contracts. Include costs for each item.

d. **Supplies** - Include tangible personal property other than equipment. Include a brief description of the supplies required to perform the work and categorized by major supply category. Example: office supplies, computer supplies, etc.

e. **Contractual (including consultant) Services** - List services and associated costs that are to be carried out by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. Consultants are contractors. Include a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided.

NOTE:
Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their /application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Refer to Section IV.d. of EPA's Standard Solicitation Clause for more information on this important topic.

f. **Other Direct Costs**- Include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples include: occasional photocopying at commercial locations (printing and binding services are contractual), rental of meeting space or instructional facilities, and sub-award costs.

g. **Subawards** - Any award of financial assistance by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible sub-recipient. Funding may be used to provide subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards including those contained in 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants must provide a line-item amount for subawards in the Budget Narrative for the "Other Direct Costs" category. For more information, see the Subaward Policy.

h. Coalitions - Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application for this assistance agreement. However, one entity must be responsible for the cooperative agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the assistance agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients. EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

EPA funds may only be used for purposes set forth in the assistance agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Assistance agreements funds may not be used to match funds for other federal grants, lobbying or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other governmental entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E.

5. Timetable: Provide a timetable for each project objective.

6. Letters of Support: If the project narrative describes partnerships, funding, or in-kind services, a letter of support may be included in the application. Letters of support are not required. If submitted, letters of support should clearly state the intent of the partner and their contribution, cash or in-kind services to the project. Letters of recommendation will not be considered.

7. Resumes: Provide brief resumes (not to exceed two pages each) for the project coordinator and key staff.

E. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for submission of applications is September 1, 2023, at 11:59 pm 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 application(s) meet the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria set forth below.

Applicants must directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Points
1. <u>Project Goals and Objectives</u>. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which the project goals and objectives are clearly stated, and consistent with the purpose, goals, and objectives outlined in Section I.B.	**10**
2. <u>Project Approach/Design/Methods</u>. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which the work plan: a. Demonstrates an approach to carry out a high-quality training program that meet the program objectives (10 points); b. Demonstrates knowledge of pesticide issues relevant to states, tribes, and U.S. territories (5 points); c. Includes the use of technology to enhance the educational experience and leverage resources (e.g. videotape sessions, etc.) (5 points); d. Demonstrates the ability to conduct training programs at and outside of the applicant's home base (5 points); e. Demonstrates the ability to measure the effectiveness of courses through survey tools and the like (5 points); and f. Describes the ability to build upon or consider lessons learned from existing efforts (5 points).	**35**
3. <u>Project Performance Measures & Expected Outputs and Outcomes</u>. Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes as described in Section I.C.	**10**

Criterion	Points
4. <u>Past Performance - Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results:</u> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's: a) Evidence of past performance/history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV D, Part III 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 (15 points); b) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project (5 points); and c) Staff expertise/qualification, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, as described in Section IV. D., Part III (5 points). <u>NOTE</u>: Note: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for item a above (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for this item, you may receive a score of 0 for this factor.	**25**
5. <u>Budget/Resources</u>: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors as discussed under Section IV D, Part IV: a) Whether the proposed project budget is appropriate (e.g. realistic, reasonable) to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes (10 points); b) Whether the budget narrative provides details of the budget designated for each major activity and justifies the proposed costs (5 points); and **c)** Whether the proposed approach, procedures, and controls exist for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely manner (5 points).	**20**

a) Review and Selection Process

EPA will use a consensus scoring approach to rank each application based on the criteria listed above. Under this approach, a panel of EPA reviewers will review each application

independently before coming together as a panel to discuss each application and arrive at a consensus score for each criterion. The review panel will sum the total scores and recommend the top ranked application(s) to the selection official. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the selection official based on these reviews and rankings. The selection official will review the recommendation(s) and the associated application(s) and make the final funding decisions and may also consider the other factors listed in Section V.C. below.

C. Other Factors

In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider funding availability and programmatic priorities. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA award official.

D. Debriefings

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

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Award Notification

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

1. Successful Applicants: EPA anticipates notification to the successful applicant will be made via telephone, email, or postal mail within 30-45 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 an applicant. The award notice signed by an 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.

The grantee information for the successful application will be posted through the Office of Compliance's website at the conclusion of the competition.

2. Unsuccessful Applicants: EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail within 30-45 days of the closing date of this RFA notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application.

B. Pre-award Costs

In accordance with 2 CFR 1500.8, EPA award recipients may incur allowable project costs 90 calendar days before the federal awarding agency makes the federal award. Expenses more than 90 calendar days pre-award require prior approval of EPA. All costs incurred before EPA makes the award are at the recipient's risk. EPA is under no obligation to reimburse such costs if for any reason the recipient does not receive a federal award or if the federal award is less than anticipated and inadequate to cover such costs.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: EPA Grants Overview for Applicants and Recipients.

D. Reporting Requirements

The successful applicant will be required to submit project activity reports throughout the duration of the project, as frequently as quarterly, as directed by the EPA Project Officer. Project activity reports must address the status of all objectives and activities outlined in the project (including measures), any changes in key personnel, and incurred project expenses. A final project report is also required 90 days following the end of the project period. All reports should be submitted electronically.

E. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at 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.

F. Copyrights

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.315, EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes, copyrighted works developed under a grant, subaward or contract under a grant or subaward. Examples of federal purpose include but are not limited to: (1) Use by EPA and other federal employees for official Government purposes; (2) Use by federal contractors performing specific tasks for the Government; (3) Publication in EPA documents provided the document does not disclose trade secrets (e.g. software codes) and the work is properly attributed to the recipient through citation or otherwise; (4) Reproduction of documents for inclusion in federal depositories; (5) Use by state, tribal and local governments that carry out delegated federal environmental programs as "co-regulators" or act as official partners with EPA to carry out a national environmental program within their jurisdiction; and (6) Limited use by other grantees to carry out federal grants provided the use is consistent with the terms of EPA's authorization to the grantee to use the copyrighted material.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this announcement, please contact Kelly Engle via email at engle.kelly@epa.gov or by postal mail at: U.S. EPA Office of Compliance, 1200 Constitution Avenue, NW, (Mail Code 2227A), Washington, D.C. 20240.

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