

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Applications Due: **Wednesday, May 13, 2026**



Office of Water, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

**Training and Technical Assistance to
Improve Water Quality and Enable
Small Public Water Systems to
Provide Safe Drinking Water**

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OGWDW-26-01



Contents

1.	Basic Information	1
	A. Executive Summary	1
	B. Key Information:	1
	C. Key Dates:	2
	D. Funding Details:	2
	E. Agency Contact Information:	2
	F. Other Funding Considerations.....	2
2.	Eligibility.....	4
	A. Eligible Applicants.....	4
	(1) Other Eligibility Requirements.....	4
	B. Cost Sharing	5
3.	Program Description	5
	A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities.....	5
	B. Program Goals and Objectives.....	10
	C. Statutory Authority	16
	D. Funding Type.....	17
4.	Application Contents and Format	17
	A. Application Forms	17
	B. Project Narrative Description.....	18
	C. Applicants Using Contractors.....	21
	D. Release Copies of Applications	22
	E. Coalition Coverage	22
	F. Quality Assurance/Quality Control.....	22
5.	Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....	23
	A. Submission Dates and Times	23
	B. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)	23
	C. Submission Instructions	23
	D. Technical Issues with Submission	24
	E. Intergovernmental Review	24
6.	Application Review Information.....	24
	A. Responsiveness Review	24
	B. Review Criteria.....	25
	C. Review and Selection Process.....	27
	(1) Other Evaluation Factors	27
	D. Risk Review	28
7.	Award Notices.....	28
8.	Post-Award Requirements and Administration	28
	A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	28

B. Reporting	28
C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting	28
9. Other Information.....	29
A. Additional Provisions for Applicants.....	29

1. Basic Information

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Water, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water

<https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/training-and-technical-assistance-improve-water-quality-and-enable-small-public-water-0>

A. Executive Summary

The *Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water* grant program supports small public water systems (PWS) in operations and maintenance to achieve and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

The 1996 amendments of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) provide a framework for states and water systems to work together to protect public health. By law, every state has a Capacity Development Program to assist public water systems in building technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capabilities (sometimes referred to as “capacity”). Additionally, provisions of the SDWA Section 1452(a)(3) have a requirement for PWSs to demonstrate TMF capability in order to receive loan assistance from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). Without TMF capabilities, States are not permitted to provide PWSs with loan assistance unless the system has agreed to make the necessary changes in operation to ensure that it has the TMF capabilities to comply over the long term.

Aside from enhancing eligibility for DWSRF funding, ensuring TMF capabilities of PWSs is essential to ensuring PWSs reliably deliver safe drinking water and protect public health. Strong TMF capabilities are necessary for systems to maintain or attain compliance with the SDWA National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) and state regulations.

The grant program also assists small publicly-owned wastewater systems and onsite/decentralized wastewater systems to improve operational performance and sustainable operations over the long term, improving public health and water quality. Additionally, the grant program provides technical assistance to private well owners to protect their drinking water supply and improve water quality.

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations, [public institutions of higher education \(IHEs\)](#), and nonprofit private universities and colleges. Selected applicants are expected to provide direct technical assistance and training to assist small drinking water systems, small publicly-owned wastewater systems and onsite/decentralized wastewater systems, and private well owners.

B. Key Information:

Opportunity Number:
EPA-OW-OGWDW-26-01

Assistance Listing:
66.436 and 66.424

Announcement Type:
Initial

Funding Available:
\$30.7 million

Number of Awards:
5

C. Key Dates:

April 27, 2026 11:59 pm ET	Questions Submission Deadline
May 13, 2026 11:59 pm ET	Application Submission Deadline
July 2026	Anticipated Notification of Selection
August 2026	Anticipated Award Notification

D. Funding Details:

It is anticipated that up to **five awards** will be made under this announcement. The amount of funding is expected to be **\$30,700,000**, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards funded under this opportunity are expected to have a **two year** project period.

E. Agency Contact Information:

Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA contact(s) indicated below.

Technical Contact:	Brianna Knoppow , SmallSystemsRFA@EPA.gov
Eligibility Contact:	Brianna Knoppow , SmallSystemsRFA@EPA.gov
Electronic Submissions Contact:	Grants.gov : support@grants.gov ; 1-800-518-4726

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA’s Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1) and consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. In accordance with the Policy, EPA cannot meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications.

Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified above as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be clarified prior to submitting a proposal. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination.

Questions about this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified above by 11:59 PM Eastern Time, April 27, 2026 and written responses will be posted on [EPA’s website](#). Please note answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), including relevant definitions, are available at [the same website](#). EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs webpage prior to submitting a question.

F. Other Funding Considerations

National Priority Areas

Up to \$30,700,000 may be awarded under this NOFO. There are three National Priority Areas (NPAs). The total funding amount for each NPA reflects Congressional appropriation levels. Applicants may submit more than one application package under this announcement as long as each one is submitted

separately and addresses only **one** National Priority Area. Applicants may not submit more than one application per individual National Priority Area.

The following are the anticipated amounts of total awards in each of the three National Priority Areas.

National Priority Area 1: Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA, including Improving Financial and Managerial Capacity. Up to three awards are anticipated under this National Priority Area, ranging from a **minimum of \$8,000,000 in federal funds, to no more than \$13,000,000 in federal funds**, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). The total anticipated amount of federal funding to potentially be made available under this National Priority Area is approximately **\$26,000,000**, depending on agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

National Priority Area 2: Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems to Help Improve Water Quality and Sustainable Operations. One award is anticipated under this National Priority Area for **no more than \$1,250,000** in federal funds, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). The total anticipated amount of federal funding to potentially be made available under this National Priority Area is approximately **\$1,250,000**, depending on agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

National Priority Area 3: Training and Technical Assistance for Private Well Owners to Help Improve Water Quality. One award is anticipated under this National Priority Area for **no more than \$3,450,000 in federal funds**, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). The total anticipated amount of federal funding to potentially be made available under this National Priority Area is approximately \$3,450,000, depending on agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under each of the NPAs described above may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons including the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, and funding availability. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amounts of awards under each NPA and the announcement, or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the NPAs.

In addition, the EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions. Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the 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, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

2. Eligibility

A. Eligible Applicants

Only these types of organizations may apply:

- [Nonprofit organizations.](#)
- [Public institutions of higher education \(IHEs\)](#)
- Nonprofit private universities and colleges

For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. States, municipalities, Tribal governments, and individuals are not eligible to apply. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. The EPA may ask applicants to demonstrate that they are eligible for funding under this announcement.

Consistent with Assistance Listing No. **66.436 and 66.424** and the EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements ([EPA Order 5700.5A1](#)), this funding opportunity is being limited to a subset of eligible applicants.

(1) Other Eligibility Requirements

Applications must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered eligible:

1. Applications must address only one of the National Priority Areas listed in Section 1. If an applicant wishes to address more than one program priority, they must submit a separate application for each priority. Applications that include more than one priority will be deemed ineligible.
2. Applicants may not submit more than one application per individual National Priority Area. If an applicant submits more than one application for a single Priority Area, EPA will contact them before the review process begins to determine which application(s) will be withdrawn. If the applicant is not able to communicate a decision within two business days of being contacted by the EPA, the EPA will accept the application received by Grants.gov first.
3. Applications for National Priority Area 2 must address the two elements of that priority as described in Section 3 or they will be deemed ineligible.
4. Applications for awards under National Priority Area 1 **must request at least the minimum of \$8,000,000 in federal funds and no more than \$13,000,000 in federal funds**; applications for awards under National Priority Area 2 must not request more than \$1,250,000 in federal funds; and applications for awards under National Priority Area 3 must not request more than \$3,450,000 in federal funds. Applications exceeding the maximum federal funding request amount for the applicable National Priority Area it addresses will be rejected.
5. An applicant must demonstrate how it will meet the cost-share/match requirement in Section 2 of this announcement at the time of application submission.
6. Eligible activities include training and technical assistance only. Infrastructure projects such as repairing water or sewer lines; adding new equipment; or upgrading, retrofitting, or rehabilitating existing equipment are not eligible for funding under this announcement. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

7. Applications must **substantially comply** with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section 4 and Section 5 of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section 4 with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section 4 establishes a 13-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit. 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.

Please see Section 6.A for additional threshold criteria.

B. Cost Sharing

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal how it will meet the cost share requirement to be considered eligible. Selected recipients must comply with [2 CFR 200.306](#) when meeting a cost share requirement.

All applicants must demonstrate in their application submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost-share/match of **10 percent of the total amount of federal funding requested** for the project. The non-federal cost-share/match may be provided in cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., and is subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements described in 2 CFR 200.306, as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value.

Cost-share/match must be used for eligible and allowable project costs. Cost-share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds also apply to the use of cost-share/match. Other federal grants may not be used as cost-share/match without specific statutory authority. **Applicants that do not demonstrate how they will meet the minimum non-federal cost-share/match requirement in their application submission will not be considered for funding.**

3. Program Description

A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities

Purpose: The purpose of this funding opportunity is to help communities comply with environmental regulations and to assist them in building their technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capabilities to sustainably operate drinking water, wastewater, and private well infrastructure.

Program Office Priorities: All communities deserve access to clean, reliable water. Yet too many communities across America face challenges in providing safe drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services to their residents. EPA's Real Water Technical Assistance (RealWaterTA) connects communities to experts who help assess and implement solutions for their drinking water, sewage, and stormwater needs and assist communities in reaching compliance with regulations. Improving water quality is a priority for EPA and the Trump Administration, as outlined in the [Make Our Children Healthy Again White House Strategy](#). Protecting the health of the country is the top priority of EPA, and EPA's RealWaterTA programs help ensure America – and America's water – is healthy.

Through this Notice of Funding Opportunity under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act, EPA will achieve greater public health protection through an increase in: trained water sector personnel, improved performance of small public drinking water and wastewater systems, Safe Drinking Water Act compliance, and protection of private drinking water wells from contamination. This action advances the Administration's priorities to Make America Healthy Again by improving water quality and reducing exposure risks, and enabling responsible economic growth for small public water systems through improved drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. In partnership with States, Tribes, and local governments and grounded in sound science and the law, EPA will deliver cleaner water, stronger infrastructure, and long-term environmental stewardship for all Americans.

The EPA's Office of Water (OW) serves as the National Program Lead and principal advisor to the Administrator and provides Agency-wide policy, guidance and direction for the Agency's water quality, drinking water, groundwater wetlands protection, marine and estuarine protection, and other water related programs.

The awards made under this funding opportunity will support OW's mission by enabling small systems to achieve and maintain compliance with SDWA and the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWRs).

The awards will aid small public water systems in operating and maintaining their systems, and in building TMF capabilities to provide safe water in communities across America. Additionally, the awards under this funding opportunity will assist publicly-owned wastewater systems, onsite/decentralized wastewater systems, and private well owners.

Consistent with EPA's [Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative](#), awards made through this funding opportunity will increase the ability of Americans to access clean and safe drinking water. RealWaterTA is an important part of Powering the Great American Comeback by helping ensure Americans have clean and safe water while also supporting cooperative federalism by working with communities and connecting them to resources they can use to take action and make informed decisions.

Environmental Results: Applicants are required to describe how funding will help EPA achieve Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American, through well-defined outputs and outcomes in their responses to the criteria in Section 6. Outputs and outcomes specific to each project will be identified as deliverables in the negotiated workplan if the application is selected for award. Recipients will be expected to report progress toward the attainment of expected project outputs and outcomes during the project performance period, in order to ensure protection of public health.

Outputs and outcomes are defined as follows:

Outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or 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.

Outcomes are 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, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, technical, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (advancements in skills), intermediate (changes in technical practices), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource and advancement of public health).

For National Priority Area 1, outputs and outcomes should directly address the goal of helping small public water systems achieve and maintain compliance with the SDWA and provide safe drinking water in the long term. For National Priority Area 2 and National Priority Area 3, outputs and outcomes should address the goal of improving water quality.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for *National Priority Area 1, Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA, including Improving Financial and Managerial Capacity*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- An increased number of small public water system managers and operators receiving training and technical assistance in regulatory requirements, basic water system operations, and advanced treatment issues, including receiving training utilizing hands-on and other approaches that maximize understanding and knowledge retention.
- An increased number of small public water systems conducting diagnostic and troubleshooting analyses to determine factors affecting performance and compliance with applicable national primary drinking water standards.
- An increased number of small public water systems receiving technical assistance in developing and implementing assessments, response plans, and mitigation to address water system resiliency and threats.
- An increased number of small public water systems receiving technical assistance in developing and implementing source water protection plans.
- An increased number of small public water system managers and operators receiving training and technical assistance in financial and managerial capacity concepts and practices.
- An increased number of board members and other small system decision makers receiving training on asset management, threat mitigation, and other sustainable management and financial concepts.
- An increased number of small public water systems implementing asset management programs.
- An increased number of small public water systems receiving energy audits and water loss analyses.
- An increased number of small public water systems developing plans to implement water system partnerships such as shared treatment and operators, restructuring, consolidation, or other collaboration or partnership actions with other water systems.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for *National Priority Area 2, Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems to Help Improve Water Quality*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

For training and technical assistance for small publicly-owned wastewater systems:

- An increased number of system managers, board members, and other decision makers receiving training on sustainable utility management, and based on an assessment of their operations, training on asset management, and other sustainable management and financial concepts.

- An increased number of small publicly-owned wastewater systems receiving or performing energy audits and taking actions to improve energy efficiency based on audit results.

For training and technical assistance for onsite/decentralized wastewater systems:

- An increased number of community leaders, system operators, or onsite/decentralized Responsible Management Entities receiving training or technical assistance on analyzing treatment alternatives, management requirements, or homeowner education.
- An increased number of onsite/decentralized wastewater systems that have been inventoried, inspected, or have maintenance schedules or manuals for new or upgraded systems.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for National Priority Area 3, *Training and Technical Assistance for Private Drinking Water Well Owners to Help Improve Water Quality*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- An increased number of private drinking water well owners receiving technical assistance and training on topics of interest to private drinking water well owners, such as well construction, well maintenance and operation, well testing, ground water quality and protection, and state regulations impacting private wells.
- An increased number of private drinking water well owners who receive information on how to respond to emergencies.
- Increased information, technical assistance, and training to organizations potentially affecting private drinking water well owners to protect public health.

Environmental **outcomes** are 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 and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be short-term (e.g., changes in knowledge and skills), intermediate (e.g., changes in practice), or long-term (e.g., changes in condition of the natural resource, advancement of public health).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for National Priority Area 1, *Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA, including Improving Financial and Managerial Capacity*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- An increase in the knowledge and competency of small public water system operators in the areas of regulatory requirements and water system operations.
- A measurable improvement in the performance of small public water systems where operational changes or other recommendations were implemented following a system diagnostic evaluation.
- An increased number of small public water systems in compliance with the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations or making substantial progress toward compliance as indicated by measured performance, reduced enforcement priority status or other factors.
- A measurable improvement in the performance of small public water systems such as those implementing asset management programs as part of their standard operating and management practices.

- An increase in the knowledge and competency of small public water system operators in their ability to plan for and respond to threats from natural disasters and malevolent acts.
- An increase in the number of small public water systems participating in water system partnerships such as shared treatment and operators, restructuring, consolidation, or other collaboration or partnership actions with other water systems to address compliance challenges or TMF deficiencies.
- An increased number of small public water systems reducing water loss or achieving cost savings due to adopting managerial/operational actions to improve efficiency such as conducting an energy, water loss, or other audit.
- An increase in the number of communities able to submit applications for federal funding to improve water infrastructure to achieve and maintain compliance over the long term.
- A measurable improvement in financial capabilities, such as the number of small public water systems with improved rate structures and participating in customer assistance programs.

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for National Priority Area 2, *Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems to Help Improve Water Quality*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

For training and technical assistance for small publicly-owned wastewater systems:

- A measurable improvement in the performance of small publicly-owned wastewater systems that have adopted sustainable management plans.
- An increase in the number of small publicly-owned wastewater systems in compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements or making substantial progress toward compliance as indicated by measured performance, reduced enforcement priority status, or other factors.
- A measurable improvement in the performance of small publicly-owned wastewater systems that improve their energy efficiency or achieve cost savings because of taking efficiency actions after conducting an energy audit.

For training and technical assistance for onsite/decentralized wastewater systems:

- A decreased number of public health-related or public nuisance-related complaints associated with malfunctioning onsite/decentralized wastewater systems.
- A demonstrated increase in the technical competence needed to form responsible management entities (RMEs).
- An increase in system owners, particularly homeowners, engaging in active management of onsite/decentralized wastewater systems.

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for National Priority Area 3, *Training and Technical Assistance for Private Drinking Water Well Owners to Help Improve Water Quality*, may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- An increase in the knowledge of private drinking water well owners in such topics as proper well construction, well operation and maintenance, well testing, relevant state regulations or programs, or ground water protection.

- An increase in the knowledge and understanding of private drinking water well owners regarding options for connecting private wells to public water systems.
- An increase in knowledge and skills to protect private drinking water wells from contamination during emergencies.
- An improvement in the quality and quantity of ground water that supplies private drinking water wells.

B. Program Goals and Objectives

The activities to be funded under this funding announcement support **Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American** of [Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars](#). All applications must be for projects that support the pillar identified above.

National Priority Areas

National Priority Area 1: Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA, including Improving Financial and Managerial Capacity

Under this National Priority Area, the EPA is soliciting applications to provide training and technical assistance for small public water systems to enable such systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and to build their technical, financial, and managerial capabilities to provide safe drinking water over the long term. The ability for small systems to attain and maintain TMF capabilities is critical to ensuring that systems can reliably and sustainably provide safe water to its customers. Refer to [the frequently asked questions section available via the competition website](#) for the definition of small public water systems.

Many small public water systems face challenges in reliably providing safe drinking water to their customers and consistently meeting the requirements of the SDWA and the NPDWRs. These challenges include, but are not limited to: (1) lack of adequate revenue or access to financing; (2) aging infrastructure; (3) retirement of experienced system operators and the inability to recruit new operators to replace them; (4) managers and operators who lack the requisite financial, technical, or managerial skills; (5) lack of planning for infrastructure upgrades or the ability to respond to and recover from natural disasters (e.g., floods or tornadoes); (6) lack of planning for cybersecurity upgrades or the ability to respond to and recover from malevolent acts; and 7) lack of understanding of existing or new regulatory requirements and treatment technologies. As a result, some small systems may experience frequent or long-term compliance challenges in reliably providing safe water to their customers, while others may currently be in compliance but lack the technical capability to maintain compliance.

For this National Priority Area, applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing training and technical assistance for personnel who operate or manage small public water systems (including decision makers such as trustees, board members, or system owners).

Applicants should also describe how they intend to strengthen the technical capability of personnel and enable them to comply with the regulatory requirements applicable to their system.

Training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face trainings and site visits or through remote learning approaches, taking into consideration the benefits of face-to-face assistance. This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs and training. Applicants should describe how they will facilitate small public water systems becoming more

resilient to natural disasters and malevolent acts. Additionally, applicants should describe their proposed approach to help small public water systems build their financial and managerial capability to address current needs and to achieve long-term sustainability.

Technical capability refers to the physical infrastructure of the water system, including, but not limited to, the adequacy of the source water, the adequacy of the system's infrastructure (i.e., source, treatment, storage, and distribution), the resiliency to natural disasters and malevolent acts, and the ability of system personnel to adequately operate and maintain the system and to apply necessary technical knowledge (e.g., certified operators, water system resiliency and security).

Financial capability refers to the financial resources of the water system, including, but not limited to, revenue sufficiency, user rate-setting, customer water assistance programs, rate collection, creditworthiness, fiscal controls, operational budgeting, and planning. Managerial capability refers to the management structure and practices of the water system, including, but not limited to, ownership accountability, staffing and organization, maintenance programs, and effective linkages and communication with customers and regulatory agencies.

The goals of the training and technical assistance activities under this priority area are to assist small public water systems in achieving and maintaining compliance with the SDWA and the NPDWRs, including newer regulations such as the PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, and the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements. Additionally, the training and technical assistance activities should assist with small public water system technical, financial, and managerial capabilities in order to reliably provide safe drinking water over the long term. Applicants may assist communities in participating in targeted compliance initiatives, such as EPA's PFAS OUTreach initiative (PFAS OUT). This involves assisting drinking water systems with technical, funding, and implementation support to address PFAS contamination, comply with federal standards, and keep their communities safe.

Applicants may also provide training and technical assistance to utilities on customer assistance programs and on how to help qualifying households obtain assistance through customer assistance programs.

Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the state or territorial primacy agency or the EPA regional direct implementation coordinators) for each state, Tribe, or territory in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available prior to providing training and technical assistance in that state, Tribe, or territory. In particular, applicants should indicate how they will coordinate and collaborate with the state, Tribe, territory, or the EPA to identify the systems in greatest need of assistance and identify the training topics of greatest need to the small public water systems; how they will keep those agencies, the EPA grant project officer, and appropriate regional coordinators informed regarding the assistance provided; and how they will document these results.

Training and technical assistance activities to support development of TMF capabilities may involve assisting system managers, decision makers, and others in understanding sustainable management practices such as asset management, maintenance programs, fiscal planning, rate-setting, workforce recruitment and retention, planning for impacts from natural disasters and malevolent acts, and water system partnership options that are necessary to promote system compliance and sustainability over the long term.

The EPA's commitment to providing technical assistance supports water systems to identify water

challenges, develop plans, enhance TMF capability, and develop application materials to access water infrastructure funding. The following are examples of eligible training and technical assistance activities for small public water systems that support this National Priority Area.

Example activities include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Provide operator training and technical assistance to: (1) comply with NPDWRs (2) assist operators with newer regulations such as the PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, and the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (3) improve the knowledge and skill competency of drinking water system personnel in the areas of technical, managerial, and financial capability.
- Provide assistance with identifying funding sources to ensure water systems are able to address public health risks.

The EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this National Priority Area. All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section 6, including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Area is addressed.

National Priority Area 2: Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems to Help Improve Water Quality and Sustainable Operations

Under this National Priority Area, the EPA is soliciting applications to provide training and technical assistance to: (a) small publicly-owned wastewater systems; and (b) communities served by onsite/decentralized wastewater systems. Under this priority area, the application must address the two elements further described below. For the purposes of this announcement, “small publicly-owned wastewater systems” are defined as wastewater systems or treatment facilities that have permitted and actual flows of less than 1 million gallons per day (MGD) and are: owned by a public entity (such as a municipality) or not-for-profit entity (such as regional sewer districts), and/or serve Tribal communities (with the exception of systems that are owned by U.S. federal entities). “Onsite/decentralized systems” are defined as: publicly-owned or privately- owned onsite or clustered systems used to collect, treat, and disperse or reclaim wastewater from a small community, Tribe, or service area that are publicly- or privately-owned and/or serve Tribal communities (with the exception of systems that are owned by U.S. federal entities).

For this National Priority Area, applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing training and technical assistance to small publicly-owned wastewater systems and to communities served by onsite/decentralized wastewater systems as described in the above paragraph. The EPA’s commitment to providing technical assistance supports communities to identify water challenges, develop plans, build TMF capability, and develop application materials to access water infrastructure funding.

Training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face trainings and site visits or through remote learning approaches, taking into consideration the benefits of face-to-face assistance. This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs and training. Assistance may include: training on long term sustainability and effectiveness of small systems and decentralized systems, evaluation of treatment and/or infrastructure alternatives, training on preliminary engineering evaluations, assessments of management approaches and their effectiveness, training on improved water and energy efficiency, developing appropriate rate structures, education of local officials, identification of funding alternatives, and/or other activities.

The goals of the training and technical assistance activities are to assist small publicly-owned wastewater systems and onsite/decentralized wastewater systems to improve operational performance and sustainable operations over the long term, thereby improving public health and water quality. Applicants should describe how they will document and report on progress toward meeting these goals. Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the state or territorial primacy agency or the EPA regional direct implementation coordinator) in each state, Tribe, or territory in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available prior to providing training and technical assistance in that state, Tribe, or territory. In particular, applicants should indicate how they will work with the state, territory, or the EPA to identify the systems in greatest need of assistance; how they will keep those agencies, the EPA grant project officer, and appropriate EPA regional coordinators informed regarding the assistance provided; and how they will document these results.

All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section 6, including how well and thoroughly both elements of this National Priority Area are addressed. Applications for awards under this National Priority Area must address both of the following two elements. Those that do not will be rejected.

Element (a): Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems

Small publicly-owned wastewater systems often face many common challenges including: (1) a lack of capability to assess current operations and identify short- and long-term opportunities for improvement; (2) frequent turnover of operations personnel; (3) personnel who lack necessary technical, financial, or managerial skills; (4) limited rate bases; (5) aging infrastructure; (6) lack of knowledge of increasingly stringent discharge limits; and (7) lack of knowledge of newer techniques to reduce discharges, assess and improve operations, and analyze infrastructure alternatives to meet water quality goals.

Training and technical assistance activities for small publicly-owned wastewater systems under this element should focus on compliance, promoting the sustainable and effective management of wastewater systems, and improving system performance. Applicants should describe in detail their approach for training, for example, assisting facility managers, utility boards, and wastewater operators in sustainable utility operations. Topics may include, for example: assessment of the system's overall strengths and areas for improvement, asset management, energy management, rate design, local decision-makers, effective utility management, and identifying funding sources or other topics that help facilities maintain long-term managerial, financial, and operational success. Applicants should also describe their approach to reaching small publicly-owned wastewater systems, especially small facilities that require additional management capability to effectively improve the long-term sustainability of operations and/or are out of compliance with discharge permits.

Applicants should describe in detail their approach for utilizing and sharing existing information and materials on pollution prevention, facility operation and maintenance, effective utility management, wastewater treatment alternatives, infrastructure funding opportunities, and efficient water use with the facilities being assisted. Applicants should describe in detail an approach for providing onsite training and technical assistance, while also providing products and assistance for a broader (e.g., nationwide) audience. These trainings or technical solutions may use existing materials, including, but not limited to, documents and tools developed by the EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and other federal agencies. Such trainings or technical solutions could then be developed into or incorporated into

existing guidebooks or webinars or other on-line training for transfer to small wastewater systems nationwide, or supported as a “train-the-trainer” approach to increase the reach of the materials.

Examples of training and technical assistance activities for small publicly-owned wastewater systems that support this element include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Assist operators to manage small wastewater treatment systems to achieve compliance.
- Perform on-site trainings or technical solutions that focus on improving performance at local facilities (e.g., training on nutrient removal technologies, rate structures, energy efficiency opportunities, and assessments of sustainability and proper management of small publicly-owned wastewater systems).

The EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of Element (a) of this National Priority Area.

Element (b): Training and Technical Assistance for Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems

Onsite/decentralized systems face significant maintenance and management challenges, including: (1) lack of information on system location, performance, age, and maintenance history; (2) improper design or siting; (3) lack of owner knowledge of proper preventative maintenance techniques; (4) lack of life-cycle management; and (5) lack of owner/service provider knowledge of advanced treatment and dispersal technologies.

Under this element, applicants should describe in detail their approach to providing training and technical assistance on aspects of decentralized system planning, installation, operation and maintenance, and management approaches. Applicants should also describe in detail their approach for utilizing and sharing existing information and materials on appropriate treatment and dispersal options and funding opportunities to the appropriate identified audience(s).

Applicants may use documents and tools developed by the EPA for these trainings. Such trainings or technical solutions could be adapted into webinars, developed into guidebooks for transfer nationwide, or supported as a "train-the-trainer" approach to increase the reach of the materials.

Examples of training and technical assistance activities for onsite/decentralized wastewater systems that support this element include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Assistance in accessing funds for decentralized wastewater system projects to address public health risks.
- Development of preliminary needs analysis.
- Outreach to individual system owners and the general public on the basics of decentralized systems, such as how they function and the wastewater treatment process
- Outreach to individual system owners and the general public on proper preventative and corrective maintenance techniques.

National Priority Area 3: Training and Technical Assistance for Private Drinking Water Well Owners to Help Improve Water Quality

Under this National Priority Area, the EPA is soliciting applications to provide training and technical assistance to private drinking water well owners. For the purposes of this announcement, a “private well” is defined as a well owned by a homeowner or group of homeowners that supplies drinking water to fewer than 25 people and contains fewer than 15 service connections.

Approximately 30 million Americans receive their drinking water from private drinking water

wells. Private drinking water well owners face many challenges in providing safe water. Protection of private drinking water wells does not fall under the authority of the SDWA, so the drinking water well owners often face challenges in obtaining the assistance they need to keep their drinking water wells in good working order and to protect the quality of their water supply. These challenges include where to go or whom to contact for accurate and timely information and technical assistance on all aspects of private drinking water well ownership, including well construction, operation, maintenance, well testing, local and state health and other relevant regulations or programs, local ground water quality and quantity concerns, and well emergency contacts and procedures.

For this National Priority Area, applicants should describe their approach to providing training and technical assistance to private drinking water well owners.

Training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face meetings and site visits or through remote learning approaches, taking into consideration the benefits of face-to-face assistance. This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs and training.

The goals of the training and technical assistance activities are to assist private drinking water well owners with information they need to protect their drinking water supply and improve water quality. Applicants should describe how they will document and report on progress toward meeting these goals. Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the state or territorial primacy agency or the EPA regional direct implementation coordinators) in each state, Tribe, or territory in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available prior to providing training and technical assistance in that state, Tribe, or territory. In particular, applicants should indicate how they will work with the state, territory, or the EPA to identify the drinking water well owners in greatest need of assistance; how they will keep those agencies, the EPA grant project officer, and appropriate EPA regional coordinators informed regarding the assistance provided; and how they will document these results.

Examples of eligible training and technical assistance activities for private drinking water wells that support this National Priority Area include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Provide assistance with identifying funding sources to improve water quality.
- Adequately staff a hotline with a toll-free number for private drinking water well owners to call for timely assistance and advice on private drinking water well matters.
- Educate private drinking water well owners through face-to-face visits regarding potential or actual threats to their wells and whom to contact for help.

The EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this National Priority Area. All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section 6, including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Area is addressed.

Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis

Applications for projects under all of the National Priority Areas described above should demonstrate the applicant's ability and approach to making training and technical assistance available on a national basis. Applicants should make training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states and the U.S. territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa), including to Tribally-owned and -operated systems, through a combination of face-to-face/onsite and remote training and technical assistance approaches. The training and technical

assistance may include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance, or some other program design that makes training and technical assistance available nationally. Applicants should describe how they will reach out to Tribally-owned and -operated systems and how they will provide training and technical assistance to these systems. Please note the “Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis” evaluation criteria in Section 6.

Applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section 6 including the demonstrated ability and described approach to making training and technical assistance available nationally in the maximum number of states and U.S. territories through face-to-face/onsite and/or remote training and technical assistance. The EPA will give priority consideration to applications that describe a thorough, quality, and flexible approach that tailors the training and technical assistance techniques and resources to address the specific needs of the target audience in as many states and U.S. territories as possible.

A tailored approach should describe how the applicant will use the most appropriate techniques and materials to address the needs of various audiences, such as system managers versus operators or private drinking water well owners, as well as the unique needs of populations determined by geographical, socio-economic, system- type, educational, or other factors. The applicant should take into consideration how state and local regulations and policies impact the implementation of national standards. The approach should also demonstrate how the applicant would balance the use of face-to-face/onsite techniques, which often result in a high level of understanding and knowledge retention for participants, but are usually more expensive and resource-intensive, with the need to provide assistance in a maximum number of states and U.S. territories through remote techniques.

Training and technical assistance may take the following forms.

- Face-to-face and onsite training or technical assistance, which includes, for example, classroom training, workshops and exercises, site visits, and circuit-riders or other multi-state and/or regional approaches to provide onsite technical assistance.
- Remote training or technical assistance, which includes, for example, webcasts, video conferencing, routine conference calls, hotline and helpdesk access, online courses, and other forms of distance learning.

Training and technical assistance may also include developing and disseminating (through web posting and other means) various resources such as training and educational materials or tools that can be used nationally and/or with state or territorial-specific variations, as appropriate.

Applicants should indicate in their applications an estimate as to what portion of their training and technical assistance would be face-to-face and onsite versus remote training and technical assistance.

Applications should also address how the applicant will coordinate to complement existing technical assistance efforts and avoid duplication, be proactive, and incorporate continuous learning.

C. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is, as appropriate, Section 1442(e) of the SDWA or Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 1442(e) of the SDWA authorizes the EPA to provide assistance agreements for training and technical assistance to small public water systems to enable such systems to achieve and maintain compliance with NPDWRs. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA authorizes the EPA to make grants to conduct and promote the coordination and

acceleration of training, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

D. Funding Type

It is anticipated that cooperative agreements will be funded under this funding opportunity.

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the 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 (the 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).

The 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.

4. Application Contents and Format

A. Application Forms

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

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments Form- Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement, if applicable.
7. Other Attachments Form: Letters of Support
8. Other Attachments Form- Biographical Sketches
9. Other Attachments Form: Use this to submit other attachments, if applicable

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. **The Project Narrative must include the project narrative description, as described in Section 4.B, below. The Project Narrative (covering Section 4.B, below) is limited to no more than thirteen (13) typewritten, single spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the cover page and executive summary.** Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended

that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative. Do not use a “double column” (aka newspaper) format. Do not include more than one application in any file.

Additional pages beyond the 13-page limit will not be considered. Please note that supporting materials, which are limited to biographical sketches and letters of support as described below, are not considered part of the Project Narrative and are not included within the page limit.

Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be time and date stamped electronically. For technical issues with submission, please see Section 5.

B. Project Narrative Description

The application’s Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

When developing the Project Narrative, applicants should refer to Section 3 of the announcement which provides a project description for the National Priority Areas.

1. See Instructions on Application Content below.

a. **Cover Page** including:

- i. Project title;
- ii. National Priority Area from Section 3 addressed in the application (**applicants must address only one National Priority Area per application package**);
- iii. Name of applicant;
- iv. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
- v. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested, the non-federal cost-share/match, and the total project cost).

b. **Executive Summary:** Provide a brief summary of the proposed project (should not exceed one page). This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

c. **Workplan:** The workplan must address the following elements:

- i. **National Priority Area:** Describe your approach for addressing one of the three National Priority Areas in Section 3 of this announcement. Highlight and describe how the proposed training and technical assistance project supports the EPA’s priority of ensuring clean water for every American when providing training and technical assistance.

Describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. Describe the process for consulting with the appropriate regulatory authority in each state, Tribe, or territory prior to initiating training and technical assistance activities. Include a process for reporting back to those authorities, to the EPA grant project officer, and to the appropriate EPA regional coordinators regarding the assistance provided and

documented results. Describe the process for coordinating with other technical assistance providers to reduce duplication of efforts. If you are addressing National Priority Area 2, also describe your approach for addressing the two elements of that priority.

- ii. Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis:** Describe the proposed approach to making face-to-face/onsite and/or remote training and technical assistance available nationally in a maximum number of states and U.S. territories. The proposed approach may also include developing training materials, developing and maintaining websites, or developing and providing educational materials that can be used in each state/territory and/or with state/territory-specific variations, as appropriate. Describe how the approach is thorough, flexible, and tailored to the specific needs of each target audience.

Describe your approach for reaching out to Tribally-owned and operated systems and how you will provide training and technical assistance to these systems.

- iii. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:** Stated Objective/Link to EPA's Pillars - List the objective of the project and the linkage to support Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American

1. Results of Activities (Output): Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section 3 of this announcement).
2. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcome): List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment or public health which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section 3 of this announcement).

- iv. Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget**

1. Milestone Schedule: Provide a projected milestone schedule for the proposed project period (estimated two years). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks and an approach for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.
2. Detailed Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section

provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A such as “other” and “contractual.”

Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total cost. All subgrant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Total costs must include both federal and cost- share/matching (non-federal) components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by the EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal cost-share/match as required in Section 2. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine the allowability of costs for each project component/task, as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and non-federal components). There is general guidance available to applicants when preparing proposed budgets which can be found on the agency’s [General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of the EPA Financial Assistance](#) webpage including a sample budget (see Appendix 2) and training on [how to develop a budget](#).

v. Programmatic Capability/Experience/Community Support:

1. Organizational Experience: Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and your organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
2. Staff Expertise/Qualifications: Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their experience/expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including demonstrated knowledge of state, Tribal, and local regulations and policies relevant to the training and technical assistance. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit.

vi. Past Performance: Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:

1. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
2. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under

those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

3. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating an applicant’s past performance, the agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from the EPA files and/or from current and prior federal agency 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 information, please indicate this in the application, and you will receive a neutral score for these factors. Failure to provide any programmatic past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors. See Section 6 for further details.

vii. Letters of Support. Applicants may provide up to 15 letters of support from potential recipients of technical assistance to demonstrate that the applicant’s proposed approach is responsive to the potential recipients’ needs. To ensure that the agency can efficiently evaluate these letters of support, the EPA will only consider letters that are included with the application itself. Letters of support (up to 15 maximum) do not count against the 13- page limit on the Project Narrative.

Note: The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above, that addresses the evaluation criteria in Section 6.

C. Applicants Using Contractors

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.

Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements. If an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application, it does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements.

The EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant provides documentation that it has complied with these requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA’s Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). The EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive

procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500, as well as the requirements in 2 CFR Part 200.321 and 40 CFR Part 33 Subpart C.

D. Release Copies of Applications

EPA recommends that applicants do not include confidential business information (CBI) in applications. However, if CBI is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B. Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their application they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, information may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant. See 40 CFR 2.203(a), 41 Fed. Reg. 36,907.

E. Coalition Coverage

A coalition is formed when two or more eligible applicants coordinate to submit a single application. Coalitions must identify which single eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will receive subawards from the recipient (the “pass-through entity”). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in [2 CFR 200.1](#) and comply with the [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#).

F. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (not included in the page limit):

In accordance with [2 CFR Part 1500.12](#) and the Agency Quality Directives, all assistance agreements that include environmental information operations must submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) for EPA approval. A QMP describes and documents the organization’s Quality Program, including the program’s organizational structure, quality policies and procedures, criteria and areas of application, and roles, responsibilities and authorities. It describes an organization's overall quality program and provides a framework for implementing quality assurance across all projects and operations within the organization. The QMP documents all technical activities to be performed under the Quality Program and describes how the program will integrate quality assurance and quality control policies and procedures, and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) into all environmental information operations. The QMP must comply with the requirements of the [EPA Quality Directives](#).

EPA Project Officers will work with all selected recipients on quality assurance requirements, which will be documented in the grant Quality Assurance Terms and Conditions. Once the award is made, if the grant includes environmental information operations, the applicant will develop a QMP in accordance with the current version of the [EPA QMP Standard CIO 2105 S-01](#), and submit for EPA approval in accordance with the awarding EPA Office’s QMP. Selected applicants cannot begin environmental information operations until EPA approves the applicant’s QMP.

Projects falling under the assistance agreement that include environmental information operations are required to submit a QAPP consistent with the requirements of the current version of the [EPA QAPP Standard CIO 2105-S-02](#). A QAPP is specific to individual projects and outlines the procedures and processes necessary to ensure the quality of data or information generated during the project. It details the project's objectives, the type and quality of environmental information required, and how it will be collected, analyzed, and used.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Submission Dates and Times

May 13, 2026 11:59 pm ET

Application Submission Deadline

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept the last on-time submission.

B. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. SAM.gov will provide a UEI for your organization, which is required to apply for grants using Grants.gov. To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for the information you will need to register. Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements before applying for the award.

SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. [Begin that process today.](#)

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Please visit [How to Register to Apply for Grants](#) for additional information.

C. Submission Instructions

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See Section 5.B. above for information on getting registered.

Important tips:

- 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.
- See the Quick Start Guide for Applicants for instructions on how to submit.
- Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks.
- Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.
- Your application must be submitted by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance.
- If you receive an error or the 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.
- See Grants.gov Errors for information on other Grants.gov errors.
- 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.

D. 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:

- Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.
- Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- Send an email with Funding Opportunity Number (FON): EPA-OW-OGWDW-26-01 in the subject line to SmallSystemsRFA@epa.gov before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
 - Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - Description of the issue
 - The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the 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.

Applicants with limited or no access to the internet may request an exception by following the procedures outlined [here](#). The request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods.

E. Intergovernmental Review

The application is not subject to Intergovernmental Review.

6. Application Review Information

A. Responsiveness Review

Applications must meet the eligibility requirements described in [Section 2](#) to be evaluated. Applicants not meeting these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be notified within 15 calendar days of the determination.

- Applications must adhere to the page limit requirements. Any pages over the limit(s) in [Section 4](#) will not be reviewed.
- Initial applications must be submitted *on or before* the application deadline through Grants.gov or through limited circumstances as expressed in [Section 5](#). The EPA will not evaluate applications that are not submitted on time.
- *Technical difficulties applying:* Applicants having technical difficulties applying must contact the Grants.gov hotline at 1-800-518-4726 *and* then must email a PDF of the full application to the EPA contact listed in [Section 1](#). The submission must be received prior to the application deadline for consideration.

B. Review Criteria

Criteria Name and Description	Points
Total possible points	100
<p><u>1) National Priority Area</u></p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability and approach for effectively addressing the National Priority Area described in this announcement that their application addresses. In conducting this evaluation, the following factors will be taken into account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an effective process for consultation with the appropriate regulatory authority in each state, Tribe, or territory prior to initiating training and technical assistance activities. (7 points) ii. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an effective approach to keeping these regulatory authorities and stakeholders informed regarding the implementation and outcome of training and technical assistance activities. (7 points) iii. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an effective process for coordinating with other technical assistance providers to reduce duplication of efforts. (3 points) 	17
<p><u>2) Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis</u></p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability and approach for making training and technical assistance available nationally in a maximum number of states and U.S. territories (see Section 3 of this announcement) taking into account the following factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to provide training and technical assistance in a maximum number of states and U.S. territories through face-to-face/onsite training and/or through remote or other alternative means. (10 points) ii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates an effective process for reaching out to Tribally-owned and operated systems and providing training and technical assistance to these systems. (7 points) iii. The extent and quality to which the applicant’s strategy utilizes flexibility to tailor the training and technical assistance techniques and resources to address the specific needs of the target audience in as many states and U.S. Territories as possible. (9 points) 	26
<u>3) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress</u>	16

<p>Applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes. (8 points) ii. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section 3 of this announcement). (8 points) 	
<p><u>4) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget</u></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks, a plan for timely and successfully completing the proposed project, and an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (6 points) ii. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Total costs must include both federal and cost-share/match (non-federal) components. The cost- effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and non-federal components) will also be evaluated, including consideration of indirect/administrative costs. (5 points) 	11
<p><u>5) Programmatic Capability/Experience/Community Support</u></p> <p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their organizational infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (7 points) ii. Plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (7 points) iii. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project including demonstrated knowledge of state and local regulations and policies relevant to the training or technical assistance. (7 points) iv. Degree of support from potential recipients of technical assistance that demonstrates that the applicant’s proposed approach to service 	26

<p>delivery is responsive to the potential recipients' needs (e.g., demonstrated through letters of support or other means). (5 points)</p>	
<p>6) Past Performance</p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 4.B of the funding opportunity (2 points) ii. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 4.B of the funding opportunity 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. (2 points) <p>Note: The EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant under items (i) and (ii) of this criterion and may 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or past reporting information must indicate that in the application and they will receive a neutral score (half of the points) for the factor (i.e., 1 point for item (i), 1 point for item (ii))</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a 0 score for the factor.</p>	<p>4</p>

C. Review and Selection Process

All applications received via Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by the EPA's staff against the threshold criteria in Section 2 and Section 6.A of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications by National Priority Area based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section 6.B. Three separate ranking lists, one per National Priority Area, will be developed based on the panel evaluations. The ranking list for each National Priority Area will be provided to the Headquarters Selection Official(s), who make(s) the final funding decisions.

(1) Other Evaluation Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions for each National Priority Area, the Selection Official(s) will consider the application score/ranking and may also take into account programmatic priorities, Agency priorities, the number of meritorious applications received, and funding availability.

As noted above, while the EPA expects to make awards in each National Priority Area, it reserves the right not to do so and may redistribute the number of awards differently.

D. Risk Review

The EPA will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov., when doing the risk review as required by [2 CFR 200.206](#).

7. Award Notices

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made by the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by EPA's Office of the Chief Grants Officer. Selection does not guarantee an award will be made. Statutory authorization, funding, or other issues during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award. 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, which must be approved by the 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.

8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The recipient and any sub-recipient must comply with the applicable [General Terms and Conditions](#). These terms and conditions are in addition to the assurances and certifications made as part of the award, terms and conditions, and restrictions reflected on the official assistance award document.

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity are subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 1500](#).

B. Reporting

[EPA's General Terms and Conditions](#) in the Notice of Award will have information on performance and financial reports, including:

- How often you will report.
- Any required form or formatting.
- How to submit them.

C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires:

- Data entry at SAM.gov for all subawards and subcontracts issued for \$30,000 or more.
- Reporting executive compensation for both recipient and subaward organizations.

9. Other Information

A. Additional Provisions for Applicants

Additional provisions that apply this funding opportunity and/or awards made under this funding opportunity, can be found at [EPA NOFO Clauses](#). If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact to obtain the provisions.

Disputes: Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section 1 of the announcement. Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

Termination

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.340, EPA may terminate awards made under this NOFO in part or its entirety:

- (a) If a recipient or subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the award, including statutory or regulatory requirements;
- (b) With the consent of the recipient when both the recipient and the EPA agree upon the termination conditions, which include the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated;
- (c) If a recipient sends the EPA a written notification of the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated; however, if the EPA determines that the remaining portion of the Federal award will not accomplish the purposes for which the Federal award was made, the EPA may terminate the award in its entirety; or
- (d) Pursuant to the terms and conditions specified in the Federal award.
- (e) By the EPA or pass-through entity to the extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

Data sharing: All grant recipients under this NOFO may be required to share data generated through their funding agreements in the form of deliverables, which will be specified in the final workplans.